

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every
month
Issue 267
October
2017**



**"Don't expect us to write
any breezy summer
bangers anytime soon."**

CASSELS

Chippy's rock agitators talk politics,
punk and avoiding predictability.

Also in this issue

SAVE THE CELLAR!

Legendary venue under threat.

Introducing **DRORE**

LOW ISLAND talk plans and parties

TOWERSEY reviewed

plus

**All your Oxford music news, reviews, previews and seven
pages of local gigs for October**

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

THE BULLINGDON

OCTOBER 2017 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Sunday 1st October
Coasts This Life Tour

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 3rd October
Krautwerk

Harald Grosskopf & Eberhard Kranemann

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 4th October
The Skints

Nice Time Tour: Part 2

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 4th October
District

Doors: 11pm

Thursday 5th October
**This is Oxford
Album Launch**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 6th October
Police Dog Hogan

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 7th October
**Musical Medicine
feat. Auntie Flo**

Doors: 11pm

Monday 9th October
Yak

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 10th October
Mae Martin - Dope

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 11th October
District

Doors: 11pm

Thursday 12th October
Ed Gamble

Doors: 7pm

Friday 13th October
**The Dead Beat Apostles
The Shapes**

Doors: 7pm

Friday 13th October
Gunfingers feat. Sir Spyro

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 14th October
**Simple
Joy Orbison
Jon Rust**

Doors: 11pm

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

Wednesday 18th October
District

Doors: 11pm

Thursday 19th October
Good Life feat. Oneman

Doors: 11pm

Friday 20th October
**Abandoman
Life and Rhymes**

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 21st October
Ritual Union Festival

Doors: 12pm

Saturday 21st October
Low Islands & Friends

Doors: 11pm

Monday 22nd October
Howie Payne

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 24th October
Skinny Molly

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 25th October
District

Doors: 11pm

Thursday 26th October
**Miles Hunt & Erica Nockalls
(The Wonder Stuff)
Will Hunt**

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 26th October
Indie Disco

Doors: 11pm

Friday 27th October
Gentlemen's Dub Club

Doors: 9pm

Saturday 28th October
**Rawdio
1985 Music**

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 28th October
**Alix Perez
Halogenix**

Doors: 11pm

Sunday 29th October
Jane Weaver

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 1st November
Matthew E. White

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 1st November
District

Doors: 11pm

Thursday 2nd November
Eddie Martin Band

Doors: 7pm

Friday 3rd November
Too Many T's

Doors: 7pm

Friday 3rd November
**Simple
Levon Vincent**

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 4th November
Silent Disco by Silent Social

Doors: 11pm

Sunday 5th November
**Iration Steppas
Soundsystem Sunday Session**

Doors: 11pm

Monday 6th November
CC Smugglers

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 7th November
Emily Barker Band

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 8th November
District

Doors: 11pm

Thursday 9th November
Wire

Doors: 7pm

Friday 10th November
Brian Gittens

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 11th November
Tropic Popsicle

Doors: 11pm

Sunday 12th November
Toseland

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 14th November
Marika Hackman

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 15th November
**Big Gilson & Blues Dynamite
feat. Del Broham**

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 15th November
District

Doors: 11pm

Thursday 16th November
The Stray Birds

Doors: 7pm

Friday 17th November
**Bossaphonik
Bukky Leo & Black Egypt**

Doors: 11pm

Friday 18th November
**Musical Medicine
feat. Medlar**

Doors: 11pm

NEWS

Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU

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YOUTHMOVIES have made their entire back catalogue available on a pay-what-you-like basis, prompting speculation they might be about to reform, even just for a one-off show. The pioneering math- and post-rock band, led by former-Foals guitarist Andrew Mears, who later went on to form Pet Moon, split up in 2010 after eight years together. They were once described by *Nightshift* as the most influential band in Oxford, inspiring a new generation of local bands. Among the other bands to come out of the split were Kone, featuring Youthmovies drummer Graeme Murray.

The extensive catalogue, including 2008 album 'Good Nature', released on Drowned in Sound, and the elaborately titled 'Hurrah! Another Year, Surely This One Will Be Better Than the Last; The Inexorable March of Progress Will Lead Us All to Happiness' EP, released on Fierce Panda in 2004, are all available at ymss.bandcamp.com.

SUBSTANCE RECORDS

release a brace of singles in the next month. The local dance label release euphoric progressive trance banger 'Together Forever' by EnCord on the 13th October. The eight-minute track is a collaboration between label bosses en-Trance and MiCord. They follow this with 'Serenity' by TJ on the 10th November, an alter-ego of en-Trance.

The Substance Sessions podcast also returns from this month after a

six-month hiatus – visit

www.substancerecords.uk – for

details. Send them your demos at demos@substancerecords.uk.

Substance's Joe Truby is also teaming up with Andy Hill from Death of Hi-Fi for a fortnightly Sunday chill-out show on Witney Radio, focussing on chillout, downtempo hip hop, trip hop and electronica. The shows go out on the 8th and 22nd October and 5th and 19th November. Again, demos welcome.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY celebrates its 26th birthday this month. They host three days of live music over the weekend of the **6th-8th October** at **The Wheatsheaf**. Friday night sees sets from The Epstein; Country For Old Men; Juliet & the Raging Romeos, and Adam & Elvis, while Saturday night features Self Help; The Mighty Redox; Callow Saints; Fracture, and Restructure. Sunday's show is a free afternoon session in the Wheatsheaf's downstairs bar, running from 3.30-7pm, with sets from Puppet Mechanic; Demoiselles; Firegazers; Twizz Twangle, and Glenda Huish.

The enduring monthly gig night, run by Phil Freizinger, Sue Smith and Ainan Addison, began in October 1991 with the aim of recreating the spirit of free festivals in Oxford venues, and has proudly continued its open-minded, anything-goes policy ever since. The monthly not-for-profit club has been forced to move venues a couple of times in its long history but has found a stable, loving home at The Wheatsheaf for the past 16 years. Klub Kakofanney runs on the first Friday of every month at The Wheatsheaf.

EARLYBIRD tickets for next

year's **WOOD FESTIVAL** have already sold out. General weekend tickets are now on sale for the pioneering eco-conscious music fest, which takes place over the weekend of the **18th-20th May** at **Braziers Park**. Adult weekend tickets cost £89 (or £85 if you're coming by bike or bus). This year's sold-out event was headlined by The Magic Numbers and CC Smugglers. Visit www.woodfestival.com for more details.



THE CELLAR will be fighting for its future when plans to turn the venue into retail space in 2018 go to a council planning meeting in early October. However, there is real cause for optimism with a well-informed source telling *Nightshift* the plans are likely to be rejected as they breach the City Council's planning policy on protecting music venues.

The announcement at the beginning of September that Lush, who own the current leasehold on the building, will be relocating to the new Westgate centre and the building's owners, the St Michael & All Saints charities, were looking to increase revenue by redeveloping the basement space which has been a pub and venue since 1979, drew immediate condemnation by local musicians, promoters and DJs, who were quickly joined by a host of other acts, including The Chemical Brothers; The Music Venue Trust; Oxford's MPs Layla Moran and Anneliese Dodds, and a host of Oxford City Council councillors. The venue's plight was featured on both BBC South and ITV Meridian news as well as the BBC's website and *The Oxford Mail*.

An online petition calling for The Cellar to remain as a live music and club venue, started by Fluid promoter Matt Aspell, attracted almost 14,000 signatures.

Originally called The Corndolly, later shortened to The Dolly and renamed The Cellar in 1999, the venue has earned a reputation for its eclectic and adventurous attitude to live music and clubs. Foals, Glass Animals, Stornoway and Young Knives are among the local acts who played their earliest shows at the venue, while club nights like Bossaphonik, Skylarkin Soundsystem, Fluid and Freerange all bring unique nights to Oxford's music scene. Over the years the venue has played host to the likes of The Cure, The National and Frank Turner.

Cellar manager Tim Hopkins, who took over the running of the venue from his dad Adrian in 1999, has been consulting with his solicitor as well as the Music Venue Trust in an attempt to block the plans, while Oxford City Council executive board member for planning, Alex Hollingsworth, publically stated he would fight the application.

Music fans were also able to file objections to the planning application at public.oxford.gov.uk. Almost 500 objections have so far been raised, most focussing on The Cellar's cultural value and vital contribution to local music.

With the official announcement due in the first week of October, people can keep up to speed on developments on the Save The Cellar Facebook page.

If our sources are correct, this might simply be the first hurdle in the battle to keep a treasured local institution and vital cog in the Oxford music scene. The best way to help any venue survive is to use it. If everyone who signed the petition makes just one visit to The Cellar, its long-term future will less precarious when market forces again come knocking.

OXFORD BEARD FESTIVAL returns this month. The fourth annual celebration of facial hair takes place at Tap Social in Botley on Saturday 7th October, from midday. There will be live music from Superloose, Franklin's Tower, Daisy West and Country For Old Men, as well as competitions including biggest and bushiest beards, straightest and curliest moustaches, least mess left in a

beard after eating, and women's and kids' beard competitions. A festival after-party features further live music from Giant Elf Fist, Beard of Destiny and Cherokii, plus burlesque troupe Scarlet Vixen. The festival will also be raising money for the Oxford Food Bank. Check out the Facebook event page for more details. By pure coincidence Jacob Rees Mogg doesn't have a beard. Or a soul.



THE BEST IN LIVE STAND-UP COMEDY

Saturday 30th September - 7pm
Suzi Ruffell, Pete Teckman, Mike Bubbins

Saturday 7th October - 7pm

Abugolia Schamaun, John Gordillo, Marlon Davis, Dave Twentyman

Saturday 14th October - 7pm

Diane Spence, Gerry K

Saturday 20th October - 7pm

Bec Hill, Andy Askins, Fin Taylor

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

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info@thebullingdon.co.uk
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NEWS



IRREGULAR FOLKS host their annual Christmas Special on **Friday 8th December** in conjunction with **Oxford Contemporary Music**. Together they present a concert featuring American folk singer, violinist and activist **Gaelynn Lee**, making a rare trip to the UK, alongside Canada's **Waitress For The Bees**, (pictured) the solo project of singer and viola player **Emma Hooper**, whose dinosaur and insect-themed avant-pop songs made her the highlight of Irregular Folks' Summer Session last year. Tickets for the show, at **St Barnabas church in Jericho**, are on sale now, priced £9 in advance, from Wegotickets.com.

THE JERICHO TAVERN closes for refurbishment on the 23rd October. It will re-open on the 15th November. Post-refurb, the venue is looking to work with new gig promoters and those in other creative fields to create a diverse calendar of programming. Email: dave@heavypop.co.uk for more information.

LITTLE RED build up to the release of their new album in early 2018 with another single this month. 'Diamond Black' is released on the 2nd October on All Will Be Well Records and follows the release of 'Siren Song' in September, with a further new song due out in November. Read a full interview with the band in next month's *Nightshift*.

31HOURS release a new single this month ahead of their debut album. The video for 'Castile' is on Youtube now. The band release their album 'Tell Me What You See' on the 17th November.

THOMAS HUGHES MEMORIAL HALL in Uffington hosts a short season of east Canadian

folk and roots music starting this month. The series of shows, organised by long-time local gig goer George Reade, kicks off on Thursday 19th October with a return to Oxfordshire for Prince Edward island trio The East Pointers. This is followed on Saturday 21st by a concert from Celtic-Cajun fusion trio Vishten, while on Wednesday 1st November Ten Strings & a Goatskin start their UK tour. More info at www.thmh.co.uk.

THE OXFORD BEATLES celebrate the 50th anniversary of the release of 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' with a five-night run of shows at Simpkins Lee Theatre in Lady Margaret Hall from the 14th-18th November (not September as stated in last month's *Nightshift*). The show, part of a play based on the life of Beatles manager Brian Epstein, written by local playwright Wayne Brown, will feature the band playing alongside a ten-piece orchestra as well as Indian musicians and guests. They'll be playing the seminal album in its entirety alongside 'Strawberry Fields', 'Penny Lane' and 'All You Need is Love'. Tickets and more information on the Sgt Pepper Show Facebook page.

NATUREBOY officially launches his latest album, 'Setting of the Sun', with a show at The Mad Hatter on Iffley Road on Monday 9th October. Reviewed in June's *Nightshift*, the album features contributions from Duotone and Megan Henwood. Tickets, £8 in advance, are on sale at www.tigmus.com.

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

SHAADOW won Hardest Working Artist at the 2017 AIM Awards last month. The rapper, who began his career on the Oxford scene, was rewarded by the judges for his relentless gigging and busking, which has earned him over 25,000 record sales. The rap and grime star returned to Oxford in May when he headlined the Uncommon stage at Common People in South Park. He said, "It's an honour to have won such a prestigious award that recognises not only my hard work but also my consistency over the years; I'll have plenty more music to come in the next year." The Association of Independent Music was set up to recognise artists, promoters, festivals and labels operating outside of the mainstream music industry. Head to www.diygang.co.uk for more Shadow news and shows.



LOW ISLAND release the first song from their new EP this month. 'The Lines' starts a run of track releases over the next few months, building to a full seven-song EP, their third, following 'Just About Somewhere' and 'In This Room', which between them have racked up over two million Spotify plays. The band, who played *Nightshift*'s Uncommon stage at Common People back in May as well as Truck Festival in July, also embark on a UK-wide Low Island & Friends tour, including a special **Ritual Union** after-party at The Bullingdon on **Saturday 21st October**.

Singer Jamie Jay spoke to *Nightshift* about the new release and the Oxford show.

"We've just done our first ever festival season, which has been really great. Latitude and Reading were particularly fun, not least as we really didn't expect to be playing them in our first year as a band. Truck was also really special; we had such an up-for-it crowd who just danced the floor into mulch in the pouring rain. During all of this, we spent June to September writing, recording and finishing the new EP.

"It's got seven tracks on it, all of which we're really proud of. We want to make sure none of them are overlooked, so we're hoping to release one or two tracks at a time over the coming months. We've had lots of people asking us about the possibilities of a physical release. We've got no plans for that as of yet but might consider it sometime next year."

Low Island's appearance at Ritual Union, which takes over six venues along the Cowley Road on the 21st and features sets from Peace, Bo Ningen, Josefin Öhm and Pinkshinyultrablast among others, will see them take over the Bullingdon for a full band live set alongside DJ sets.

"The Bullingdon is such a great club night space, so we couldn't pass up the opportunity to throw a party there. We've got the PYT resident DJs bringing the funk and disco and we'll be playing some tunes as well, probably more techno than disco. We've got a flight to a gig at Primavera Barcelona a few hours after the afterparty, so we'll have to keep it together!

"Weirdly enough, this will actually be our first Oxford venue gig with the full band line-up, so we're super excited. Ritual Union is a great example of Oxford's kick-ass music scene, and we're stoked to be part of it. These sort of events really help support independent music venues like The Bullingdon, where we all grew up going to gigs. Unfortunately, these venues are coming under threat, like The Cellar recently, so it's really important that they are seen to thrive as a considerable cultural asset of the community, before they get turned into an air-conditioned estate agents' office where you can peruse some delightful 2-up-and-2-downs with The Lighthouse Family playing in the background."

Hear 'The Lines' on Spotify and follow the band at facebook.com/lowislandmusic

Tickets for Ritual Union are on sale at seetickets.com



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ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
SAT 4 NOV



G4 THU 1 MAR



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
SON OF A PREACHER MAN A NEW MUSICAL FEATURING THE SONGS OF DUSTY SPRINGFIELD	TUE 24 - SAT 28

NOVEMBER

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA	SAT 4
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
MAMMA MIA! THE SMASH-HIT MUSICAL BASED ON THE SONGS OF ABBA	TUE 14 - SAT 25

DECEMBER

BANANARAMA	MON 4
THE SENSATIONAL 60s EXPERIENCE	FRI 8
CHRIS REA	SAT 9

JANUARY

ICONS OF THE 80s	THU 18
THE CHICAGO BLUES BROTHERS	FRI 26

MARCH

G4	THU 1
PAUL CARRACK	SAT 10
OUR HOUSE THE MADNESS MUSICAL	MON 12 - SAT 17
A VISION OF ELVIS	FRI 30

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CASSELS

photo: Helen Messenger



“**BEING CYNICAL IS SUCH AN intrinsic part of who I am now that it’s hard for me to imagine what life would be like if I was of a sunny disposition. It’s not like I choose to find no enjoyment in the things most people care about; it’s just the way I am. Quite a lot of the time I’m bummed out, anxious and gloomy.**”

SO SAYS JIM BECK, SINGER, guitarist and, alongside drumming brother Loz, one half of Cassels, when *Nightshift* asks him if cynicism is what drives him through life. It certainly drives his band’s music and lyrics as evidenced on the duo’s debut album ‘Epithet’, released this month on Big Scary Monsters. Jim mixes the personal and political with highly articulate ire and tightly-reined rage, whether it’s a generation of people trapped in debt and low wages, or the frustrations of growing up in a place like Chipping Norton, with its small-town attitudes. His biting words are played out over spiky, spangled noise-pop that will switch on a sixpence, from nervy, ruminative calm to ferocious, battle-ready garage punk, an unwillingness to conform to set song structures just one of the elements that has made Cassels one of the most exciting young bands to emerge from Oxfordshire I recent times.

BROTHERS JIM AND LOZ, now 22 and 18 respectively, played their debut gig in London 2013 but

had been playing music together since they were 12 and 8. The last three years has seen them release a string of singles and EPs and tour the UK as they built up to their first full album. Their gigs are intense, explosive affairs, myriad complex emotions shaken up in a bottle and sprayed into the crowd amid a storm of riffs, beats and limbs.

The first, immensely satisfying thing to take from ‘Epithet’ is how well it traps that live energy. It’s a finely structured set of songs, but it’s a world away from being an easy listen.

THE OPENING LINE OF THE album, ‘We form an army of waifs and strays’, sounds like a great call to arms to society’s marginalised, but Jim, the considerably more vocal of the pair, is quick to refute such an idea. “To call myself marginalised would be immensely insulting to hell of a lot of people. I guess I was talking about, for want of a better word, millennials in that song. Both taking a swipe at the completely apathetic, materialistic and disengaged attitudes I’ve encountered in so many people my own age, but also saying I completely understand why those attitudes exist. So many people my age – and I’m talking late teens up to early 30s here – have found themselves either saddled with crippling debt, still living at home with their parents, working in low

paid customer service jobs with no chance of progression, or often all of the above. When you’re faced with those circumstances it’s completely understandable that you’d see no point in engaging with certain things, particularly politics, as it must feel like there’s nothing to engage with. So many young people must feel completely powerless, voiceless and infantilised, and unfortunately they seem to have accepted this as their lot in life. That said, I was heartened by the result of the general election, particularly the youth turn out, but now I’m fearful that those young people who voted for the first time will be completely turned off again now they see nothing has changed. “The group I’ve just described above encompasses all communities, nationalities and ethnicities, and to say I’m a voice for all of them would be vastly overstating my own importance and my ability to comprehend the complexity of such varied experiences. All I’ve offered in ‘Coupe’ is a cynical slice of social commentary; I’m under no illusion that it’s going to galvanise anyone into doing anything.”

IT’S FAIR TO SAY JIM HAS strong opinions on things and both lyrically and in person articulates those feelings meticulously. The last time *Nightshift* interviewed Cassels was in the wake of the Brexit vote last summer, which animated both brothers a lot. Their opinions haven’t

mellowed any, although Jim is at pains to emphasise ‘Epithet’ isn’t an out and out political record. “I think I probably reacted in the same way a lot of people did: despair, followed by rage, followed by desperation, followed by begrudging acceptance bordering on wilful ignorance. ‘Let’ was written the morning of the result – very much in the rage phase – and ‘Coupe’ was written in the lead up. Apart from those first two tracks it’s a pretty politics-free record. I suppose the symbolism of the result; the move toward a more isolationist, segregated, and essentially unfriendly society, has also reinforced my cynicism and misanthropy. So don’t expect us to write any breezy summer bangers anytime soon.”

MORE THAN ANYTHING, what exercises Jim’s lyrical ire is his life growing up in Chipping Norton, a place he escaped two years ago to live in London. Loz similarly made the break last year, moving to Hertfordshire to study. Has leaving the place that fuelled so much of their musical fire tempered their feelings? Does absence make the heart grow fonder at all? No chance. “I fucking hated the place growing up and spent my whole childhood and teenage years wanting to leave, so I’m in no hurry to go back,” says Jim, “I went home for Christmas last year and stayed for four or five days and even in that time lost my mind and sense of identity little bit. I can never escape the eerie feeling that when you’re standing in the middle of a deserted field, no one would be able to hear you scream...”

Loz, by contrast, does have some fondness for his childhood home town. “Jim has far stronger views on Chippy than me. He is right in that it’s very mundane, however I’ve got some very close mates that are still living there so on the whole I still enjoy visiting. I will admit it’s a very odd place, though. On the surface it seems like a nice quaint market town, but in reality there’s a seedy underbelly filled with complete fuckheads.”

CHIPPING NORTON AND the duo’s antipathy towards it is documented in *Is It Punk Music?* a new 50-minute film about Cassels that’s released this month to coincide with the new album. It was made

by French film maker Rodrique Huart, who followed the band for a year, recording not just live footage and life on the road but also the Beck family home, with interviews with their parents and even their grandparents, which give a far more unique picture of the people behind the music than most “behind the scenes” documentaries. “We met Rodrique completely by chance,” explains Jim, “he was over in London for a meeting and happened to wander upstairs in The Old Blue Last when we were playing. I guess he must have liked what he saw, but we remember it as being a pretty shit show to be honest. Anyway, yeah, then he just sent us this long message on Facebook in broken English saying he wanted to follow us around for a year and we thought ‘fuck it, why not’. Turns out he’s actually an amazing filmmaker so it turned out to be lovely slice of serendipity.”

What was it like being trailed by a film maker for a year? “It was obviously super strange at first, but Rod has an uncanny ability to blend in the background and you quickly forget he’s there. He actually only came over to the UK to film us four or five times too, so it wasn’t like he was literally there every minute of the day. Fuck knows what viewers will think of it; it’s too close to home for me to have any real perspective. Hopefully we don’t come across as complete pricks.”

Any moments you wish you could edit out? “He included an old song called ‘Seasick’ which we can’t stand, so would have preferred if he’d left that out... otherwise I actually wish he’d fit more *in*. He only filmed three shows and we played some way better ones that year, so it’s a shame he didn’t come to more. Also looking back at some of the early footage it’s kind of embarrassing seeing how little we knew back then. We were definitely still finding our feet when he started filming, but it feels more like a proper band now.”

The film had its premiere in Paris and over 200 people come out to see it. Not bad for a band barely known in their own country yet, never mind France.

“It was fucking surreal. When the film ended they made us stand at the front and asked us what we thought and I was pretty much lost for words. If you’re ever forced to watch a 50-minute film about yourself on a huge screen surrounded by 200 French people you’ll see what I mean; it’s not a situation many would be equipped to deal with. Most people seemed to really like it though, and we sold out of records, so I guess they must have liked the music as well as the film.”

The title of the film comes from a

quote from the brothers’ mother when she’s filmed listening to the band’s new single; punk as a description of Cassels’ music doesn’t hold much water for the band, though. “I can see why it’s applied to our music as a descriptor,” admits Jim, “because people have a need to compartmentalise and label everything, but music is so subjective I personally think it’s a bit pointless. For example, if I say I’m in a punk band, one person might immediately assume we sound like Green Day, another might think The Sex Pistols, and another may think Minor Threat. If people want to call our band ‘punk’, fine, I’ve got no problem with it. But I’d rather they just listened to the music without trying to box it into a genre.”

EARLIER THIS YEAR CASSELS toured with London’s Meat Wave (“so, so good; we had a blast I was worried that they were going to be complete arseholes or they were going to think we were complete

situation? JIM: “Yeah, though obviously it’s tangential to the small venues situation. In London it’s mad: so many good venues have gone even in the short time I’ve lived there. The Buffalo Bar and Powerlunches in particular spring to mind. The areas of London which used to be a bit bohemian and interesting have been completely sterilised by rich tenants moving in. Ironically, many move to these areas because they’re interesting and exciting, but then complain about the noise from venues until they’re forced to close. It’s bullshit.

ANOTHER PART OF IS IT PUNK Music? Focuses on Jim working in his day job shows, which basically just goes to pay recording costs and making it possible to go on tour. Can he see a point where the band pays for itself? “Nah. I just don’t think our music, in its current form anyway, will appeal to enough people to make

“I went home to Chipping Norton for four or five days and even in that time lost my mind and sense of identity little bit. I can never escape the eerie feeling that when you’re standing in the middle of a deserted field, no one would be able to hear you scream...”

arseholes, but luckily we got on really well and now have matching spoons tattoos as a memento: we visited Wetherspoons at least once a day, sometimes twice a day,” remembers Jim), and later this year they’ll head off around the UK again as tour support to Single Mothers. Before then though they play a hometown show at The Cellar this month; the venue is at threat of closure. Living in London now, Jim has seen this sort of thing a lot. What does he think can be done to save grassroots venues from the various forces that are bulldozing them? “Beyond petitioning and lobbying owners and councils, not much. You can always try and make the case for the significance of small music venues in terms of both their contribution to culture and their importance to so many people, but when you’re faced with a greedy landlord whose favourite band is Status Quo or some shit I think you’re always fighting an uphill battle. I really hope for Oxford’s sake that the Cellar somehow finds a way to stay open though; losing it would be such a blow to the city.” There’s a bit in the documentary where Cassels talk about about the old mill in Chipping Norton and how it’s been turned into luxury flats; do they see parallels with the venue

us anywhere near enough money. Also there’s just not the budget or opportunities available in music for bands anymore that there used to be. “The past 20 years has seen the gradual devaluation of music as a product, to the point where one stream is now worth 0.08p or something ridiculous. Also I think guitar music in general is receding into a niche interest again, akin to jazz or classical but to a smaller degree. The indie boom of the mid-noughties ended long ago, and now things like grime are starting to enter the mainstream, which, while I don’t really listen to grime, I think is great. Whatever I might think about an artist like Stormzy’s music, you have to respect the fact he’s making something new and exciting and has pretty much done it all himself without the help of a major label.” You seem resigned to the fact you’ll never cross over enough to make it big; how do you stay focussed and motivated believing that, and doesn’t the relative success of bands like Slaves and Fat White Family give you hope? JIM: “Sometimes it can be hard, mainly because I’m such a pessimistic person. I tend to flip between being grateful for all the cool shit we’ve done/are doing and feeling like no one really gives a

shit. Growing up I always said to myself that if we could get signed to a good indie label and release some music I’d be happy, which we’ve done, so I try to remind myself of that. Avoiding social media and remembering to have a life outside of the band also helps. In regards to those bands you’ve mentioned, I’d argue that they’re coming from a place of having fun; they’re writing music for people to have a good time to, whereas we’re throwing all of the horrible shit that has affected us into our songs as a way of dealing with it. They’re fundamentally different approaches to writing music, and the former is always going to be more popular for obvious reasons. Also Slaves and The Fat White Family have choruses and repeated phrases in most of their songs, which makes them catchy, which people like. We don’t really do choruses.”

MUSICALLY AT LEAST THE crux of the film sees Jim stating how important it is for Cassels to “avoid the clichés of being in a band”; their wired, often unpredictable music certainly walks the walk on that score but asked what would be the worst clichés to fall into, Jim’s response is characteristically to the point. JIM: “Boring ‘intro, verse, chorus, verse, chorus, middle eight, chorus, end’ song structures. Just singing ‘woah’ or ‘ooh’ in a song because you can’t be arsed to write any more words, and because people can easily join in with ‘woahs’ and ‘oohs’. Singing in an American accent when you’re actually from a provincial town in the south east of England or wherever. Saying things like ‘IS EVERYBODY HAVING A GOOD TIME?!’ followed by, ‘YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT!’ at shows. Trying to get people to clap along to your songs. In more recent times, posting cryptic shit on social media to try and make yourself seem interesting. There’s more, but I’ll stop there. I feel like all of that has been done to death and now it just sounds and looks lazy, predictable and embarrassing. It’s not hard to avoid them; just try and be honest and sincere, instead of pretending to be something you’re not.”

CASSELS HAVE NO shortage of honesty. It seeps and seethes and explodes out of their music at every turn. If that can make for uncomfortable listening for anyone caught in Jim Beck’s aim, it also guarantees a thrilling musical ride – whether you call it punk or whatever. Sometimes the truth hurts, but Cassels deserve to be heard.

‘Epithets’ is released on the 6th October on Big Scary Monsters. Cassels play The Cellar on Saturday 7th October.

RELEASED

CASSELS

‘Epithet’

(*Big Scary Monsters*)

The vinyl edition of ‘Epithet’ comes in a limited red, white and blue colourway. This is, no doubt, a sarcastic two fingers to sweeping nationalist mania, about which this nine-track debut album seethes.

Built around chunky, noisy, melodic guitar squall, the likes of which Big Scary Monsters has long championed, it’s certainly a statement of angry intent, although at times it teeters awkwardly between righteous indignation and unfocussed millennial angst. Cassels’ vocal style takes some getting used to – a wordy waterfall of lyrics delivered in a petulant, Sleaford Mods-on-caffeine splurge – but it’s inarguable that this is a band with a lot to say.

Blur once claimed that ‘Modern Life Is Rubbish’, during a previous wave of Union Jack-waving ‘national pride’, and ‘Epithet’ seems similarly themed. Overall, the message is that young and poor people today *really* have it hard, and that the country is being run by selfish, racist, uncaring suits. While at times their message is abrasively simplistic – for example, opener ‘Coup’ stating “we enter a new form of Huxleyan nightmare” – there are times of definite power and believable anger. Lyrics such as “Britain,



home of the ignorant, arrogant bastard” (‘Let’) and the poetically abrupt “Proof once and for all that slaughter is the most miraculous cure for chronic erectile dysfunction” (‘Where Baseball Was Invented’) are delivered with impressive authenticity. Aside from the relentless political and social commentary – not that there’s anything wrong with that, of course – Cassels are musically intense and controlled, and impressively complex-sounding for a two-piece. ‘Epithet’ is a robust and inventive series of thuggish art rock pieces, delivered with a nod to melody and grace.

Simon Minter



TIGER MENDOZA

‘Old Ideas 1’

(*Self released*)

Death of Hi-Fi’s superb new album aside, we were starting to wonder where all the local hip hop had gone this year, then this turns up like a brilliantly bad-tempered bad penny, Ian de Quadros teaming up with an array of local rappers and singers – including Death of Hi-Fi themselves – to make a six-track EP of industrial-heavy hip hop that ranges from imposing to militant, via brooding. Yeah, there’s no spliff-happy party bangers here. Stand-out track is opener ‘Dark’, featuring Pierquinn, which sounds like a gothic-industrial inversion of Arab Strap’s ‘The First Big Weekend’ by Burial after a weekend bingeing on Throbbing Gristle and mephedrone. It’s grimy and heavy and coming your way, but there’s no point running

31HOURS

‘Castile’

(*Self released*)

The first single from their forthcoming debut album, ‘Castile’ sort of shudders in like a malfunctioning robot that’s been left out in the snow without even a scarf to keep its circuits warm. It sounds like they’ve been listening to Death Grips a bit since we last heard them and the mildly disorientating blend of lysergic wooziness and spasming electronics here is a step up even from their promising early demos. Radiohead’s more recent glitched-out gloom-pop is another undeniable influence but if this song is an indication of what we can expect from the album, 31Hours are dead certs for ones to watch in 2018.

Zoe Herriot

Sponsored by



CAPTAIN KUPPA T AND THE ZEPPELIN CREW

‘Crumbs (From the Captain’s Table’

(*Self released*)

Each to their own and all that; live and let live; if it’s not hurting anyone, etc. etc... Chap-hop has been a surprisingly enduring fad, given it’s essentially a self-consciously eccentric opportunity for grown men and women to dress up like characters from an H. Rider Haggard adaptation of Jeeves & Wooster and pretend to be Straight Outta Peas Pottage. Oxford’s champions of the cause are Captain Kuppa T And the Zeppelin Crew, who host regular steampunk nights in town, and this mini-album (released on what increasingly seems appropriately anachronistic compact disc) doesn’t stray too far from the blueprint laid down by chap-hop’s chief exemplifiers, Mr B the Gentleman Rhymer and Professor Elemental, mostly featuring *faux*-posh homages to / pistakes of hip hop by way of doo wop, human beatboxing and barbershop quartet harmonies, knowingly name-checking Anthrax, Mary Berry and Gentleman’s Relish along the way. Kelis’s ‘Milkshake’ is remade as ‘Fruitcake’, while ‘Zeppelin Boogie’ is basically The Andrew Sisters taken for an airship ride to The Lost World. The *a capella* parts are neatly orchestrated and it’s equal to its obvious influences. It’s also highly irritating: it’s all so terribly wacky, it knows it is and it revels in its own zaniness. The double-entendre-riddled ‘Up the Garden Path’ is a student footlights piss take that doesn’t take the piss nearly enough, and the constant posh chap interruptions are crying out to be punched into silence. ‘War of the Worlds’ is a step up, sounding like Jeffrey Lewis attempting a George Formby-themed concept album, but it takes a lot of patience to make it to the end without succumbing to the urge to reach for your fighting trousers and dish out some pugilistic punishment to everyone responsible. Still, at least we can be grateful that wizard rock never took off in Oxford.

Dale Kattack



DRORE

‘Tape Two: Life Regrets’

(*Rad Nauseam Records*)

And, welcome back to the Home Spending Network. As promised, we’re here to take a look at Gleem Inframatic, the best stain remover on the market. Now, you won’t find this in the shops, not even the sort of shops that sell highly limited edition cassettes to which you should go on 22nd September. But, just take a look at this, we’ve applied Gleem to two of the worst, most stubborn dirty stains we could find: greasy chip fat, and *Life Regrets*, the new EP from Drore. See, just a quick application will evaporate the chip-pan grease like *that*, and on the Oxford sludge you can see it...well, it takes a little more rubbing but... okay, this is quite a thick sonic residue, but Gleem can cut through even the blackest, most abstract post-grunge... err...right, just a small hitch, folks...what? I’m trying, Steve! I thought it would be alright. After all, the opener ‘Novelty Tattoo Sleeve’ has that Melvinsy chug, I figured I could deal with it... Sure, but then ‘Old Egg’ renders the bones of a ‘Bleach’ song into a stagnant rock jelly and... Jeez, it’s growing! Steve, I swear this got bigger, just after the part where it slowed down like a black, exhausted lung...Aargh! ‘Happy Accident’ is a mutated atonal molasses trudge, it’s too much – turn the cameras off! Steve – the cameraman’s been swallowed by the hideous thick guitar on ‘New Skids On The Block’... no, I can’t reach the camera, I can’t move!... hearing this music, it’s like doing the macarena in a vat of molten cheese... Wait... it’s expanding... The rage!... The distortion!... can’t... the thick post-hardcore, it’s on me... it’s... it’s... my God, it’s full of starch...

David Murphy

THE BECKONING FAIR ONES

‘TBFO’

(*Self released*)

‘TBFO’ looks like being the final offering from one of Oxford’s most impressive bands of the past couple of years, the spawn of punky combo Dallas Don’t and one of the stand out acts from the 2016 Oxford Punt. Front man Niall Kennedy hails from Scotland’s Moray coast but has starred on the local scene for a few years, his second outfit an expertly assembled dream team featuring keyboard expert Peter Harris, talented bassist Lindsey Hall and energetic drumming veteran Sam King. It’s been a project that has always delivered, particularly live,

THE SHAKER HEIGHTS

‘Collapses’

(*Skag Harry*)

The Shaker Heights’ reinvention from country-tinged indie rockers to synth-fed robo-popsters has been well documented in reviews of the band’s recent singles, so let’s just say ‘Collapses’ is the band’s first album since 2007’s ‘Magna Doors’ and for the most they’re a very different, more fun prospect now than they were when they started out.

Album opener ‘Body’, released as a single back in 2015 just after they became The Shaker Heights 2.0, sets the scene well, all harsh, squirming Numan-esque synthetics, moody bass and stark, metronomic beats that sounds like a down-at-heart cousin to Teleman. ‘Out of the Blue’ is lighter in mood but with an epic 80s pop edge that recalls Pet Shop Boys and Future Islands.

One of ‘Collapses’ strengths is its variety; ‘Baby Put the Devil’ finds Robyn Coope taking over from Vincent Coole on lead vocals and the result is a dark, disco power ballad that could be from Madonna’s should-have-been goth phase, while the nervy, stuttering ‘Now You Try’ touches base with 90s Warp Records and 70s synth noodling. ‘Echoes Apart’ is widescreen soul-pop with a machine beat heart that aims for the more polished end of mid-80s electro-pop, and that bridge between mechanical clicks and whirrs and emotionally stretched vocals continues on ‘Hug the Bear’.

Where the album falters is when The Shaker Heights’ drop back into old habits, like the overly-earnest ‘Guillotine’, with its simple plucked acoustic guitar; the leaden, overwrought ‘People Are Going to Blame Me’ and the understated and underwhelming ‘Everything Ends’, which provides an unsatisfying conclusion to an otherwise enjoyable album.

Best, instead, to concentrate on the real high points – the cascading strings, swooning vocals and Steve Reich-like insistency of the album’s title track, and the sublime ‘Brunski’, again with Robyn Coope on lead vocals, her sad-eyed delivery accentuating the shadowy nature of the tune, where Weimar cabaret meets Blitz Club and a big pop chorus to die for.

Maybe a more uneven collection than the last few singles suggested, but you’ll struggle to find a better straight-up pop album from an Oxford band this year.

Dale Kattack



THE STATIC HAND

‘Lemsip Days’

(*High Strung Young*)

When BBC Introducing recently aired the opening and title track of The Static Hand’s debut album, it came as a revelation that such musical experimentation is alive and well in Oxfordshire. ‘Lemsip Days’ core keyboard refrain might recall the lament of a cat sat outside on a wall as the composer lies suffering in bed with a heavy cold watching Jeremy Kyle, but the metronomic vocals are beautiful and melancholy.

There’s a variety to Gary Charles’ output too. Second cut, ‘The Jaunt’, recalls ‘Kid A’-era Radiohead, Factory Floor and the artist whose influence looms largest over the album, The Aphex Twin, while ‘Time Moves in All Directions (Hillary)’ is a reminder of those mid-90s ‘Trance Europe Express’ compilations featuring bands such as LFO, Finitribe, Bandulu and µ-Ziq. ‘Brother, to the Border’ is a nod to boffin-generated German systems music, while ‘Hauntological Crossings’ is a low-level stomp with wobbly keyboards that could soundtrack a parade of hooded partygoers making their way through some woods in a search for an illegal rave circa 1991,the drugs beginning to play a slightly unwanted role, tips of fingers feeling the chill.

‘Lemsip Days’ is a venture supported by Brookes University’s Sonic Art Research Unit, a forum for dialogue between the fields of Experimental Composition and Sound Art and at times, The Static Hand’s work veers towards the highbrow. It’s cerebral for sure and not suitable if you are in the mood for punch-in-the-gut, synapse-attacking simplicity. What it is though is a wonderfully crafted set of tunes from a new and distinct voice.

Rob Langham

sidekick Isla St. Clair who has taken up residence in the north Oxfordshire town. It’s a possible career high point to place alongside early track ‘Billy’ as it showcases best the considerable talents of all four band members.

Elsewhere, opener ‘Divider’ will get you pogoing around your bedroom in the manner of Car Seat Headrest, Kennedy lamenting that “we can’t keep it together”; regretful words as the band go their separate ways while ‘Dry Swimming Pool’ is a slower number that showcases some shimmering guitar work in the manner of Terry Bickers and ‘Emily’s Army’ recalls the singer’s activities with Dallas Don’t. Rumour has it that the extant Oxford members of the band may re-emerge soon but in the meantime, this is a fitting send off indeed.

Rob Langham

G I G G U I D E

SUNDAY 1st
COASTS: The Bullingdon – Stadium-friendly tropical pop in the vein of Foals and Friendly Fires from Bristol’s Coasts, out on tour to promote their new album, ‘This Life’.
FLYTE + CATGOD + 31HOURS: The Cellar – Epic, soulful acoustic rock and piano-led pop from the London band, mixing up

Monday 2nd
SUZANNE VEGA: The New Theatre
Vega returns to Oxford for the first time since her 2014 showing at Cornbury Festival, and thirty years on from her first Oxford show in this same venue. Appropriately she’s celebrating the 30th anniversary of ‘Solitude Standing’, her second album and the one that made her a multi-million selling, Grammy-nominated global star, the album spawning the hits ‘Luka’ and ‘Tom’s Diner’. She’s playing the album in its entirety along with the whole of 1992’s “techno-folk” album ‘99.9F’, which turns 25 this year. The New York-born songstress emerged out of the same Greenwich Village folk scene in the mid-80s that had spawned Bob Dylan and Joan Baez in the 60s, and initially at least she followed a similarly political lyrical path, albeit with a strangely skewed and personal perspective. Hits like ‘Marlene On The Wall’ and ‘Luka’ dealt with bedsit isolation and child abuse respectively, while songs like ‘Men In A War’ detailed the experiences of military amputees. Her career received an added boost in 1990 with DNA’s remix of ‘Tom’s Diner’. ‘Solitude Standing’ was Vega’s commercial high point but she remains a crowd-puller and an influence on subsequent generations of artists. If her lyrical subject matter moved into more straightforward romantic territory over the years and she’s often perceived as a mellow pop presence, her contribution to David Lynch and Dangermouse’s ‘Dark Night Of The Soul’ project showed she still commands respect where it counts and revisiting those old records here is reminder of her at her most potent.



OCTOBER

influences of The Beatles and Hoosiers along the way. Local supports from tripped-out electro/jazz outfit Catgod and starlit electro-pop crew 31Hours.
SONG & SUPPER ROOMS + MARK BOSLEY & PETE LOCK + JULES PENZO + JEREMY HUGHES: Donnington Community Centre (6pm) – Free evening of live, unplugged music.
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms – Weekly open mic session.

MONDAY 2nd
SUZANNE VEGA: The New Theatre – The veteran songstress plays her classic ‘Solitude Standing’ and ‘99.9F’ albums in full – *see main preview*
TOUTS + VISTAS: The Cellar – Effervescent melodic punk in the vein of Stiff Little Fingers and The Skids from Derry’s Touts, out on a joint headline tour with Edinburgh’s Arctic Monkeys and Twin Atlantic-influenced rockers Vistas.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim – Weekly open session.
STRUM WHAT YA BRUNG: The Black Swan – Fortnightly open mic session.
FAUSTUS: Nettlebed Folk Club – Folk fun from the award-winning trio featuring Bellowhead’s Benji Kirkpatrick and Paul Sartin, alongside Waterson-Carthy collaborator Saul Rose.

TUESDAY 3rd
KRAUTWERK: The Bullingdon – Harald Grosskopf and Eberhard Kranemann, two veterans of the early-70s Krautrock movement, join forces for an evening of motorik electronic adventuring and kosmiche, Grosskopf a pioneer in electronic percussion with Synthesist and later Ash Ra Tempel, while Kranemann briefly played bass in both Kraftwerk and Neu!
BREAKFAST MUFF + RAINBOW RESERVOIR + HOLY MOMENTS: The Library – Righteous, raucous and witty DIY punk, riot grrl and chant-along noise-pop from Glasgow’s Breakfast Muff at tonight’s Divine Schism show, the band, featuring members of Joanna Gruesome and Spinning Coin, out on tour to promote third album ‘Eugh!’ Great riot grrl-inspired support from Reservoir, mixing up Le Tigre, B52s and Moldy Peaches, and spiky, spindly pop-punk from Holy Moments.
SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern – Weekly open mic night.

WEDNESDAY 4th
THE SKINTS: The Bullingdon – A heady blend of ska, reggae, hip hop, dub and punk

from east London’s Skints, back in Oxford for the first time since supporting Reel Big Fish here in 2011. They’ve also supported Sonic Boom Six, You Me At Six and Less Than Jake along the way, while scoring success in the American reggae charts with most recent album ‘FM’.
DISTRICT: The Bullingdon – Launch night for national club night District’s move into Oxford, playing a mix of rock, pop-punk, indie, grunge and alternative sounds across two rooms every Wednesday.

THURSDAY 5th
TIGER MENDOZA: Truck Store (6pm) – Electro/hip hop producer Tiger Mendoza launches his new ‘Old Ideas’ EP with an instore set.
THE DEARS: O2 Academy – Enduring epic misery and melodrama from Montreal’s finest – *see main preview*
THIS IS OXFORD LAUNCH: The Bullingdon – Launch gig for the new Oxford music showcase compilation.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf – Free show in the downstairs bar from the veteran local swamp-blues, psychedelia, funk and ska faves in the run up to their Klub Kakaofanney anniversary party.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Club – Oxford’s longest running and most eclectic open club night continues to showcase singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists every Thursday.
SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon – Sparky hosts his weekly open mic session.
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure – Weekly unplugged open mic night.
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford – Open blues jam.

FRIDAY 6th
GARY NUMAN: O2 Academy – Return of the synth-pop / industrial rock godhead – *see main preview*
THE WALL: O2 Academy – Pink Floyd tribute.
POLICE DOG HOGAN: The Bullingdon – Upbeat urban bluegrass, suburban country, West Country folk, fun drinking songs, tales of failed barbecues and souvenir tea towels at tonight’s Empty Room show from the ever-touring octet, back in town after last year’s sold-out show and their showing at this summer’s Cornbury Festival, the band featuring *Guardian* columnist Tim Dowling on banjo, their inclusive, feelgood onstage vibes a neat counterpoint to his dry, hangdog humour.
BOSSAPHONIK with THE BRASS FUNKEYS + PAPA NUI: The Cellar – Latin dancefloor, Balkan beats, global grooves, Afrobeat and nu-jazz club night hosted by Dan Ofer, tonight celebrating its 13th birthday and

featuring a live set from eight-piece brass band Brass Funkeys, fresh from playing Glastonbury and Secret Garden Party over the summer after previous shows supporting Dr John and The Hit 8 Brass Band and now touring debut album ‘Rabble Rousers’, drawing on the classic New Orleans street jazz tradition, plus local blues, funk, ska and reggae crew Papa Nui.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with THE EPSTEIN + COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN + JULIET & THE RAGING ROMEOS + ADAM & ELVIS: The Wheatsheaf – Klub Kakofanney celebrates its 26th birthday with a typically eclectic bill of live music, featuring alt.country and folk-rock faves The Epstein alongside Reading’s pop-friendly punkers Juliet & the Raging Romeos.
DIPPER MALKIN: The White House – Folk music and dance from acoustic guitar and viola duo Dipper Malkin at the Oxford Folk Club, the pair back in Oxford after their showing at The Oxford Folk Weekend in April and currently enjoying a creative artists’ residency at Cecil Sharp House for the English Folk Dance & Song Society.
WHOLE LOTTA DC: Fat Lil’s, Witney – AC/DC tribute.

Thursday 5th
THE DEARS: O2 Academy
Thirteen years on from being voted Best New Band at South By Southwest, which catapulted them to the precipice of success, The Dears remain a cult concern, while near neighbours The Arcade Fire enjoy the global stardom that could, maybe should, have been theirs. It’s not like they did anything wrong. The band, led by Murray Lightburn’s windswept baritone, which regularly saw him compared to Morrissey, continued to make the epic, string-laden soul-tinged pop that made breakthrough album ‘No Cities Left’ such a joy. Finding a sweet spot where Marvin Gaye and Isaac Hayes met The Smiths and Blur by way of Burt Bacharach and Serge Gainsbourg, The Dears have drama, pathos, gravity and swagger in equal measure, but maybe Lightburn’s perennially tortured soul was a little too alienating for mainstream pop audiences. New album ‘Times Infinity Volume 2’ doesn’t find him cheering up any. Having got through a hefty roster of bandmates over the years, Murray’s only permanent colleague now is wife Natalia Yanchak, although live they’re boosted by a full backing band, as such epically-proportioned pop demands.



SATURDAY 7th
CASELS + FANCY DRESS: The Cellar – Spindly, spiky and spiteful pop-flavoured punk from this month’s cover stars – *see main interview feature*
FREERANGE: The Cellar – UK garage, grime and bassline club night playing the best new underground sounds.
THE SMYTHS: O2 Academy – The Smiths tribute band play ‘Strangeways, Here I Come’ in its entirety, plus more classic songs.
AMBER RUN: O2 Academy – The Home Secretary brings her anthemic/emotive soft rock band to town, promoting new single ‘Alaska’, a place as cold and inhospitable as her treatment of asylum seekers.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with SELF HELP + THE MIGHTY REDOX + CALLOW SAINTS + FRACTURE + RESTRUCTURE: The Wheatsheaf – Second night of Klub Kakofanney’s birthday weekender, tonight with rising local pop-punk starlets Self Help alongside KK hosts The Mighty Redox, Aylesbury rockers Callow Saints, punk-rap-rave hoolies Restructure and more.
TOTALLY TINA: The New Theatre – Big stage, career-spanning tribute revue to Tina Turner.
MUSICAL MEDICINE: The Bullingdon SPARKY’S SPONTANEOUS SHOWCASE AND SPOTLIGHT JAM: The White House – Sparky’s monthly bands and jam night, tonight featuring Waterfahl, The Porker Band and The Night Wreckers.
OXFORD BEARD FESTIVAL: Tap Social, Botley – Return of the annual celebration of facial hair. Beard and moustache-related fun, including live sets from Superloose, Franklin’s Tower, Daisy West, Country For Old Men and more.
TEAS & TREES: Friends Meeting House, St. Giles – Four-piece female harmony singers play a free concert.
THE INFLATABLES: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Classic ska and Two Tone covers from the longstanding local tribute band.
OCTANE SPRING: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon – Classic rock covers.

SUNDAY 8th
KLUB KAKOFANNEY: The Wheatsheaf (3.30-7pm) – Free afternoon of live music in the downstairs bar to round off the KK birthday weekend, with sets from Puppet Mechanic; Demoiselles; Firegazers; Twizz Twangle, and Glenda Huish.
PERFECT: O2 Academy – Bluesy rock from Poland’s veteran crew.

MONDAY 9th
YAK: The Bullingdon – Raw and raucous garage rocking from London trio Yak, back in town as part of a tour to promote last year’s debut album ‘Alas Salvation’ – produced by Pulp’s Steve Mackey – following on from tour supports to Last Shadow Puppets and Peace.
ISAAC GRACIE + WILDES: The Cellar – Minor key melancholy in the vein of Jeff Buckley and Ryan Adams from London sing-songwriter Gracie, playing songs from his recent ‘Songs in Black & White’ EP.
NEW WAVE: The Cellar – New hip hop club



Friday 6th GARY NUMAN: O2 Academy

Gary Numan’s last album, 2013’s ‘Splinter’, was subtitled ‘Songs From a Broken Mind’ and detailed his depression, near break-down of his marriage and the contemplation of mortality. Its follow-up, ‘Savage’, comes with the appendage ‘Songs From a Broken World’ and finds Numan, who relocated to California during the writing of ‘Splinter’, looking out rather than in, spurred on by Trump’s devastating environmental policies and writing about a post-apocalyptic world and the psychological traumas and religious violence that comes in its wake. Numan has always looked on the dark side of life, from his earliest recordings as Tubeway Army, inspired by JG Ballard and Philip K Dick; paranoia, betrayal, dystopian futures and militant atheism have long been fuel to his creative fire, while musically his form of electronic music has always veered towards stark and bleak. Few rock stars have risen so high, fallen so low and been so completely reborn as Numan. Back in the late 70s the self-confessed accidental pioneer of synth-pop was just about the biggest star around, but simultaneously reviled by a music press still stuck on post-punk’s political posturing. When Numan’s musical magic began to fade, he was sustained only by the most fanatical fanbase in pop. Now though he is a universally respected pioneer with few equals. Everyone from Trent Reznor, Beck, Damon Albarn and Lady Gaga to Bowie, Prince, Dr Dre and Afrikaa Bambaataa has clamoured to hail his electronic genius over the years and his brooding, anthemic industrial rock is a suitably bruising soundtrack to the apocalyptic landscapes he’s singing about.

night playing new tunes from the US and UK.
NATUREBOY: The Mad Hatter – Dave Noble officially launches his latest album, ‘Setting of the Sun’, released in the summer and featuring contributions from a raft of local musicians, including Duotone and Megan Henwood, his languorous mix of pop, psychedelia, folk and jazz drawing comparisons to The Beatles, Steely Dan, Donovan and Pink Floyd.
KARA GRAINGER + JODY WYATT: The Jericho Tavern – Soulful blues and roots rocking from the LA-based Australian singer and guitarist at tonight’s Monday Blues show.



Saturday 14th

DESPERATE JOURNALIST / OCTOBER DRIFT: The Cellar

These are good times for classic female-fronted indie bands. Alongside recent Truck Festival show-stealers The Orielles and Honeyblood, the likes of Alvveys and Dream Wife are making like the Oasis-inspired death of proper indie never happened. You might expect a band named after an obscure Cure lyric taking the piss out of pretentious music journo Paul Morley to be a bit knowing but north London's Desperate Journalist sound completely heartfelt in their graceful, romantic post-punk and jangle-pop journeys, even a bit unabashed and unironic goth (well hey, as we say, the name comes from a Cure lyric, plus they've supported Chameleons Vox on tour and even played the Whitby Goth Weekender). Singer Jo Bevan is possessed of a similar mix of stridency and vulnerability as Savages' Jehnny Beth and also Morrissey's introverted poetic flourish and singles like 'Control' and 'Christine' come with some of The Smiths', Siouxsie's and New Order's DNA in their blood, managing to be simultaneously uplifting and a bit gloomy. Completing a superb double bill tonight are Somerset's October Drift, one of the most intense and entertaining live acts *Nightshift* has witnessed in recent times, taking Icicle Works and Comsat Angels' anthemic 80s alternative pop and shoving it through My Bloody Valentine and Smashing Pumpkins' rock mangle. It's a glorious racket, made better by the singer's big show off theatrics. What used to be called in the olden days, a bloody great night out.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim OXFORD CLASSIC JAZZ: Harcourt Arms THE SHEE: Nettlebed Folk Club – All-female harmony folk at Nettlebed tonight from the award-winning trio, featuring harp player Rachel Newton, 2017 BBC Folk Awards musician of the year.

TUESDAY 10th

TOM McRAE: O2 Academy – Chelmsford's master of mirth returns to town to promote his new album, continuing to plumb the depths of musical sorrow and melancholy in rather splendid style and with a feather-light vocal touch that leavens his tales of gloom and lost love.

INTRUSION: The Cellar – Monthly goth, industrial, ebm and cyberpunk club night with residents Doktor Joy and Bookhouse keeping it dark on the decks.
SPARK'S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 11th

REDFACES: The Cellar – Sheffield's harmony-heavy 60s r'n'b-influenced indie rockers head out on a headline tour following supports to Courteeners and Strypes and an appearance at this summer's Truck Festival.
DOCTOR FEELGOOD: The Cellar – Not the classic 70s r'n'b band, but a new disco, afrobeat and house club night.
DISTRICT: The Bullingdon
GREEN ONIONS: Fat Lil's, Witney – Blues Brothers tribute.

THURSDAY 12th

THE DEADBEAT APOSTLES: Truck Store (6pm) – EP launch set from the local soul and Americana outfit ahead of their show at the Bully tomorrow night.
THE HOOSIERS: O2 Academy – Too chirpy by half soft rock and 80s-styled pop from the fifth member of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse team. Come on Pyongyang, fire that missile, save us all.
TIGER MENDOZA: The Library – EP launch show from Ian de Quadros' dark-hearted electro/industrial/hip hop project, finding a meeting point between Burial, Nine Inch Nails and Deftones as he's joined by a series of guest singers and rappers.
KRIEF: The Jericho Tavern – Former-Dears multi-instrumentalist Patrick Krief heads out on the solo trail in support of emotively epic new album 'Automatic', dealing with death and lost love.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Club
SPARKY'S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford
BLACK FORGE + THE REAPER + HELLION RISING + 1000 CHAINS + KNAVE: Fat Lil's, Witney – OxRox brings the riffs to Witney with Somerset power trio Black Forge channelling Sepultura, Doom and Motorhead, alongside local classic rock and metal faves The Reaper, Newcastle's stoner/groove metallers Hellion Rising and eclectic local heavyweights 1000 Chains.

FRIDAY 13th

THE DEADBEAT APOSTLES + THE SHAPES: The Bullingdon – Excellent double bill of two of Oxford's best party-starting bands with expansive, country-tinged soul and r'n'b crew Deadbeat Apostles going head to head with last month's *Nightshift* cover stars The Shapes, mixing 60s r'n'b, folk, new wave and feelgood pop into a heady brew.
WILLIE & THE BANDITS + CLAUDE HAY: O2 Academy – Epic, intricate prog-roots rocking and blues from Plymouth's Willie & The Bandits, out on tour to promote new album 'Steal', the band having variously been

compared to Led Zeppelin, Cream and Santana as they mix up rootsy rocking and blues with electronics and convoluted song structures.
THE OXFORD SOUL TRAIN: O2 Academy – Classic soul, funk, disco and Motown tune across two rooms at the quarterly extravaganza.
JEFFREY LEWIS & LOS BOLTS + LUCY LEAVE: The Wheatsheaf – Continuing to be a beacon of genuine wit and humour in music, New York's Jeffrey Lewis returns to town with his new band, his sleight of hand as a lyricist matched by his talent as an artist, and his way with a story that marks him out as a genuinely funny entertainer, his songs tread a fine line between melancholic introspection and jaunty whimsy, like a young Paul Simon. Last year's sold out show here found him updating The Velvet Underground's 'Heroin' as a hymn to the internet ("It's my wi-fi and it's my hi-fi"); stylistically he can flit from grunge to skiffle with ease, unconstrained by style or the anti-folk tag that forever dogs him. He's out on tour to promote last year's '...Did Not Choose the Tracks' – something like his 25th studio album, but frankly it's impossible to keep up. Great, wonky post-punk/jazz-rock/psych support from Lucy leave.
THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND + PEERLESS PIRATES: The Jericho Tavern – Local jump blues, swing and r'n'b faves The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band return to Oxford action with a night of their own hot jazz hits alongside covers of Dean Martin, Lou Monte, Louis Prima and more. They're joined by heroic rockabilly romantics Peerless Pirates, also mixing up their own songs with suitably swashbuckling covers.
THE OXFORD BEATLES + RORY EVANS: The Cellar – Local Beatles tribute show ahead of the band's 'St Pepper' residency in November.
THE HISTORY OF JUNGLE: The Cellar – Classic jungle anthems and rare classics.
KATHRYN ROBERTS & SEAN LAKEMAN: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Husband and wife duo Kathryn and Sean return to the Shire, fresh from winning Best Duo at the BBC Folk Awards off the back of the acclaim accorded their 'Hidden People' album, mixing tender folk ballads with stomping acoustic rock, the couple having previously formed Equation with Kate Rusby and Sean's brother Seth.
THE BLACK FEATHERS: Friends Meeting House, St. Giles – Gentle, harmony-heavy Americana and folk from Cirencester duo The Black Feathers, touring their new 'Holy Water' single.
REVEREND BLACK: Tap Social, Botley – Classic rock covers.

SATURDAY 14th

DESPERATE JOURNALIST + OCTOBER LIST: The Cellar – Gothic post-punk pop exuberance from the rising London stars – *see main preview*
FRESH OUT THE BOX presents CENSUS SOUNDS: The Cellar – Progressive house and techno club night with DJs Ed Steele B2B Kostas G, Alan Cross, Ettica and Alna
SIMPLE with JOY ORBISON: The Bullingdon – Oxford's long-running house club night hosts the mighty Joy Orbison, following

his set at Common People in May and, almost a decade on from his seminal 'Hyph Mngo' single, providing something of a condensed history of the past twenty years of UK dance culture, mixing in house, dubstep, UK funky and garage, old school jungle and grime into his slickly uplifting sets.
TARPIT + THE OTHER ONES + WATERCOLOURS: The Wheatsheaf – Local bands night.

SUNDAY 15th

MARC ALMOND: The New Theatre – Orchestral greatest hits show from the flamboyant former-Soft Cell singer – *see main preview*
INHEAVEN: The Bullingdon – South London's epic indie rockers return to town,

Sunday 15th

MARC ALMOND: The New Theatre

Say what you like about Marc Almond, he's had a far more interesting life than most of us and he's one of music's most unlikely and enduring stars. There were the early hits with Soft Cell of course, including perennial favourite 'Tainted Love', a cover of Gloria Jones's hit which summed up the duo's perfect blend of northern soul and electro-pop. Later there would be Top 10 hits with 'Something's Gotten Hold of My Heart' (a duet with Gene Pitney) and 'Days of Pearly Spencer', while Almond's flamboyant personality and endless stream of anecdotes has sustained his star status through all manner of dark times. Away from the big hits though have come the real musical highlights – his sublime Marc & the Mambas albums, the excoriating 'Vermin in Ermine', and collaborations with the likes of Coil, Jim Thirwell and Psychic TV which allowed him to fully explore the dark side of his life and art. Having had to relearn how to sing after a near-fatal motorbike crash in 2004, he's remained prolific, both as a composer and interpreter of others' songs, mixing camp, cabaret and crooning with more outré explorations. Tonight's show is part of a tour with a full orchestra revisiting his biggest hits – 'Stories of Johnny'; 'Bedsitter'; Tears Run Rings'; 'Torch' and 'What!' among them – alongside tracks from lush, characteristically melodramatic new covers album 'Shadows & Reflections' and more, the man still very much a star in every sense.



anthemic songs like 'Bitter Town', 'Baby's Alright' and 'All There Is', revealing a band that falls somewhere between The Jesus & Mary Chain, Big Country and REM, mixing guitar fuzz and spangle with big-hearted choruses.
THE MIGHTY CADILLACS + TONY BATEY & SAL MOORE + PURPLE MAY + MONKFISH + PETE LOCK & MARK BOSLEY: The Wheatsheaf (3:30-8:30pm) – Free afternoon of live music in the downstairs bar, hosted by Giddyup Music.
PRETTY GIRLS LIKE TRAP MUSIC: The Cellar – Hip hop, r'n'b and trap club night.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Prince of Wales, Ifley (3-6pm)
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms

MONDAY 16th

DREAM WIFE: The Bullingdon – Fresh from slaying Truckfest, Brighton's Anglo-Icelandic trio return to Oxford. Originally formed as a fictional project for a mockumentary at art school, they went down so well they came to life, their mix of 60s girl groups, 70s NY punk, riot grrl, bubblegum cheerleader pop and disco pitching them in at a very neat point between Blondie, Sleater Kinney, Grimes and Le Tigre. New single 'Somebody' is out now.
STRUM WHAT YA BRUNG: The Black Swan
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim MADDY PRIOR with GILES LEWIN & HANNAH JAMES: Nettlebed Folk Club – Steeleye Span singer and Brit-folk legend Prior returns to Nettlebed's legendary folk club.

TUESDAY 17th

MIDGE URE + THE CHRISTIANS + ALTERED IMAGES: The New Theatre – Midge Ure – Yeah! The Christians – Uh-uh. Altered Images – Bloody hell, yes! – *see main preview*
CLEAN CUT KID: The Bullingdon – Languidly funky electro-pop in a Vampire Weekend style from the Liverpooldian quartet, out on their biggest tour to date to promote debut album 'Felt'.
SANE SESSION 1: The Cellar – 90s and noughties dance hits.
SPARK'S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 18th

THE PRETENDERS: The New Theatre – Back in the Shire after headlining the final Cornbury Festival in July, Chrissie Hynde and the gang kick out the hits - 'Brass In Pocket'; 'Stop Your Sobbing'; 'Back on the Chain Gang'; '2000 Miles'; 'Don't Get Me Wrong' et al, plus songs from last year's 'Alone' album. Still one of the coolest people in rock.
THE BIG MOON: The Bullingdon – Exuberant grunged-up indie from The Big Moon, last seen round these parts at Truck 2016, the band touring Mercury-nominated debut album 'Love in the 4th Dimension', their fuzzgun tales of boys, romance and smalltown escapism partway between Pixies and Sleeper.
TIGERCUB: The Cellar – Raw and raucous nu-grunge from Brighton's Tigercub, heavily inspired by Nirvana and Queens of the Stone-Age and back in town for a headline show after



Tuesday 17th

MIDGE URE / THE CHRISTIANS / ALTERED IMAGES: The New Theatre

These retro package tours can be a treat or a horror show, or sometimes both at the same time, depending who signs up. There's nothing completely horrendous here, though The Christians' lightweight soul-pop, which earned them multi-million sales and hits with 'Ideal World', 'Hooverville' and a cover of The Isley Brothers' 'Harvest For the World' are hardly the stuff of pop legend. And, as his acoustic set at Cornbury proved, even without Ultravox behind him, Midge Ure's both a great songwriter and an engaging, genuinely funny presence and knows his audience want the big hits, so you'll get 'Vienna', 'Dancing With Tears in My Eyes' and 'Hymn' along the way. But it's Altered Images *Nightshift* is getting giddy about. We almost saw them live at their commercial peak in the early 80s before illness meant the show was cancelled. We were in love with singer Clare Grogan from the moment we caught her singing 'Happy Birthday' on *Top of the Pops* and we're still in love with her. In fact there is a signed photo of her on the wall of the *Nightshift* office. It says "with love from Clare," so we know our feelings are reciprocated. And Altered Images were an awesome pop band, from their first, Steve Severin-produced album to the glossy, exuberant joy of 'Pinky Blue' and all the perfect pop moments contained within. Seriously, if they play 'Goodnight and I Wish' you will see a grown man swoon and faint clean away.

supports to Royal Blood and Black Peaks.
BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: The Cellar – 80s pop, new wave, disco, synth-pop and glam club night, from The Smiths and Madonna to Talking Heads and Kate Bush and beyond.
DISTRICT: The Bullingdon

THURSDAY 19th

LETHAL BIZZLE: O2 Academy – Return to town for the veteran MC, something of an elder statesman of grime, although over his extensive and varied career he's veered off into pop-friendly rap, funky house, electro and more. His early willingness to collaborate with acts like Gallows made him the rock scene's favourite rapper and he appeared at Reading and Leeds Festivals as well as an ill-fated foray into



Saturday 21st
**RITUAL UNION:
Cowley Road**

Having upped Oxford’s gigging game over the past 18 months promoters Future Perfect host their most ambitious event to date with an all-day mini-festival taking in some 35 acts across five venues along the Cowley Road. The day starts off at Truck Store with some early acoustic sets before moving along to The Library and The Bullingdon then taking over both floors of the O2 Academy, culminating in a headline set from **PEACE**. While the Birmingham’s indie-funk stars provide the pop-friendly face of the festival, the emphasis is on the more psychedelic side of things for much of the day, with Japanese noise overlords **BO NINGEN** taking the most extreme trip spaceward, sounding like Lemmy from Motorhead and Sadako from *Ring* spawned a brood of skinny, demonic imps, raised them on a diet of Hawkwind and let them loose on the world. Watching them live can feel like being caught in the path of a force-5 hurricane. By contrast Russia’s **PINKSHINYULTRABLAST**’s surging shoegaze storm feels more like a blizzard of cherry blossom as they take inspiration from Cocteau Twins and Lush and make them soar, with singer Lyubov Soloveva’s enchanting glossolalia at its heart. **JOSEFIN OHRN + THE LIBERATION** are just one of a dozen contenders for what could be highlight of the day, back in town after last year’s stupendous show at the Bullingdon, the Swedish songstress’ pure-phase sonic battle wandering into sumptuous, motorik lullabies and dark, narcotic haze, partway between The Velvet Underground, Stereolab and Portishead. She’ll be pushed all the way by Sheffield’s seriously tripped-out shamanic rockers **BABA NAGA**, Copenhagen’s glorious black-hole dirge/doom rockers **BABY IN VAIN** and **TRAAMS**’ intense, uptight post-punk jamming. Motorik psych/drone/Krautrock/electropop crew **TOYS**, spaced-out groove rockers **VRYLL SOCIETY** and harmony-heavy fuzz-core people **ULRIKA SPACEK** will keep things lysergic and hypnotic, while drifting out of the psychedelic haze for a while,

BLACK HONEY’s grunged-up soul, surf rock and Morricone-inspired soundtracking comes fronted by Izzy Fraser’s deliciously ethereal Nancy Sinatra-meets-Dusty Springfield vocals, while **TRUDY & THE ROMANCE**’s own take on surf sounds come mixed with an eclectic mix of r’n’b, bluesy 50s pop and rockabilly. Among the less well known faces on show, you can pick from Canterbury’s funky, psych-tined folk rockers **SYD ARTHUR**; Bristol’s indie garage rockers **VAN ZELLER**; **MAGIQUE**’s euphoric one-man electro-pop; **MELLOW GANG**’s swoonesome breeze-pop, and **HER’S**’ hazy dreampop thrum. There’s a strong Oxford showing too, with local star on the rise **WILLIE J HEALEY** making his main Academy room debut, where he’s joined by gothic drone-infected Americana duo **THE AUGUST LIST** and intimate synth-popsters **CANDY SAYS**. Garage rock duo **THE OTHER DRAMAS**, symphonic one-man post-rock fave **KID KIN** and elaborate slacker-soul trouper **CHRIS BARKER** also fly the local flag, while rave-friendly electro-pop starlets **LOW ISLAND** play the main part of the festival before hosting their own after-show party at the Bully. All that’s only half the picture though, and as with any great festival, much of the fun is wandering between stages discovering new sounds amid the more familiar stars. With festival season now an increasingly distant memory, Ritual Union takes the action indoors, neatly avoids any risk of mud and looks like its come up with a line-up to better any outdoor festival this year.



Download. Latterly he’s worked with Wiley, Tempa T and Stormzy, keeping up the hit rate, notably on Top 20 single ‘Fester Skank’, his goofy rhymes and eclectic style taking him from the UK hip hop underground to household name, where he’s still comfortably positioned. **THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD: The New Theatre** – Bruce Waters, Bruce Gilmour and Bruce Mason pay tribute to the prog behemoths in typically Aussie style, including ‘A Saucerful of Fosters’, ‘Comfortably Numb (After Twelve Pints of Fosters)’, and ‘Wish You Were A Pint of Fosters’. **GOOD LIFE featuring ONEMAN: The Bullingdon** – Oxford launch for the bass, grime and garage club night, with Rinse FM’s Oneman. **GOODNESS: The Cellar** – House, techno and disco club night. **TOM MILLAR: Keble College** – Groove-led piano jazz from composer and bandleader Millar and his quartet. **THE EAST POINTERS: Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington** – Kicking off a trio of concerts from Canadian folk-roots acts at the Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall over the next couple of weeks are Prince Edward Island trio The East Pointers, back in the shire after supporting near neighbours Gordie MacKeema & His Rhythm Boys here last year, the band – whose family music roots go back seven generations – draw on traditional Scottish and Irish traditions as they mix banjo and fiddle melodies with stomp box rhythms. **THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Wheatsheaf** – Free show in the downstairs bar from the veteran rocker and band. **CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Club** **SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon** **ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure** **BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford** **BIGFOOT + DEAD MAN’S WHISKEY + THE MOTIVE + BLACK TREE** **VULTURES: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – OxRox rock and metal night.

FRIDAY 20th

BAD BREEDING: The Cellar – Pure unrefined punk rock fury from Stevenage’s anarcho-political street beasts, raging against the machine in fine style, reminiscent of militant early anarcho-punk bands like Crass, Subhumans and particularly Flux of Pink Indians. **THE ALARM + DAVE SHARP: O2 Academy** – Mike Peters continues to reimagine his band’s early albums, and having done ‘Declaration’ and ‘Strength’, the 30th anniversary of ‘Eye of the Hurricane’ might provide the opportunity to do the same again, while he continues to pen anthemic, folk-inspired punk and power pop on new records alongside big hits like ‘68 Guns’ and ‘Where Were You Hiding’. **SHY FX SOUNDSYSTEM: O2 Academy** – Drum&bass and jungle maestro Andre Williams, aka Shy FX, returns to the shire for the first time since hosting Truck Festival’s dance barn in the 2015. **RYDERS CREED + SILK ROAD + SWITCHBLADE CITY: The Wheatsheaf** – OxRox gig night with Staffordshire’s hard

MICAH P. HINSON
The Bullingdon
28.09.17 | £15

DESPERATE JOURNALIST & OCTOBER DRIFT
The Cellar
14.10.17 | £7

HOWIE PAYNE
The Bullingdon
23.10.17 | £10

BRIX & THE EXTRICATED
The Cellar
04.11.17 | £15

DJ SHADOW
O2 Academy
28.09.17 | £23

INHEAVEN
The Bullingdon
15.10.17 | £8

MILES HUNT & ERICA NOCKALLS
The Bullingdon
26.10.17 | £15

CC SMUGGLERS
The Bullingdon
06.11.17 | £10

VAN ZELLER
The Library
28.09.17 | SOLD OUT

CLEAN CUT KID
The Bullingdon
17.10.17 | £10

SLØTFACE
The Cellar
26.10.17 | £7

GIRL RAY
The Cellar
06.11.17 | £7.50

FLYTE
The Cellar
01.10.17 | £7

THE BIG MOON
The Bullingdon
18.10.17 | £10

ULRICH SCHNAUSS
Modern Art
28.10.17 | £12

WIRE
The Bullingdon
09.11.17 | £14.50

KRAUTWERK
The Bullingdon
03.10.17 | £15

TIGERCUB
The Cellar
18.10.17 | £7.50

SLOWCOACHES
The Cellar
31.10.17 | £7

CHELOU
The Cellar
10.11.17 | £7

THE SKINTS
The Bullingdon
04.10.17 | £16

BAD BREEDING
The Cellar
20.10.17 | £7

MATTHEW E. WHITE
The Bullingdon
01.11.17 | £14

GOAT GIRL
Modern Art
10.11.17 | SOLD OUT

CASSELS
The Cellar
07.10.17 | £6.50

RITUAL UNION FESTIVAL
Cowley Road
21.10.17 | £30

KAGOULE
The Cellar
03.11.17 | £8

TOSELAND
The Bullingdon
12.11.17 | £10

YAK
The Bullingdon
09.10.17 | £10

LOW ISLAND & FRIENDS
The Bullingdon
21.10.17 | £5

GHOSTPOET
O2 Academy
03.11.17 | £15

MARIKA HACKMAN
The Bullingdon
14.11.17 | £10

REDFACES
The Cellar
11.10.17 | £7

FRANCOBOLLO
The Cellar
22.10.17 | £7

BLOODY KNEES
The Library
03.11.17 | SOLD OUT

AMUSEMENT PARKS ON FIRE
The Bullingdon
22.11.17 | £10

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Saturday 28th
**ROOTS MANUVA:
O2 Academy**

Good news, if Rodney Smith is touring again it must mean there’s a new Roots Manuva album on its way and given the undisputed godfather of UK hip hop has been getting stranger and more experimental as he gets older and younger generations of rappers have taken over his chart hit mantle, this must be cause for celebration. Part funky party starter, part sombre street philosopher, Smith has always been his own man, from the very start making his US rap influences a more British affair with elements of dub, trip hop and dancehall and a laconic delivery that was inspired by Rakim but could only be homegrown. The feelgood party mood of his music, with its Barry White samples and all, is often at odds with Roots Manuva’s poignant world outlook and often bleak lyricism and that rare thing, rap existentialism. It’s his perceptiveness and ability to turn it into such powerful rhymes, though, that put him on top of the pile and make him a real contender as the best British rapper ever. Well over 20 years into his career he’s worked with everyone from Leftfield, U.N.K.L.E and Gorillaz to Mica Paris, Mr Scruff and FourTet and quite possibly, somewhere along the line, he invented grime. Stormzy might outsell him now and Ghostpoet is close to being his equal in the trippier outreaches of hip hop but Roots Manuva is still the king.

rock and stoner crew Ryder’s Creed, alongside swaggering hard rock and blues crew Silk Crew and Northampton rockers Switchblade City. **SOUL SESSIONS: The Cellar** – Classic 60s, 70s and 80s funk, soul and disco club night. **BREEZE: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Rock and indie covers.

SATURDAY 21st
RITUAL UNION: Various venues, Cowley Road – Future Perfect’s Cowley Road-spanning all-dayer provides a superb line-up of music, from headliners Peace to Black Honey, Josefin Ohn and Pinshinyultrablast – *see main preview* **LOW ISLAND & FRIENDS: The Bullingdon** – The local ravey electro-pop stars host their own post-Ritual Union party, with a live performance as well as DJ sets. **SEPREVATION + BLACK SKIES BURN + NEGATIVE THOUGHT PROCESS + CRIMSON TUSK: The Wheatshae**f – A night of wanton noise violence with Bristol’s thrash/death monsters Seprevation taking inspiration from Death and Possessed and having supported

Gorguts and Onslaught on tour, plus local death/grind heroes Black Skies Burn, recent tour support to Napalm Death; crust/grind/powerviolence outfit Negative Thought Process, and heavy-duty stoner-metal and sludge blues from Crimson Tusk **FLUID: The Cellar** – Bassline, UK garage and drum&bass from rising bass star Deadbeat UK and Fluid residents. **HUGO’S COVERS BAND: Harcourt Arms VISHTEN: Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington** – Gorgeously darkwoods tales from Prince Edward Island trio Vishten, combining the folk traditions of their native Canada with Scottish and Cajun sounds. **REVEREND BLACK: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon** – Classic rock covers.

SUNDAY 22nd
FRANCOBOLLO: The Cellar – Heady mix of punk, prog, psychedelia and synth-pop from London-based Swedes Francobollo, on tour to promote debut album ‘Long Live Life’ after their recent showing at Truck Festival. **OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms**

MONDAY 23rd
HOWIE PAYNE: The Bullingdon – The former Stands frontman returns to town after his show here earlier in the year, out on tour to premiere songs from ‘Mountain’, his first album in eight years, following the release of a comprehensive Stands retrospective box set, the 90s band big favourites of Noel Gallagher and tour support to Paul Weller, Gomez, The Coral and Richard Ashcroft back in their heyday. **OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim HEIDI TALBOT: Nettlebed Folk Club** – The County Kildare folk singer launches new album ‘Kith & Kin’, the former Cherish the Ladies vocalist, who has collaborated with the likes of Idlewild, Kris Drever, Eddie Reader and husband John McCusker, drawing comparisons to such disparate influences as Bjork, Kirsty MacColl and Nora Jones.

TUESDAY 24th
SKINNY MOLLY: The Bullingdon – Good ol’ southern rock from Nashville’s Skinny Molly at tonight’s Haven Club show, the band formed by former Lynyrd Skynyrd and Blackfoot guitarist Mike Estes, and originally featuring Molly Hatchet’s Dave Hlubek. **TIFT MERRITT: St. Barnabas Church, Jericho** – North Carolina country/folk singer-songwriter Merritt makes her first visit to Oxford since 2013, touring her recent ‘Stitch of the World’ album, following time spent playing guitar for Andrew Bird, her heartfelt, poignant songs, about heartache, nature and life on the road, in the storytelling tradition of Emmylou Harris, James Taylor and Joni Mitchell. **4x4: The Cellar** – New tech-house, bassline and jump up club night, with opening night guest Wittyboy alongside Kudo and Morelli. **MADE IN CUBA with RAN KAN KAN & YELFIR VALDES: The Old Fire Station** – A celebration of Cuban dance music with local party faves Ran Kan teaming up with virtuoso Cuban trumpeter Valdes for a run through of Son Montuno and mambo classics, preceded by a Cuban dance class, with DJ Badger keeping the

vibes going on the decks. **SPARK’S SIDE OF THE MOON: James Street Tavern**

WEDNESDAY 25th
H_NGM_N + HAVELOCK + DAISY + WORRY: The Wheatsheaf – Emo-pop from Brighton duo H_ngm_n. **DISTRICT: The Bullingdon**

THURSDAY 26th
SLØTFACE: The Cellar – Exuberantly spiky indie-grunge in the vein of Pixies and WolfAlice from Norway’s Slotface, out on tour to promote new album ‘Try Not To Freak Out’. **MILES HUNT & ERICA NOCKALLS: The Bullingdon** – Wonderstuff singer Hunt and violinist Nockalls tour their third album together,

Sunday 29th
JANE WEAVER: The Bullingdon
Much of the best music in recent years has been made by women using electronic instruments: Lonelady; Gwenno; Josefin Öhrn; Gazelle Twin; I Speak Machine, and Oxford’s own Esther Joy Lane among them. As we head into October it’s looking likely *Nightshift*’s favourite album of the year will be ‘Modern Kosmology’ by Jane Weaver, written and performed on her array of homemade analogue synthesizers. It’s looking likely to be Weaver’s breakthrough album, which is incredible given it’s her ninth solo release and she’s been playing since the mid-90s, first with indie hopefuls Kill Laura and then ill-fated folktronia project Misty Dixon. Having spent much of her solo career flitting inventively between acoustic balladry, avant garde electronica and improv experimentation Weaver’s sound began to cohere with 2014’s ‘The Silver Globe and its follow-up ‘The Amber Light’. ‘Modern Kosmology’, though, is her best yet, fast earning her a new army of fans for its exotic mix of Krautrock (particularly Can, whose Malcolm Mooney crops us briefly on one track), 80s synth-pop and psychedelia, her swirling synthscales, motorik rhythms and fragile, otherworldly vocals joining dots between early Pink Floyd, Jefferson Airplane and Neu! on one hand and Stereolab, Broadcast and Goldfrapp on the other. Lyrically it’s all occult themes and spirituality while musically it’s just gorgeous, gorgeous pop music that is unlikely to be bettered before we get to Christmas. So stick it on your list for Santa and make sure you get down to see her live tonight.



‘We Came Here To Work’. **FOOTNOTE: The Cellar** – Disco, house and techno club night. **SWING TIME: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – Classics from Glenn Miller, Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie and more from the jazz band, featured on Children in Need. **CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Club** **SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon** **ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure** **BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford**

FRIDAY 27th
GENTLEMAN’S DUB CLUB: The Bullingdon – Leeds’ livewire nine-strong roots reggae, ska, rock and dub collective bring the party back to town after their show at the Academy last year, the band having spent the summer doing the European festival circuit and having previously played alongside Madness, Roots Manuva, The Streets and The Wailers. **SKYLARKIN’ SOUNDSYSTEM with DADDY G: The Cellar** – Deep, dubby reggae, hip hop, garage, drum&bass and bock party classics from the Massive Attack man, back at Skylarkin’ Soundsystem’s monthly party night after previous sold-out shows, the Bristolian pioneer and former-Wild Bunch lynchpin hearing about the Cellar’s potential demise and demanding to be able to play one of his favourite venues again. Dancehall don Skylarkin joins him on the decks, alongside Tru Thoughts’ MC Deemas J **GUNS2ROSES + METALLICA RELOADED + COSMOSIS + EMPYRE: O2 Academy** – Double dose of heavyweight tributism, plus local rock supports. **ART THEEFE: The Mad Hatter** – Launch gig for the local trio’s new single ‘Lover’s Lane’. **LEGEND – A TRIBUTE TO BOB MARLEY: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – Does what it says on the tin.

SATURDAY 28th
ULRICH SCHNAUSS: Modern Art Oxford – Electrogaze and indietronica from composer Schnauss, and sometime member of Tangerine Dream, back in town with his hypnotic mix of dream-pop, synth soundscapes, oceanic ambience and washes of electronic noise and Balearic beats. **ROOTS MANUVA: O2 Academy** – The Godfather of UK hip hop returns – *see main preview* **KATCHAFIRE: O2 Academy** – Classic roots reggae, dancehall and reggae-flavoured pop from New Zealand’s long-standing live faves, over for a European tour to celebrate their 20th anniversary.

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with CHASING DAYLIGHT + DEATHSEX BLOODBATH + MAMZER: The Wheatshaef – Characteristically mix bag of sounds at this month’s GTI with Chasing Daylight taking The Blockheads’ eccentric r’n’b and The Kinks’ quirkier moments into full-on John Otway madcap territory. They’re joined by Coventry’s pop degenerates Deathsex Bloodbath who promise “music inspired by meaningless sexual

encounters, self-loathing, murderous intentions and asphyxiwanking,” plus noisy bastard rock newcomers Mamzer **BETTER THAN NEVER + ONE STATE DRIVE + THE KAOS: The Cellar** – Pop-punk in a Blink 182 / Good Charlotte vein from the local rockers. **PITCH BLACK HALLOWEEN: The Cellar** – Techno Halloween club night as Pitch Black celebrate their second birthday with underground techno hero Regis, aka Karl O’Connor from influential label Downwards. **RAWDIO: The Bullingdon** – Drum&bass club night. **GHOUL TAMARA’S PARTIES: The Bear & the Bean** – All Tamara’s Parties hosts a Halloween special, with sets from London-based American singer Kate Ellis, whose reflective, emotive take on folk and country has been compared to Nanci Griffith and Lucinda Williams and has seen her playing guitar with Hank Williams; tonight she’ll be playing songs from her debut album ‘Care Me Out’. She’s joined by Hannah Bruce’s gentle, romantic acoustic confessionals and poet and raconteur George Chopping’s idiosyncratic compering, plus a Halloween fancy dress competition. **THE TOM IVEY BAND: Harcourt Arms** – Live blues. **BEN MEETS BENNY: St Giles Parish Hall** – Jazz violin virtuoso Ben Holder pays tribute to King of the Swing Benny Goodman at tonight’s Jazz at St. Giles show, Holder joined by rising young clarinetist Julian Stringle. **MITCHFEST: Fat Lil’s, Witney (midday – 11.30pm)** - All-day tribute concert in memory of Michelle Jackson who died last year, with an extensive cast of rock, metal and more. Among those playing are Terminus, K-Lacura, My Diablo, Raised by Hypocrites, Ghoul, Counting Cards, Trauma UK, Osprey and The Motive. **THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Dolphin, Wallingford** **DAMN GOOD REASON: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon** – Blues and rock covers.

SUNDAY 29th
JANE WEAVER: The Bullingdon – Sublime psych-kraut-electro-pop from the mercurial synthesist – *see main preview* **MARK ATHERTON & FRIENDS + EASTER ISLAND STATUES + TONY BATEY & SAL MOORE + ASTEROX: The Wheatshae**f (3.30-7pm) – Klub Kakofanny host an afternoon of free live music in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar. **OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms** **HEADINGTON HILLBILLIES: Prince of Wales, Iffley** – Bluegrass and Americana from the local stalwarts. **BLUES JAM: Fat Lil’s, Witney (3-7pm)** – Open jam session.

MONDAY 30th
CHRIS WHILE & JULIE MATTHEWS: Nettlebed Folk Club – Powerful harmony singing from the Albion Band and St Agnes Fountain duo and leading ladies of English

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Tuesday 31st
SLOWCOACHES: The Cellar
According to Slowcoaches’ biog they once caused a bloke down the front of one of their gigs to headbang so vigorously he heatbuted a monitor and promptly projectile vomited all over the stage. Not sure *Nightshift* would ever do anything quite so daft but we can see how Slowcoaches cause people to lose themselves to wild abandon. This is punk. And pop. But not punk-pop like all those terrible So.Cal bands make. It’s riotous and messy and gloriously unrestrained, but comes with bloody big shiny pop songs slapped all over it like giant pink lipstick kisses. The London trio, led by singer/bassist Heather Perkins, hark back to great girl-led 80s bands like The Shop Assistants, The Flatmates and We Are Going To Eat You, as well as their more recent American cousins like Slumber Party, Vyvian Girls and Dum Dum Girls, all bands more concerned with giant pop hooks, infectious melodies and keeping it fuzzed-up, frenetic and fun. Throw comparisons like No Age, The Germs and The Nerves into the blender, give it all a good shake and spray the resulting rainbow mix into the crowd and you’ve got what gigs are all about. Another thing gigs should be all about is fun for everyone, so Slowcoaches have promised each show on this tour to promote debut album ‘Nothing Gives’ will be a safe space, so no being a macho dick in the moshpit. If you have to inflict damage on anyone, follow that other guy’s example and do it to yourself.

folk, out on tour to promote their tenth album together, ‘Shoulder To Shoulder’. **OPEN MIC SESSION: The Royal Blenheim** **STRUM WHAT YA BRUNG: The Black Swan**

TUESDAY 31st
SLOWCOACHES: The Cellar – Riotously messy, melodically-sweet punk-pop from the London fuzzsters – *see main preview* **RESOLVE + BLOODSHOT + BAD ROACH: The Wheatshae**f – Jam City Halloween show with djent newcomers Resolve and deathcore merchants Bloodshot. **SOFAR SOUNDS: Venue TBC** – Pop-up gig with venue to be announced to ticketholders.



IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

East Oxford Community Centre/Fusion Arts Centre

It feels somewhat like missing the point to leap into an event like If Not Now, When? and immediately start reviewing bands. What you should really know is that this is an event with real heart, purpose and personality that’s an absolute joy to attend from start to finish. When a group of friends and promoters recognise that no one else is putting on the kind of shows they want to see, and then come together to do something about it – from home-made stage banners to local artists working on the event posters – a proper DIY event like this is a treasure. Musically, it’s a pleasingly mixed bag: ostensibly basing itself around a clutch of classic indie-pop

bands with indie-pop names like **SPOOK SCHOOL**, the festival branches out into tortuous guitar instrumentals, heads-down thug-rock and a smattering of highlights from the Oxford scene. The stages are so close together (there are three across the tiny East Oxford Community Centre complex) that it’s easy to absorb a head-spinningly large amount of music from today’s 27 artists: props too to the organisers for keeping three stages running pretty much exactly to time across ten hours. No mean feat. Holding up the Oxford end are **KID KIN**, whose first performance with a drummer showcases any number of different directions in which he

could take his impressive layer-and-build instrumental dynamics, and **KONE**, whose tight, sparse post-punk improves every time we see them. **SLATE HEARTS** continue their upward trajectory as one of the best live bands in the city, channelling Mudhoney and Sebadoh through some cast-iron slabs of guitar work and refreshingly full-on stage presence. Elsewhere, **PROTECTION SPELLS** are a nice mid-afternoon surprise with their part-Grouper, part-Bat For Lashes delicacy. **SALVATION BILL**’s return to Oxford scores highly for the accompaniment from a lively and inventive drummer who matches the anything-goes nature of the songs

with some imaginative kit work that lifts the whole thing up another level – and that’s before you even mention the kazoo-based audience participation section.

Cardiff’s **ROUGH MUSIC** go head to head with **DEATH PEDALS** from London for the most brutal band of the day in a fight that leaves both sides bruised and battered. Death Pedals take it on points, bringing all kinds of pleasant memories of the Jesus Lizard and the Amphetamine Reptile catalogue with an undercurrent of sleaze to their heads-down and basic (and I mean that as a compliment) riffing.

ALPHA MALE TEA PARTY are the archetypal Big Scary Monsters band, complementing some impressively-tight math-rock acrobatics with between-song banter that matches the tone of their song titles (sample: ‘You Eat Houmous, Of Course You Listen To Genesis’). Technically impressive, but rooted in the post-Don Caballero world of 2002 when every other band was prone to stuffing their songs with similarly fiddly flourishes.

Sensibly, after such a glut of music, the best is undeniably saved until last – **GALLOPS** are operating a different level, and are frankly an astonishing prospect as a live band. A victory of invention over technical ostentatiousness, they build from a breathtaking array of tech-nerd gear music that blends the intertwining melodies of Do Make Say Think with a bit of the muscle of Russian Circles and layer in a stack of soundtrack influences. Ultimately, they sound like Maserati soundtracking *Stranger Things*, which in our book is a pretty great end to any day. When is the next If Not Now, When? please? Now. *Stuart Fowkes*

NADIA REID

The Cellar

Almost half of the UK’s small venues have closed in the past decade, and The Cellar is facing the same fate. We’re here tonight after what will probably end up being the last day of the summer, tight-skinned and a little sleepy from the afternoon’s cider. Nadia Reid is touring her second album, ‘Preservation’. The album comes as a follow up to 2015’s ‘Listen To Formation, Look For The Signs’ and has brought her increased worldwide attention.

Tonight she stands before us in her signature round spectacles and turtleneck, having approached the stage as casually as one might turn up to a bus stop. Her soft “hello” cuts through the post-August List murmur – who were the perfect support act – and she begins ‘Seasons Change’ as softly as the first drops of a rain shower.

Tonight shows small music venues at their best; with a capacity of 150, we’re able to connect with Nadia’s performance from the offset. Her voice is deep and silky, and as she continues into the album’s title track with guitarist Sam, we hear her ability to pleat notes seamlessly into one another.

With most of the tracks on ‘Preservation’ little preamble is needed; the narrative of ‘Richard’ who “Liked the sound of his own

voice/ By the kitchen in the mirror” instantly engages. ‘Hanson Pt.2’, she tells us, was written in a village near Wellington after a breakup. In this sense, Reid is unafraid of simplicity. “Who’s ever been in love?” she asks genuinely, while plucking her guitar. The songs themselves, however, are more complex. A knack for coupling the concrete with metaphor, she pushes at the “arrow of time” after noting Richard’s quirks. In ‘Reach My Destination’ she tells us “There is one main street in this town” and follows it with “There are two straight lines in my head.” This act, of following the narrative trail of her stories and having her reflections interspersed among them, is an edifying one. Lines from single release ‘Arrow And The Aim’ and ‘Right On Time’ come over with such conviction we feel part of the emotional landscape. And, with boats bobbing on the river, she sets the scene of her home country well too.

After bowing in tandem with Sam, Reid returns to the stage for her encore solo and plays the delicate ‘Ain’t Got You’. Modest and sincere, her songs really do speak for themselves. And The Cellar is exactly the sort of intimate environment to best hear them.

Eva Hibbs

ALVVAYS

The Bullingdon

Alvvays arrive on stage in front of a packed house to the strains of ABBA’s ‘Arrival’. It’s entirely appropriate; both bands know a thing or two about perfect pop. If the Toronto quintet are unlikely to surpass Sweden’s finest in the multi-million sale stakes, the polite fervency of tonight’s crowd is a reflection of their smaller scale magic. So packed and so hot does it eventually get that two fans have fainted and been carried outside in as many minutes.

Current single ‘Plimsoll Punks’ is an early shiny bauble of a tune, a fluttering, skittish slice of jangle-pop, while ‘In Undertow’ is simultaneously sad-eyed and euphoric, a kissing cousin of Camera Obscura’s ‘Let’s Get Out of This Country’. Singer Molly Rankin has a gorgeously honeyed voice that you can simply melt into, while the band’s music has a carefree naivety tinged with melancholy about it that sounds like the last days of summer. That sadness is at the heart of their

best songs, like the sultry, soulful ‘Dreams Tonite’, but it never stops them being playful and pretty, like on freewheeling early single ‘Adult Diversion’.

Even amid a set that carries you along on a breeze Alvvays hit their peak with ‘Archie, Marry Me’, simply one of the best songs of the past ten years and a simple, unsentimental love song that can make even this superannuated cynic swoon.

If there’s a disappointment tonight it’s the lack of encore – the band are knackered after a long stretch of shows and they’d been up early recording a live session for Lauren Laverne’s 6Music show – particularly given previous nights had seen them covering ‘Trying To Be Kind’ by The Motorcycle Boy – one of the great lost 80s bands and an obvious influence on Alvvays. It’s hard to be churlish on the face of such unfettered pop joy though. These are songs to keep close to your heart – alvvays and forever.

Sue Foreman

THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS

O2 Academy

Like Simple Minds, The Psychedelic Furs’ early output is a glorious mix and meld of post-punk attitude and invention with great pop tunes, and just like Simple Minds, their later work, when they broke into the American arena market, sounds hollow and soulless. Both bands have near enough acknowledged as much in recent times, but given tonight’s show is a run through of the Furs’ singles, from their beginnings in 1979 to the turn of the Millennium, we know we’re going to get both sides of the band.

Richard Butler, in *de rigueur* sunglasses after dark, bounces onstage in exaggerated debonair fashion as the band launches into ‘Dumb Waiters’ and it’s immediately apparent his voice has lost none of its old edge, sounding like it’s been rubbed rough by the elements (and no little indulgence). The snarling, sneering ‘We Love You’ grates in just the right way while ‘Mr Jones’ completes a near perfect opening, the band’s stadium-sized misanthropy writ large, Mars Williams, replacing founding member Duncan Kilburn on sax, often leading the charge in a way that always made the band stand out even from other adventurous early-80s bands. They often sounded like a band who were doing their damndest to break their songs even as they played them but unable to dent the sheen of gloriously wayward tunes like ‘Love My Way’.

Empty Room Promotions

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TIFT MERRITT
Tuesday 24th October 2017,
St Barnabas Church, Oxford, doors 7.30pm

PETER BRUNTNELL TRIO
Saturday 28th October 2017,
Tingewick Village Hall, doors 7.30pm

EMILY BARKER BAND
Tuesday 7th November 2017,
The Bullingdon, Oxford, doors 7.30pm

BILLY BRAGG - Sold Out
Friday 10th November 2017,
The O2 Oxford, doors 6.30pm

THE STRAY BIRDS
Thursday 16th November 2017,
The Bullingdon, Oxford, doors 7.30pm

TOM RUSSELL
Wednesday 29th November,
The Bullingdon, Oxford, doors 7.30pm

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**BRIGHTWORKS / PFAFF /
MOOGIEMAN**

The Wheatsheaf

As early doors stand-ins at tonight’s Gappy Tooth Industries show, Shan Sriharan’s Moogiemans are pitted to a trio with Vincent Lynch on bass and Stefano Maio on drum machine. Without the two Claires (Le Masters and Heavyside), they are less spacey B52s and more a choppy Talking Heads, with debut album ‘Girls And Film’ providing a host of photography-themed songs like ‘Disposable’, ‘I Left My Camera On The Moon’ and ‘Polly Polaroid’ (“Polly Polaroid / She’s addicted to Alkaloid / She’ll take a picture of you and throw it away”) all demonstrating why they are so very good at writing enjoyable two-minute pop gems. Manchester’s Pfaff make their music enjoyable too. Their fugues of mazy pink noise drag math-rock from its sometimes snore-worthy limpet hold by gooning with the audience and having actual fun with its time signature punch points by alternately lulling you onto a peaceful blue lagoon lilo and then setting sharks of wired, thrashing jazz on you to turn the water red. It has all the moral

imperative of bands like Adebisi Shank or Giraffe? Giraffe! but with its tongue poking out. Talking of Goons, Bright Works’ stellar front man Liam Amies conjures up visions of Spike Milligan channelling Morrissey while freeing himself from a straitjacket through every song. Back in the day, as nascent band Nairobi, they gave Foals cause to look back nervously over their shoulders, with their mafrobeat sharpness challenging Yannis’s cool tricks. But eventually morphing into Bright Works their own eyes were always more on the barking Beefheart angles of life, with Pete Hughes solid twinkling riffs and Charl E Green’s spot-perfect drumming stopping the whole thing becoming completely unhinged. That said Amies is no fool, and despite his endearing and recalcitrant shambling, he knows exactly where he is in songs like ‘Houses’ and ‘If You Have Any Sweet Nothings, Say Them Now’, and with their renewed gig work ethic once again taking hold, maybe their time has finally come. *Paul Carrera*

SUPERGLU / BAD POP
The Cellar

Sounding a little like a very brief list of things ingested by children that lead to intestinal maladies, Bad Pop and SuperGlu are two bands currently attempting to climb the well-oiled and seductive pole of rock’n’roll recognition like overweight teenagers in a tasteless Japanese gameshow. And both, it must be said, are having a certain amount of success; Bad Pop appearing keen to be the new New Pornographers and SuperGlu having a charming Pixies-meets-that-band-you-were-in-when-you-were-seventeen-and-listening-to-way-too-much-Ash-1977 vibe. First up Bad Pop and what with them being Canadian and all, you instinctively expect a certain level of musical competency. In the wake of Arcade Fire, Broken Social Scene, Viet Cong, if you’re from the Lumberjacking capital of the world, you automatically make the honorary playlist for the world’s speciality coffee houses. With impressive energy and an unashamed propensity for big choruses, Bad Pop’s set is as infectious as it is engaging, the three-piece finding big hooks and chunky melodies in amongst a slightly haphazard barrage of furry, distorted chord progressions. It’s chirpy but never cloying and has enough

bravado to carry itself over the line. SuperGlu take to the stage with a little confusion, arriving late to the party like an embarrassed brother-in-law with lukewarm quiche and overcooked vol-au-vent, but quickly plug in guitars and with no soundcheck, play a quite phenomenal forty minutes of shambolic but captivating music. Their ability to invigorate a slightly flagging crowd is quite astounding as is their seemingly chaotic but wholly precise work. SuperGlu’s lead guitarist Ben Brown seems to be directly channelling Frank Black as the abrasive four-piece smash through thrashy pop-inflected three-minute wonders in an unrelenting set where every track seems twice the speed of the radio edit. You’ll struggle to find a more ballsy, aggressive group of musicians currently working the circuit. Even though this doesn’t create an overly accurate picture of events, there feels a necessity to tie this all up in a tiresome but pithy soundbite. So... Bad Pop are just about bubbly enough to give a sparkling performance whereas SuperGlu never come unstuck and keep our attention fastened, if perhaps a little sloppy in places. God I hate myself. *Richard Brabin*

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TOWERSEY FESTIVAL

Thame Showground

This year Towersey Festival, celebrating its 53rd year, is blessed with great weather, which could the weather gods way of showing appreciation for the efforts of the crew who’ve performed heroics to get the event set up after the site was left in no fit state for a festival the week before.

THE EPSTEIN are the only Oxford band appearing on the main stage across the four-day weekend. With Olly Wills’ vocals as expressive as ever, the band turn in a characteristically consummate performance; this despite a lurgy striking down guitarist Billy Quarterman just 24 hours before, and the band being on the point of cancelling until Joe Bennett stepped in to save the day. Folk rock outfit MAWKIN were last seen at Oxford Town Hall as support for Bellowhead’s farewell show. Now, as then, they put in a high energy shift with echoes of The Pogues, though the highlight is a medieval French tune showcasing the talents of violinist James Delarre and melodeon player Nick Cook.

Talking of Bellowhead, JON BODEN appears solo here, putting in probably the loudest performance of the festival in front of a lively audience. It’s a bold performance, including an unaccompanied song with phrasing that’s more Bartók than Vaughan Williams, and a 28-verse ballad which inevitably ends badly for the hero. Boden switches the vibe with his cover of ‘I Just Want To Dance With Somebody’, but it’s his powerful, stripped-back versions of

Bellowhead numbers that ignite the audience and whose singing of ‘New York Girls’ would raise the roof if Thame Showground had one.

KT TUNSTALL is every inch the star in a spangly dress. Backed by a band who are exceptionally tight after weeks of touring, and a full-on light show, she powers through her set, turning her biggest hit ‘Suddenly I See’ into a full-blown rock anthem.

Away from the main stage the festival zumba session with its folk soundtrack is popular but instead we head to the concert venues to hear ANDY CUTTING’s solo melodeon playing step dances, waltzes and polkas, and later ALASTAIR ANDERSON’s solo concertina, playing tunes from Northumberland. Cutting sits composed on The Big Club stage, whereas Anderson stands tall, whirling his concertina in circles at the end of his long arms, and suddenly performs a traditional Northumbrian rap dance round the intimate Den venue. It’s as extraordinary and mesmerizing as his playing; both he and Cutting conjure up tones and colours that transform folk tunes into mini symphonies without losing the tunes’ essential earthiness, and it is a privilege to hear two such master musicians perform.

In between everything else we catch MEGSON; they’re not the most famous of the contemporary folk duos on the bill but they’re the one whose gritty lyrics we end up particularly liking, especially ‘Longshot’,

a great song about the pain of supporting a relegation threatened football team that Crystal Palace fans are doubtless learning right now.

We’re back at the main stage for THE ESKIES but for some reason they don’t do it for us. So instead we end Friday night with Oxford’s own dynamic jump jive and vintage jazz band THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND, who take playing in what up to now has been the ceilidh venue in their stride, and the festival goers appreciate this is one more chance to dance and do so well past the midnight hour.

There’s a cider tasting session first thing Saturday morning but our day begins with the massed brass and percussion of FRUMPTARN GUGGENBAND in their Day of the Dead-style costumes, blasting out The Beach Boys’ ‘Barbara Ann’ in carnival style. Guggen bands originated in Switzerland and caught on in parts of Germany but this one is from Barnsley, and they pop up several times over the weekend, one of Towersey’s surprise hits.

The festival is sold out today and there’s a huge crowd for regular Towersey favourites, the black clad Australians THE SPOOKY MEN’S CHORALE. They are a wonderful close-harmony a capella ensemble known for humour, hats and facial hair and all these elements are evident today. They subvert their tongue-in-cheek image with a beautiful unsentimental song about facing death, and

finish their set with heartwarming tributes to Bowie and Leonard Cohen.

For folk royalty ELIZA CARTHY, Towersey is a homecoming. Way back when she played her first ever solo gig here but now it’s the main stage for her and her WAYWARD BAND, the eleven-strong outfit she calls “my pride and joy.” They’re all dressed strikingly in white, and are a band in their own right rather not just a vehicle for Eliza; they make a big sound but have clever arrangements too with lots of interplay right across the line-up, including with the two drummers and Eliza’s pleasingly rough-edged vocals. It’s a pity the balance is out and some lyrics are submerged, but what’s happening on stage and with the crowd response is exciting, and it looks like Eliza, who is completely in the moment, has created a band to match her passion and big personality.

The no longer dreadlocked hitmaker and all-round good guy NEWTON FAULKNER is impressive in an entirely different way. He’s designed his brand new album to be performed solo and to stretch his voice and he does both with only some electronics and his trusty guitar. Sometimes he seems to be improvising, and while he does eventually move onto safe ground by bringing out the hits, massive credit to him for experimenting.

THE BLOCKHEADS put on a performance that shows it was never a waste to play the fool in a six piece band. Indeed their hit songs with patter-style lyrics (an Essex folk tradition, perhaps), punkish r’n’b riffs and Gilad Atzmon, a man familiar to Oxford jazz fans, blazing away on sax, surely make The Blockheads one of the reasons to be cheerful today.

Come Sunday the weather is still great, The Frumptarn Guggenband continue to pop up with their fun brass and percussion carnival sounds and The Spooky Men continue to entertain, organising a flash mob of 100-plus singing festival goers to surprise the bar. A touch of musical and physical fatigue though necessitates time out from the main stages to visit the storytelling tent and then to listen to ANDY KERSHAW giving a delightfully rambling account of his life in music, while only getting as far as 1986 and The Bhundu Boys.

Overall the music today and on Monday isn’t up to that of the first two days. There some gems and much to our surprise the shiniest is folk rockers LINDISFARNE making their Towersey debut in their fifth decade together. They put on an outstanding show on Sunday, playing ‘Fog on the Tyne’ and all their other hits with freshness and verve; there’s a great atmosphere and it’s a fantastic feel-good gig.

Back by popular demand, SHOW OF HANDS deliver yet again. Steve Knightly and Phil Beer, along with Miranda Sykes, make a big sound for an acoustic trio and the social comment of ‘Arrogance,

Ignorance and Greed’ and other songs remains as powerful and relevant as ever.

BLACKBEARD’S TEA PARTY, who we’ve wanted to see playing a gig since being bowled over by them as a ceilidh band, unfortunately disappoint. Having two drummers is not yet working for them; the two sound like one playing a basic rhythm very loudly and it becomes boring and does little for the group’s sound, but they’ve got so much talent we expect them to come good soon.

On Monday there’s spectacular Appalachian clog dancing to the tune ‘Making Whoopee’, and THE JIM CAUSLEY TRIO, who are a treat as Jim rightly is thought by many to have one of the best voices on the folk scene. THE SWEET WATER WARBLERS, making their UK debut, charm the afternoon main stage crowd with their varied Americana, and are startlingly good when they sing the blues.

Much of the rest of the day is about the new and the old. The new is NORTHERN COMPANY, who we’ve no plan to see but whose sound draws us into the concert tent. They make clever use of the classical and the jazz background of some of their numbers, while sustaining a folk vibe, and they’re our discovery of the weekend, along with singer-songwriter VERA VAN HEERINGEN for her guitar playing, which is on a par with that of Kris Drever.

The much loved and much more experienced close harmony folk group COOPE, BOYES & SIMPSON are making their last Towersey appearance as a trio at the festival where one of them first appeared as a street circus performer, setting fire to himself. It’s clear they are retiring this line-up while still at the top of their game and the Towersey audience give them a warm and emotional send off. The audience is just as warm and emotional for the annual gig by festival patron, 83 year old ROY BAILEY. He does an unconvincing, slightly irascible self-effacing act (“Do you really want to hear this stuff?”) but he still has the voice and, flanked by multiple BBC Folk Award winners MARTIN SIMPSON and Andy Cutting, and with a guest appearance from The Spooky Men, it goes down very well; when Bailey sings a song sent to him about the plight of refugees plenty in the audience are fighting back tears.

Four days might been a bit of a marathon, yet it still seems too soon when the time comes for the Towersey tradition of everyone singing ‘Hey Jude’ to bring down the curtain. Having a ticket for Towersey is the probably the nearest thing to being handed a guarantee of a good time at a festival, so make sure you get yours for next year.

Colin May

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

Drore

Who are they?
West Oxfordshire noise band Drore are: Taz Corona Brown (*vocals/guitar*); Tom Greenway (*guitar/vocals*); Olly Corona-Brown (*bass*), and Tom McKibbin (*drums*). The band formed in 2015 “out of a mutual desire to make a truly horrible noise,” originally with ex-Girl Power drummer Stephen Frame, who left earlier this year to be replaced by Tom McKibbin. He, along with Taz and Ollie were previously in local doom titans Undersmile, while Tom Greenway has served time with Sow and Mutagenocide as well as being a current member of Crippled Black Phoenix. The quartet released ‘TapeOne’ last year and follow it up this month with ‘TapeTwo – Life Regrets’ on Rad Nauseum Records. They’ve played live with the likes of Snob, Guilt Police; Groak; No Form; Cattle; Hex; Molasses, and Fickle Twin, among others.
What do they sound like?
A gloriously hellish blend of doom, sludge, punk, fuzz and grunge fuelled by rage and disgust. Drore’s music comes without respite, mercy, or compromise: it’s a supercharged torrent of guitars battling with Taz’s cracked, demonic growl/scream, not so much music as an onward tide of magnificent all-consuming raw noise. Or, as *Terrorizer* once had it, “King Buzzo kicking the shit out of Pissed Jeans,” of which Taz says, “we couldn’t really top that: two of our favourite bands embroiled in bloody fisticuffs? Yes please!”
What inspires them?
“A strange blend of the silly – athlete’s foot, glib sayings, out of date food – the more grotesque elements of life, and anxieties. Plus some of the incredible bands in the UK at the moment, like the ones listed above, and being surrounded by such talented friends is a constant inspiration.”
Career highlight so far:
“Playing the Cosmic Carnage/Sonic Grave all-dayer with the blistering Cattle and other great bands a few weeks ago. It was a heck of a line-up and Cosmic Carnage always put on such awesome bands.”
And the lowlight:
“The first time we played one of our new songs, ‘Old Egg’, live and we were



all playing completely different sections simultaneously. In front of some of our favourite bands. That was just embarrassing.”

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:
“Guilt Police, because they are totes ‘ardcore and Bethan rules at drums.”

If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:
“‘Si Monumentum Requires, Circumspice’ by French black metallers Deathspell Omega; it’s feverish, ravenous and deep: an almost perfect album.”

When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect?
“Nothing confirmed but hopefully a Smash Disco show in the next month or so. Newcomers are welcome but advised to bring a change of underwear and a spare soul.”

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:
“The scene has some of the most diverse acts around with new and interesting ones always popping up; there are some honest and decent folks around too, but then there are some right shits, and some mega cliques, and if The Cellar closes we are down another amazing venue. Culture is not for sale; it is priceless. Fight all that negative shit.”

You might love them if you love:
Fudge Tunnel; Harvey Milk; Babes in Toyland; The Jesus Lizard; Pissed Jeans; Malsain; Melvins.

Hear them here:
drorebandcamp.com

THE WHEATSHEAF

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Wednesday 11th October – MOSHKA
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Dr SHOTOVER: Shandy Supernova

Ah, at LAST, there you are, Newbie. We’re gasping here, man! Time to unscrew your armour-plated wallet and buy us all a drink. *What’s our poison?* Did no-one tell you? It’s only Champagne Super-Friday here at the East Indies Club bar. Bedingfield, I say BEDINGFIELD – another bottle of the ‘58. And some of those caviar-and-salad-cream-flavoured crisps while you’re at it. Lord Newbington here will pay – yes, yes, put it on his account. What? Well, START ONE UP for him! Now, where were we? Ah yes, I was about to unwrap some more tasty anecdotes from my high times in the Hindu Kush with the King’s Own Mahavishnu Rifles. Did I tell you about the occasion when Blinky Blightman and his platoon got out of their tiny minds on primo-quality Afghan Black and streaked starkers across a particularly rickety rope bridge? They were, quite literally, a thousand foot up. ‘Steady, In-the-Buffs!’ shouted I. Quite a catch-phrase at regimental dinners that turned into. Or the time our dyslexic adjutant and his batman decided to entertain the Colonel’s wife and daughters with a rendition of the Beach Boys’ *Barbara Ann*? ‘BRA-BRA-BRA’ they began, and were promptly put in jankers for the rest of the tour. Or the time when... what’s that, Newbie? You think it’s MY turn to buy a round? How DARE YOU, you little toe-rag?!? Dr Shotover NEVER buys a round. NEVER. For that you will be ‘sconced’ using the alcoholic beverage of my choice. Bedingfield, I say BEDINGFIELD... bring Lord Newbington a full decanter of Chateau Pot-Noodle, a plastic straw and an egg-timer. And, I need hardly say... put it on his account... along with some more of the ‘58 for the rest of us!

Next month:
Cup-a-Soup-a-Nova



‘FLOREAT SHOTOVER!’: the King’s Own Mahavishnu Rifles regimental reunion

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO
Radio 1 Sound City finally made it to Oxford after six months of build up, with a host of celebrities and record industry high flyers descending on the city for a week of gigs. Among highlights of a series of sold-out shows which were broadcast live on Radio 1 each evening was a guest appearance by **Zoe Ball** with **Sleeper** at **Brookes University**; **Prolapse**’s characteristically maniacal set at **The Zodiac** and **Ultrasound** making the most of their 30 minutes of radio fame by playing an entire set of feedback and noise as they opened for **Embrace**. **The Lightning Seeds** performed a greatest hits set while **Bentley Rhythm Ace**, **DJ Shadow**, **Gene**, **Dubstar**, **Echobelly** and **Spiritualized** were among the other big names performing. The one and only disappointment of the week was a poorly-attended rave at the **Ice Rink** in Oxpens hosted by **Pete Tong**. High ticket prices and the cancellation of DJ sets by the likes of **Boy George** were blamed. On the local side of the coin, Spice Girls manager **Simon Fuller** was in town to check out rising young stars **The Full Monty** (who would go on to become **Hester Thrale** and later **Psychid**), while **Dustball**, **Unbelievable Truth**, **Beaker** and **The Bigger the God** played a special local acts showcase, to the delight of Radio 1 host **Steve Lamacq**. Unbelievable Truth also played a sold-out show at **Po Na Na** along with **The Egg**, while **The Secret**, **Remould** and **OOOD** hosted a sold-out rave at **East Oxford Community Centre**. Over 100 local acts played as part of Sound City Fringe at **The Fuggle & Firkin**, **The Bullingdon Arms**, **The Point**, **The Old Fire Station**, **The**

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

– an influence they still exert on Oxford acts of a more esoteric nature. Back then they’d just played All Tomorrow’s Parties, signed an album deal with Drowned In Sound and appeared at the Carling Weekend Festivals. A five-week UK tour due to kick off and plans were in the pipeline for a Japanese tour.

5 YEARS AGO
Alphabet Backwards made their second front cover appearance in October 2012’s *Nightshift* but it was the month’s Introducing act that catches the eye in retrospect, **Glass Animals** following up their Demo of the Month in April 2010 with their first full feature in any magazine. “We love nature,” they said, asked what inspired them. “Having a studio surrounded by squirrels and field mice is great; we walk past their homes every morning. They’re very friendly neighbours. There’s also a very handsome fox who lives in the hedge next door; he’s eyeing up the chickens round the corner.” While Glass Animals were just starting out on the road to fame and fortune, **Supergrass** were awarded with a blue plaque to commemorate their first ever gig, on the front wall of **The Jericho Tavern**. It was a lovely ceremony, and we were loathe to point out the organisers had got the wrong date. Should’ve asked someone who was actually there. Someone else who we managed not to argue with was **Azealia Banks**, who was playing at the O2 Academy, the bellicose rapper having already fallen out with her record label by this stage in her career. As of last week there are now only seven people on the planet she doesn’t have a beef with.

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DEMOS

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DEMO OF THE MONTH

MSRY

The world, or at least that part of it we live in, read about, watch on the news and listen to at extreme volume in musical form is full of misery. We're taking a wild guess here but Msry are basically misery with all the vowels removed, for that special condensed experience of all the harrowing horror of life (imagine Hurricane Irma with Nigel Farage's face and a slab of marzipan in its hand and you'll start to get the idea). We think Msry here might have accidentally dropped all those lost vowels into their lyrics, which mainly consist of bellows, roars, screams and vomiting, the only vaguely intelligible line we're able to make out being "Hwoooooaa! Where's my pyjamas?" but that might be a mistake on our part. Anyway, talking of force 5 hurricanes, Msry sound a bit like one as they pile drive full-throttle through seven tracks of what they almost laughably call melodic hardcore but is really high-octane metalcore, thrash and a touch of death without a solitary break for any of that weakling cry baby clean stuff metalcore often falls prey to. There are well-drilled blast beats, there is much shredding, scree and what might be laser-blast squeals from the guitars and there are even air raid sirens. They take Pantera as a starting point, drag them kicking and screaming through Lamb of God and even pop into Abaddon Incarnate for a cup of tea and some ritual slaughter. The epic sprawl of 'Home' is the high point but all of it works well as a soundtrack to rearranging the furniture with a sledgehammer and some Semtex. If you can't comprehend how a band like Msry make the misery of life that much more bearable, you are no friend of ours.

PROMETHEAN REIGN

Any tall buildings still standing after that? Good, cos we reckon Promethean Reign would be disappointed if there was nothing left to wreck with what they call their "blackened metal". Blackened rather than simply black, since the band don't fall into a lot of the genre traps of black metal, which, with a very few arch practitioners, drove itself willingly into a cul-de-sac many years ago. Instead of monochrome grind there's an almost panto theatricality and Hammer Horror vibe about opener 'By the Ashen Light of Dawn', while the breathless shiver that opens 'The Great

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Deceiver' adds to that morbid (angel) feel. Of course, as with all good black/death metal, it's all monstrosly OTT, from the ominous Emperor-like overture that opens the demo, to the singer's almost flamboyant intensity as he conjures growls and screams from his gut and the drummer pummels his kit like Old Nick himself has a pistol to his temple and has told him to keep going or else. It's unrelenting and it's brutish but it's got character and a sense of adventure within its own boundaries: 'Titanomachy' is almost hymnal in its delivery and there's a bit at the end of 'The Great Deceiver' where everything slows down and it sounds like some vile behemoth expelling its last breath. There's a track here called 'Dead Gods and Excrement'; it sounds like hell on earth. Take that as a compliment of the highest order.

DAN RAWLE

And after all that metal mayhem, what we need is some acoustic whimsy. Actually, what we need is some more metal mayhem, but we'll indulge Dan here as in his own sweet, simple way, he's a one-man antidote to all the misery in the world, cheerily recounting how "My payslip's A5 / Below average size / But I'm chuffed", before wandering gaily off to contemplate whether he should be worrying about pensions, becoming a parent or earning more, but concluding "I'm building my life at my own pace / It's hardly a race," and "I have enough." All a bit happy-clappy and hippy-dippy? Maybe but, dear reader, when you've sat through several thousand dolorous young men bemoaning the unfairness of their lot in love and life, it's rather refreshing to hear someone who's more than happy with what he's got or might get in the future. "I have enough," sings Dan with a sparkle in his eye and we make a note to go and enjoy a drink or five with him at the first opportunity. Because Dan Rawle is going to mend the world and all its woes.

GARIENT

Readers with an attention span marginally longer than an average Buzzfeed-reading goldfish might recall that Gariant here was last month's Demo Dumper for his ball-achingly earnest acoustic cover of 'Sex On Fire'. He's straight back in the saddle with one of his own songs called - *ta da!* - 'Misery'. And it's a little cracker, in complete contrast to his previous effort, a slinky, sleazy sliver of gothic post-punk electronica that might be a John Lydon wannabe teaming up with Alien Sex Fiend and heading down The Batacave to see if they can make the place a bit gloomier. All of which begs the question: if you're capable of stuff like this, why make your opening gambit something

so atrocious. It's like going to a job interview armed with a foolproof plan to double the company's profits within six months, but first you're going to have a shit on the CEO's chair. You're a strange fella Gariant, but we've decided we like you after all. Keep this up and we'll forget all about that earlier unpleasantness.

INLAND TAIPAN

Sticking with the theme of all things unpleasant, Inland Taipan here name themselves after the world's most venomous snake (the venom in one bite could kill 100 people). What's more their first song is called 'Trazadone', an anti-depressant, so we're not straying too far from the old misery theme. Problem is, as any herpetologist will tell you, the Inland Taipan might have a bugger of a bite and a precision strike, but it's actually a pretty shy and retiring creature, its nickname 'the fierce snake' coming not from its attitude towards anyone who strays too close but merely the strength of its venom, and more often than not it'll slither off and hide if anyone comes anywhere near it. So we shouldn't be too disappointed when the band aren't quite the demonic sonic slayers we first hoped, instead a ramshackle rumble with a chaotic approach to anything resembling a tune, plus a singer with a propensity to almost operatic shrillness when things get anywhere near intense. Probably doesn't help that this is a live demo, which saps some of its structure and intricacy, but they have a way with a Doors-y atmosphere on 'Easter Rising', although a bit more precision and venom might be in order. It's a great band name; we genuinely hope they can do it justice.

VIOLENT CHIMES

Last time round we found ourselves comparing Violent Chimes to Opeth and Peter Gabriel, which isn't a combination you come across every day, but this new song finds them dispensing with any semblance of musical guile in favour of a leaden slab of grungy thrash and sullenly overwrought singing that's so far out of tune with the rest of the band it might as well be the mournful bellowing of heifers as they watch their newborn calves loaded into the veal crates. There are brief traces of the proggy tendencies of last time and the guitarist attempts some kind of heroic song rescue with an epic solo but mostly this is fuzz and bluster that sounds like it's died without ever living. Misery indeed.

THE STEADY LETTERS

We're going to make ourselves extremely unpopular here (hey, what's new) but we've never really understood the intense love afforded Elbow. Nothing intrinsically terrible about them: we've even nodded along to a

couple of their songs in the past, but every record they make sounds like the last one and they seem to have been invented to provide a sort of unimposing dad-rock bed for 6Music to have on when they can't find something more interesting to play. The Steady Letters' singer reminds us of Guy Garvey (a perfectly lovely bloke and all that, but... y'know) and the band's name gives the game away far too much: they're steady. Dependable. Reliable. A safe pair of hands. Poison Pen Letters or Hatemail are far better band names, because they convey some of rock and roll's wild, unpredictable spirit, its primal aggression. This tame, well-trained bluesy chugaboogie won't crap on your carpet, bite your gran's face off or lead you astray after nicking a litre bottle of vodka from behind the bar, but if you want music that can offer you solid, blokey advice or knows how to correctly assemble flat-pack furniture, maybe you've come to the wrong party. And hey, don't sit down, cos we've moved your chair.*
 (* - actually Msry smashed it with a rock but don't sit down anyway, you'll get splinters in your arse).

THE DEMO DUMPER

BLACKHILL PIONEERS

Misery takes many forms, from "starving to death in a refugee camp having escaped the horror of war where home once was" at 10 to "not having a girlfriend and being a bit sad about it" at 1. Somewhere around the 6 or 7 mark is "consumptive Victorian child" which is a bit like what the singer of Blackhill Pioneers sounds like for the first half of this one-song offering, meekly emoting "We're under covers / Walking a way behind / Walking against the tide" and threatening to faint clean away as the music swoons tastefully behind him like the soothing soundtrack to an aromatherapy session. At least until it gets a bit of gumption about it and thrashes off towards some heroic far horizon, windswept and bound for death or glory. It's epic! It's bland! It's... really, really bland. Even when we turn it right up - to a point well beyond we dared have with Msry in case the neighbours called the police or died of thrill overload - it sounds like it's lurking unobtrusively in the middle distance. Possibly on a deserted autumnal beach, waiting for a beloved pet dog to return with the stick they threw to it. Oblivious to the fact the dog fucked off down the pub an hour ago where it begged Promethean Reign to adopt it and buy it a big black spiky collar, feed it raw buffalo innards and rename it Misery, Destroyer of Worlds. Never mind fellas, here's your stick back at least. Maybe you could build a pathetically small fire out of it.

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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+ Willie J Healey
+ Pinkshinyultrablast
+ The Vryll Society + TOY

Wed 25th Oct • £5 adv • 9.30pm
Fishies - Week 5

Fri 27th Oct • £12 adv • 6.30pm
Guns 2 Roses
+ Metallica Reloaded + Empyre

Sat 28th Oct • £20 adv • 6pm
Roots Manuva
+ Chali 2na (Jurassic 5)
+ Krafty Kurts
+ Oscar Wolrdpeace

Sat 28th Oct • £16.50 adv • 6pm
Katchafire

Sat 28th Oct • £7 adv • 11pm
Garage Nation

Wed 1st Nov • £5 adv • 9.30pm
Fishies - Week 6

Fri 3rd Nov • £22.50 adv • 6.30pm
From The Jam "The Gift" 35th Anniversary

Fri 3rd Nov • £15 adv • 6pm
Ghostpoet

Sat 4th Nov • £8 adv • 6pm
Autobahn
+ Who's Alice? + Rock Solid
+ Sam martin

Sun 5th Nov • £12.50 adv
Intervals
+ Polyphia + Nick Johnston

Mon 6th Nov • £25 adv
Akon with Konvict Kartel
+ Tre Carter + OG Boo Dirty
+ Tone Tone

Tue 7th Nov • £18.50 adv
Cradle of Filth

Tue 7th Nov • £15 adv
Bury Tomorrow
+ Loathe

Wed 8th Nov • £5 adv • 9.30pm
Fishies - Week 7

Fri 10th Nov • £14 adv • 6pm
Pearl Jam UK-Tribute

Fri 10th Nov • **SOLD OUT** • 6.30pm
Billy Bragg

Sat 11th Nov • £10 • 6.30pm
Viper - The Sound Of Drum & Bass
+ Brookes Brothers + Cyantific,
+ Koven + Majistrate + IC3

Sat 11th Nov • £10 • 11pm
Crucast - Skepsis
+ Darkzy + Notion + Mr Virgo

Tue 14th Nov • £27.50 adv
Nelly
+ Sir The Baptist

Wed 15th Nov • £5 adv • 9.30pm
Fishies - Week 8

Fri 17th Nov • £12 adv • 6.30pm
Antarctic Monkeys
+ Ash Adams (With full band)
+ Sprung From cages

Fri 17th Nov • £12.50 adv • 10pm
Kurupt FM - The lost Tape Tour

Sat 18th Nov • £12 adv • 6.30pm
Definitely Mightbe
+ The White Tips

Sat 18th Nov • £22 adv • 6.30pm
Newton Faulkner

Sun 19th Nov • £21 adv
Airbourne
+ Phil Campbell And The Bastard Sons
+ The Wild

Wed 22nd Nov • £5 adv • 9.30pm
Fishies - Week 9

Fri 24th Nov • £15 adv • 6.30pm
Glasville

Fri 24th Nov • £22.50 adv • 6.30pm
Dr John Cooper Clarke
+ Mike Garry + Toria Garbutt

Sat 25th Nov • £10 adv • 6.30pm
Saedly Dorus and the Hoolie Band

Wed 29th Nov • £5 adv • 9.30pm
Fishies - Week 10

Thurs 30th Nov • £23 adv
Scouting For Girls

Fri 1st Dec • £14 adv • 6.30pm
Jagged Little Pill A Tribute to Alanis Morissette's Classic Album

Sat 2nd Dec • £12.50 adv • 6.30pm
The Prince Experience

Wed 6th Dec • £5 adv • 9.30pm
Fishies - Week 11

Fri 8th Dec • £15 adv • 6.30pm
Absolute Bowie

Fri 8th Dec • £21.25 adv
The Twang

Sat 9th Dec • £22.50 adv • 6.30pm
Mark Lanegan Band
+ Tenebrous Liar
+ Joe Cardamone

Wed 13th Dec • £5 adv • 9.30pm
Fishies - Week 12

Thu 14th Dec • 15 adv
Doc Brown and The Haggis Horns
+ Dr Erbz

Wed 20th Dec • £5 adv • 9.30pm
Fishies - Week 13

Thurs 21st Dec • £23 adv
Slade

Fri 22nd Dec • £17.50 adv • 6pm
Dreadzone

Sat 10th Feb • £12 adv • 6.30pm
Cash - A Tribute To The Man in Black

Thu 15th Feb • £17.50 adv
Hayseed Dixie

Sat 3rd Mar • £20 adv • 6pm
The Blockheads
+ Chasing Daylight

Wed 7th Mar • £17.50 ad • 6.30pm
Paul Draper

Sun 18th Mar • £13 adv
The AC/DC Experience

Fri 27th Mar • £28.50 adv • 6.30pm
Heather Small - The voice of M People

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