



NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every**month****Issue 275****June****2018**

"I take ages to get ready
and at the end of it I don't
look any different. Richie
takes no time at all and
ends up looking perfectly
styled."

photo: A.J. Knight

THE OTHER DRAMAS

Oxford's first couple of garage rock
talk hair care, local music history
and the patterns of life.

Also in this issue

Introducing **PREMIUM LEISURE**
WIN! Cornbury Festival tickets
The Demo World Cup

plus

All your Oxford music news, reviews and gigs
for the month ahead.

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

THE BULLINGDON

JUNE 2018 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Friday 1st June
Absolute Bowie
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 2nd June
Old Skool Oxford
DJ Ratty
Doors: 11pm

Friday 8th June
Ryan McGarvey
Doors: 7pm

Friday 8th June
Gunfingers
Doors: 11pm

Saturday 9th June
Musical Medicine
Dan Shake B2B Magnier All Night
Doors: 11pm

Tuesday 12th June
Sisters of Funk
Dot's Funk Odyssey
Garfunkel
Doors: 8pm

Thursday 14th June
Israel Nash
Doors: 7pm

Friday 15th June
Puppet Mechanic
Port Erin
Zero UK
Doors: 7pm

Friday 15th June
Dr Feelgood
Doors: 11pm

Saturday 16th June
Simple
Young Marco
Doors: 11pm

Tuesday 19th June
The Subways
Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 19th June
Graduation
Doors: 11pm

Wednesday 20th June
Rob Togoni
Doors: 7pm

Friday 22nd June
Zodiac Reunion
After Party
Count Skylarkin
Osprey
Ian Hebson
Dick Edwards
Ed Fisher
Nelly B Page
Doors: 11pm

Saturday 23rd June
[Untitled] Present Nightslugs:
BokBok B2B Girl Unit
VLT
Mai Gai
Doors: 11pm

Sunday 24th June
Pieranormal Festival
A Tribute to Pier Corona
Doors: 2pm

Friday 29th June
Metal to the Masses
Final
Doors: 7pm

Friday 29th June
Metal to the Masses
Final - After Party
Doors: 11pm

Saturday 30th June
Volume DnB #11
Doors: 11pm

Sunday 1st July
The Bullingdon Cocktail Bar
Carnival Soundsystem
DJs from 11am - 5pm
Doors: 11am

Sunday 1st July
The Carnival Afters
DJs from 5pm - Midnight
Doors: 4.30pm

Thursday 5th July
Oli Brown
Doors: 7pm

Friday 6th July
The Americans
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 12th July
Billy Branch + Giles Robson
Doors: 7pm

Friday 20th July
Patrick Monahan
Rewind Selector 90s
Doors: 7pm

Friday 20th July
Flowerz
Doors: 11pm

Friday 27th July
Arkhive Vol: #1 Launch
Mozee
Michael Arkk
Kelthy Roots
w/ Empress Peppa Krutial
White Magic
Doors: 11pm

Friday 3rd August
K-Funkz: Looney + Hamdi
Doors: 11pm

Saturday 4th August
Musical Medicine & Friends
Doors: 11pm

Friday 17th August
Groove
Doors: 11pm

Saturday 18th August
DNA Events
Doors: 11pm

Thursday 23rd August
Mike Vernon
& The Mighty Combo
Doors: 7pm

Friday 24th August
Hookworms
Doors: 7.30pm

Friday 24th August
Rascal Present:
Contrast
Doors: 11pm

Saturday 25th August
Volume DnB #12
Doors: 11pm

Wednesday 29th August
Epic Beard Men
Sage Francis + B. Dolan
Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 5th September
Jolie Holland & Samantha Parton
(The Be Good Tanyas)
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 6th September
Hamilton Loomis
Doors: 7pm

Friday 14th September
Beaux Gris Gris
Doors: 7pm

Thursday 20th September
Sikth
Doors: 7pm

Saturday 22nd September
Musical Medicine
Jive Talk
Doors: 11pm

Thursday 27th September
Sari Schorr
Doors: 7pm

NEWS

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PREMIUM LEISURE launch their debut EP with a three week residency at The Library this month. The band, fronted by singer-songwriter Chris Barker and featuring Willie J Healey as well as renowned local drummer Mike Monaghan, release 'Plug The Leads In' on the 29th June on new cassette label Beanie Tapes. The quartet, who played on *Nightshift's* Uncommon Stage at Common People at the end of May, will play a set at Truck Store on Thursday 7th June, the same night as they play the first of three weekly shows at The Library ahead of the new EP. They're back at the Cowley Road venue on the 14th and 21st. Tickets for each show are £5, or you can do all three for a tenner. Tickets are on sale from Truck Store or through Wegottickets.com.

Meanwhile, Beanie Tapes have more cassette releases lined up for 2018, with a debut EP from Michael Fox in July, followed by releases for Max Blansjaar, Jordan O'Shea and

Candy Says later in the year. Follow them at www.facebook.com/beanietapes.

THE O2 ACADEMY hosts a Zodiac reunion party this month. Eleven years after it closed to become an Academy venue, The Zodiac is celebrated with a party on Friday 22nd June, featuring bands and club nights from that era. DJs from lounge night Disques Vogue; 80s, trash and glam night Trashy; reggae, dancehall and ska night Skylarkin; indie night Transformation and old-school acid house night Audacity come together for two rooms of nostalgic club fun, while local post-punk heroes Earinade, Audacity Live and Osprey & the OX4 Allstars play live. The reunion party continues into the early hours with an after-party at The Bullingdon from 11.30pm. Tickets from The O2 box office and Wegottickets.com.

CHARLBURY RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL returns over the weekend of the 28th - 29th July. The annual two-day free festival is set to feature over 30 acts across two stages as well as an acoustic and open mic stage. No line-up details as yet, but visit www.riversidefestival.charlbury.com for updates.



UNDERSMILE are set to reform for a one-off show to remember photographer and music fan **Pier Corona** this month.

The local doom band split in 2016 after the release of their widely acclaimed second album 'Anhedonia' but will reconvene for **Pieranormal**, an all-day show at **The Bullingdon** on **Sunday 24th June**. Singer and guitarist Taz Corona-Brown is Pier's daughter and he became their biggest supporter, as well as on-tour driver over the years.

Pier, whose superb photos capturing some of the most eclectic and esoteric music to come to and from Oxford frequently appeared in *Nightshift's* pages, passed away from cancer in 2017, followed by an outpouring of love from local musicians who he had helped, encouraged and photographed over the years. The concert, which will raise money for the Upper GI Unit at The Royal Marsden Hospital, features many of Pier's favourite artists, including a rare Oxford show for **The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band**. They are joined by **Robert Ridley-Shackleton**; **The Brickwork Lizards**; **Sandro G Masoni**; **Macarena Ortizar + Lee Riley**; **Brown Glove**; **Von Braun**; **Basic Dicks** - featuring daughters Taz and Loz - and **LC:TG**.

Undersmile bassist Olly Corona-Brown, who is organising the show, told *Nightshift*: "Pier had such an impact on our lives and the scene in Oxford; it's only right that we celebrate his life with some of his favourite bands and performers. All the acts were friends of his. His childhood friend Sandro is flying over from Italy specially to play, and The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band are playing a rare Oxford show. This will be Undersmile's first show in two years. Pier was an instrumental part of Undersmile and the band couldn't have functioned without him. He was also our biggest fan, so we couldn't have put together a memorial gig without Undersmile playing. It's going to be an emotional day, but a fun one - a room full of Pier's family and friends, his photos and loads of weird music.

Tickets, priced £10 in advance (£12 on the door), are on sale now from Wegottickets.com.

ROY YOUNG 1934 - 2018

Roy Young, the Oxford musician who played with The Beatles and David Bowie, and famously declined an invitation to join The Fab Four, has died; he was 83.

Young, best known as a keyboard player, was born in London, the son of a pub pianist, Lily, moved to Oxford during World War II when his family was evacuated during the Blitz. He began playing local pubs in the 50s, notably The Carpenters Arms in Cowley. He auditioned for TV show *Oh Boy!* And later became a regular on teatime shows on the BBC and ITV. He toured with Cliff Richard and the Shadows, released his debut single, 'Just Keep It Up' in 1959 and shortly after began playing the club circuit in Germany, including Hamburg's The Top Ten and The Star Club. Here he formed The Beat Brothers with Ringo Starr and Tony Sheridan and played keys and sang backing vocals with The Beatles. He was invited to join the band by Brian Epstein but declined, though he later played on 'Got To Get You Into My Life'. He also played piano on three tracks on Bowie's seminal 'Low' album, recorded in France. In 1995 he was invited back to The Star Club to mark its anniversary. Later in life Roy managed Long John Baldrey and toured with Ian Hunter and Mick Ronson.

After spending most of the 80s and 90s living and playing in The USA and Canada, Roy returned to Oxfordshire in 2007 and in recent years could be seen performing at the fortnightly Blues Jam in Marston.

Roger Warner from the band Steamroller knew Roy almost his entire life and said, "It was a bit of a shock and we're still getting over it. I was with Roy a lot towards the end. I met him when he first came to Oxford as an evacuee. Steamroller backed him up 40 years ago and we backed him up again in the last ten years before he sadly had to give up playing. He was a genuinely lovely man. His own song 'Beautiful Man' sums him up perfectly."

Roy is survived by his wife Carol and three children.



THE BEST IN LIVE STAND-UP COMEDY

Saturday 2nd June - 7pm
Christian Schulte-Loh, Clint Edwards + more tbc

Saturday 9th June - 7pm
Paul Thorne, Joe Bor, John Lynn, David Trent

Saturday 16th June - 7pm
JoJo Smith, Rudi Lickwood, Howard Read

Saturday 23rd June - 7pm
Lauren Pattison, John Fothergill, George Zach, Ivo Graham

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NEWS

THE YOUNG WOMEN’S MUSIC PROJECT

are set to launch a crowdfunding project this month. The education charity, which helps young women and girls develop their musical skills as well as building self confidence, has faced an uncertain future in recent years and is about to lose its long-term home at Fusion Arts. A new home has been found, in Jericho, but funds are needed to bring the place up to the necessary standard. Project leader Zahra Tehrani said, “We need to raise the cash to build the space up to a high standard: soundproofing walls, having the right shelving, painting etc. We want to involve the young women and create work for them every step of the way. We have written a budget and it looks like we need to raise £15k, so on the 2nd June we are going to launch a crowdfunder on BBC Introducing in Oxford. We have already pencilled in fundraising events with Sofar Sounds, Truck Store and Fusion Arts and are working with other local promoters.” Visit them at www.ywmp.org.uk.

OM & BASS returns to Braziers Park this summer. The reggae and wellbeing festival runs over the weekend of the 6th – 8th July at Braziers Park in Ipsden. As well as live reggae and soundsystems, the three-day event hosts over 120 workshops, featuring yoga, dance, martial arts, meditation and crafts. All food on site is vegan, with a no-plastic rule. Tickets, priced £165, including camping and showers, are on sale now at www.omandbass.co.uk. Day tickets are also available with under 12s going free.

DON BROCO’S show at The O2 Academy has been rescheduled for the 6th June. The original show at the end of April had to be abandoned after a sewage pipe burst, flooding the downstairs venue with, well, you can imagine. All tickets for the original date remain valid, or refunds are available from point of purchase. Meanwhile Strange Bones’ show at The Cellar in May, which was postponed due to injury to the band’s lead singer, has been rescheduled for Tuesday 29th May if you read this in time. Support comes from local post-punk crew Spinner Fall.

OXJAM will return to Oxford this autumn. The nationwide network of fundraising gigs for anti-poverty charity Oxfam hosts an all-day takeover of venues on and around Cowley Road on Saturday 27th October. After a series of successful takeovers in recent years, last year’s local Oxjam was a show at Tap Social in Botley, organised by 14-year-old musician Max Blansjaar. Bands and volunteers keen to help out in any way should get in touch via Facebook or Twitter – OxjamOxford for both.

THE ROCK BARN in Witney is under threat as the local council have plans to demolish it to make room for flats. The barn hosts The Muzo Academy, which as well as nurturing Witney’s aspiring musicians, helps young people and people with mental health problems develop life skills through the medium of music. There’s a petition up to try and persuade the council to keep the barn. Find out more and sign up at www.facebook.com/muzoacademy.

GLASSHOUSE STUDIOS host their annual open day party this month. Easter Island Statues, Self Help and We Aeronauts will be playing live in one of the studios while Remade Guitars provide a pop-up guitar repair shop and a musical instrument bring and buy sale. The family-friendly open day also features a barbecue and the studio’s traditional “large but disappointing” crisp buffet. The day runs from 1-6pm on Saturday 30th June. Entry is free though there’ll be a collection in aid of Parkinson’s UK. Bring your own sausages. Check glasshousestudios.org for more info.

THE DOLLYMOPS head out on a short tour of Oxfordshire this month ahead of their debut release. The Oxford-based indie rockers release ‘Fields of Wheat’ on the 8th June and play The Jericho Tavern on the 7th; Banbury’s Rock the Atic on the 9th and Bicester’s Atic bar on the 16th. Follow them at twitter.com/TheDollyMops, or try finding them on Facebook without getting loads of cleaning services.

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

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

WIN CORNBURY FESTIVAL TICKETS!

Some people were in a field, they thought it was all over... it isn’t now.

No, after last year’s celebratory, sold-out farewell, **Cornbury Festival** has slipped off its retirement pyjamas and made the swiftest of comebacks. And hurray for that, we say. Here’s one festival that still has some fight in it. And anyway, where else was *Nightshift* going to spend a weekend doubling our bodyweight with pints of Pimm’s and Prosecco.

Yes, once again **Great Tew Country Park** will ring to the sound of music and a steady parade of celebrities – from prime ministers to TV presenters, via the occasional Hollywood A-lister – as the sun shines down (it will, it will). This year’s Cornbury takes place over the weekend of the **13th-15th July**, featuring its trademark mix of big name acts, cult heroes and rising stars. Headlining this year are **Alanis Morissette, Squeeze** and **UB40**.

Morissette tops a Saturday line-up that is entirely female. For a festival often derided for being conservative, it’s a typically pioneering piece of programming from organiser Hugh Phillimore as well as a lesson to other events to think about the mix of people playing their stages. So, also playing on Saturday are legendary gospel singer **Mavis Staples**; **Nina Nesbitt**; **Pixie Lott**; **PP Arnold**; **Grainne Duffy**; **Megan McKenna**; **Southern Avenue Kolars**; **Ten**; **Millennia**, and **The Adelaides**.



UB40 top the bill on Friday, joined across the two main stages by **Jimmy Cliff**; **Zucchero**; **Stereo MCs**; **Lucas Nelson & the Promise of the Real**; **Danny & the Champions of the World**; **The Tall Poppies** and **Irit**.

No strangers to Cornbury over the years, Squeeze close proceedings on Sunday, joined across the day by **Caro Emerald**; **Deacon Blue**; **Marc Cohen**; **Andy Fairweather Low**; **Mari Wilson & the New Wilsations**; **Lissie**; **Catherine McGrath**, and **The Mighty John Street Ska Orchestra**.

Plenty more besides, plus of course the Riverside stage, featuring a host of local and up and coming acts, tribute bands and school

bands; the comedy tent; kids activities; the legendary Disco Shed, and, in what’s being billed as a world exclusive, a festival feast hosted by **The Hairy Bikers**. We assume they won’t be playing music too, although given Loyd Grossman has been a Cornbury regular with his band The New Forbidden, we wouldn’t rule anything out.

Tickets for Cornbury Festival are on sale now at cornburyfestival.com, with adult weekend tickets priced from £180, with day tickets available and discounts for over-70s, teens and kids.

And thanks, as ever, to our chums at Cornbury, we have two pairs of weekend adult camping tickets to give away, for free, in a competition. Oh yes.

To be in with a chance of winning, just answer the following question:

Which of the following was not a headline act at Cornbury 2017?

A. Bryan Adams B. Kaiser Chiefs C. Bryan Ferry.

Email answers, clearly marked Cornbury Competition, to editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk, or on a postcard to **Cornbury Competition, Nightshift Magazine, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU**. Please include full name, address and daytime telephone number. Deadline for inclusion is the 25th June. The editor’s decision is to be cool for cats.

MELT DUNES

The Library
07.06.18 | £5

SEAN MCGOWAN

The Cellar
08.06.18 | £7

SEAN MCGOWAN

The Cellar
08.06.18 | £7

LOMA

The Cellar
09.06.18 | £9

CANDY SAYS

Modern Art Oxford
15.06.18 | Free Entry

THE SUBWAYS

The Bullingdon
19.06.18 | £14

CATGOD

The Cellar
23.06.18 | Free Entry

LA WITCH

The Cellar
28.06.18 | £12

SUPER HANS

O2 Academy 2
06.07.18 | £15

TREMBLING BELLS

The Cellar
11.07.18 | £10

HOOKWORMS

The Bullingdon
24.08.18 | £12.50

JOLIE HOLLAND & SAMANTHA PARTON

The Bullingdon
05.09.18 | £16

THE NIGHTINGALES

The Cellar
20.09.18 | £10

THE NIGHT CAFE

O2 Academy 2
25.09.18 | £10

TELEMAN

O2 Academy 2
29.09.18 | £15

THE MAGIC GANG

O2 Academy
05.10.18 | £13.50

HOLLIE COOK

O2 Academy
12.10.18 | £14

DERMOT KENNEDY

O2 Academy
14.10.18 | £12.50

CLAP YOUR HANDS SAY YEAH

The Bullingdon
16.10.18 | £16

TOM GRENNAN

O2 Academy
17.10.18 | £16

STEVE DAVIS & KAVUS TORABI

The Cellar
20.10.18 | £6

PUMA BLUE

The Cellar
22.10.18 | £8

YELLOWDAYS

The Bullingdon
23.10.18 | £11

BRIX & THE EXTRICATED

The Cellar
16.11.18 | £16

EASY LIFE

The Cellar
24.11.18 | £8

SUNFLOWER BEAN

The Bullingdon
25.11.18 | £13.50

SHAME

O2 Academy
27.11.18 | £13.50

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THE OTHER DRAMAS

photo: A.J. Knight



“I TAKE AGES TO GET READY AND AT the end of it I don’t look any different. Richie takes no time at all and ends up looking perfectly styled; that’s just the way it goes!”

So says Maria Ilett, singer and guitarist with The Other Dramas when *Nightshift* asks her who out of her and bandmate and partner Richie Wildsmith is the most high maintenance.

“Maria doesn’t take ages getting ready, she takes ages deciding what to wear,” replies Richie; “do I need gloves; is it going to rain; do I take an umbrella?” etc.”

WE ONLY ASKED THE QUESTION because the duo, who release their new single ‘The Future is a Holiday’ this month, have twice recently been described as the band with the best

hair in Oxford. Unsurprising given the impressive – and contrasting – manes they sport. They have their own follically-flushed faves though, Maria admiring local songstress Laima Bite (“She really rocks the Joan Jett look”), while Richie points to Chris Barker’s Premium Leisure (“definitely one of my current favourites and they’ve got cool haircuts too”).

MARIA AND RICHIE MAY BE TWO OF the most recognisable figures on the Oxford music scene – both as performers and as regulars at gigs across the city – but it’s for their music the pair now attract so much attention, and their new single will only increase that attention, fusing The Other Drama’s fine balance between psychedelic bubblegum pop and grunged-up garage rock much

like last year’s ‘Radio’ did.

The instant earworm that was ‘Radio’ earned the pair a Top 10 place in *Nightshift*’s end of year Top 25 and the woozily powerful, harmony-heavy ‘The Future is a Holiday’, with its summery, swoon-along chorus is sure to have an equal impact, finding a sweet spot between 60s girl groups; The Lovely Eggs’ sharp-edged pop-punk and The White Stripes’ stripped-down grunge. It’s a rainbow-coloured chocolate bar of a song, one studded with ground glass and laced with something lysergic.

THE OTHER DRAMAS HAVE BEEN A fixture on the local gig circuit since 2013; they formed after meeting while playing in former-Candyskins guitarist Mark Cope’s band Ninestone Cowboy, but they both have musical history going back to the 1990s.

Maria – daughter of renowned local jazz musician Denny Ilett – grew up with her dad’s record collection and began playing at an early age. “My Dad’s massively influential. I adore his playing and all the music he’s introduced me too. I get my love of Elvis, Louis Armstrong, Little Richard and Shirley Bassey from him. He’s a professional musician and still travels a lot, playing abroad regularly. Our house was always full of music and instruments when I was growing up. I went to all the jazz clubs with my parents when I was little, seeing artists like Wild Bill Davidson and Humphrey Lyttelton.

“I wrote my first song on keyboard when I was at primary school, then later on picked up my mum’s guitar and taught myself, making up the chords as I went along! My mum played organ in soul bands in the 60s; in fact that’s how my mum and dad met: their bands were booked to play on the same bill one night.

“My dad played in soul bands who played with Jimi Hendrix, The Small Faces, The Who and Cream, and mum played the brass parts on her organ in her bands. She still has the Farfisa she used to play from the 60s. She’s a real inspiration too: she was a female musician at a time when that didn’t really happen. I think they should both write a book!”

FOR HIS PART, RICHIE MOVED TO Oxford from his native Plymouth in the mid-90s, where he helped form booze-fuelled faves on the scene at the time, Shuffle.

“It was such a great time for me when I first moved here. I got to know the members of Ride, and started hanging out with an up and coming band called Supergrass. I became good mates with The Candyskins, which of course is how I first met Mark Cope and through him Maria. There were so many cool bands around and some great places to hang out with each other after gigs.

“I had never done a gig back home in Plymouth so when I joined Shuffle and we got our first gig at The Dolly I was so excited and nervous, which maybe was why we partied so hard before we played! But we did have a great couple of years together in that band.”

WHILE ALL THIS HAPPENED SOME years before they even met, both Maria and Richie

experienced close calls with the music industry and commercial success around the same time.

Maria, playing solo and acoustic at open mic sessions, met Jim Eliot (who has worked with Foxes, Ellie Goulding, Will Young, Kylie Minogue, and Olly Murs) and they formed a band together – Eliot – who signed to Critical Mass Records, played at Glastonbury and were championed by Rob da Bank, who was set to sign them to his Sunday Best label before they split.

Maria: “Working with Jim so early on was a blessing; I have such incredible memories. We formed the band, and I was there at the very beginning and to see it through from recording demos to finishing our album and playing at Glastonbury on the Radio 1 stage was the best experience. He helped me so much and he really got my voice – much better than I did! He inspired me to go on to study music technology; his enthusiasm for production was definitely infectious.”

As part of Shuffle, meanwhile, Richie came close to signing to ZTT.

“I think we did think things were happening for us,” he recalls, “we had what we thought was a good look and good songs; maybe less time partying and more work might have paid off. Supergrass asked us to support them when they played at The Zodiac, which was massive for us as a whole new audience got to hear us. ZTT started taking an interest and coming to our rehearsals and we started recording for them, but it was never completed and things just faded. Of course I was gutted when it ended but when I look back at that time I’ve got nothing but good memories.”

WITH SEPARATE CAREERS RUNNING IN something like parallel, the pair finally met when they joined Ninestone Cowboy.

Richie: “I had heard of Maria but hadn’t bumped into her at any point, although I used to go and see her brother Denny play at the Bullingdon, so we must have been out at the same time quite a lot.”

Maria: “Every weekend I’d drink in the New Inn then go to the Zodiac to see the bands and the club afterwards then end up in the Kari King as that’s where all the local bands hung out after their gigs; it was a meeting place and had a real buzz about it. I remember seeing Richie for the first time and just thinking he was the coolest looking dude I’d ever seen. From then on, I went to all Shuffle’s gigs – I was a total fan girl! I was far too shy to speak to him though so it wasn’t until years later when I joined Mark’s band that I actually got to meet him. Shuffle and The Candyskins were my favourite bands back then so to be in a band with Richie and Mark was so exciting for me. While we were in Ninestone I wrote some new songs; I was looking for a different approach to my music but wasn’t quite sure how to go about it, so I asked Rich if he would rehearse with me to try out some ideas. There was one song, ‘This Way’, that clicked straight away: his playing made me play guitar differently; it upped the tempo and his drum rolls gave it a momentum that it hadn’t had before. I realised then that I wanted to write more songs that were rhythm influenced. Before the rehearsal I intended to form a more standard four-piece band, but we were buzzing afterwards so we thought it’d be exciting to see how far we could go with just the two of us.”

“I had never done a gig back home in Plymouth so when I joined Shuffle and we got our first gig at The Dolly I was so excited and nervous, which maybe was why we partied so hard before we played! But we did have a great couple of years together in that band.”

HAVING PLAYED AROUND TOWN FOR a while, earning some decent reviews without generating too much excitement, and having

undergone an enforced semi-hiatus while they endured some legal problems, The Other Dramas really began to click a couple of years back and in 2017 *Nightshift* invited the duo to play on the Uncommon Stage at Common People, a gig that was set to be a major turning point for the band. Maria: “It just came at the perfect time for us. For the first time in years we were in the right headspace and had just started working with Kit and Mike from Safehouse Studios; it focussed us at just the right time. About two weeks before the date I had this freak out where I rewrote our whole set... I just knew I could do better. It was a lot more stressful on Richie I think, a real gamble, plus we had to learn all this new music! I wouldn’t recommend it but it worked for us and sometimes it’s good to live dangerously! We got to meet so many people that weekend and see a lot of other local bands that we’d been wanting to catch live; it was an inspiring time. We met the guys from All Will Be Well Records and signed to them shortly after. BBC Introducing were very kind and interviewed us.”

THE PAIR ALSO RECORDED AN acoustic version of ‘Radio’ for BBC Radio Oxford, the single that would become a bit of a

“We played at a jumble sale once. I do love a good jumble sale.”

breakthrough success for them.

Maria: “We were amazed by the response it got. Songwriting for me is about communication: I’m learning all the time what is the best way to get ideas across and there’s something about that song that reached people. It’s about longing to feel more connected to someone. Broadcasting a radio signal that may never be received. The new single is an extension of that feeling, wanting to reach out further.

Ah yes, ‘The Future is a Holiday’, a song that’s about being optimistic about the future while feeling low. It’s a bright, sunshiney piece that seems to brim with optimism.

Maria: “‘Radio’ was about signals, ‘The Future is a Holiday’ is about cycles and patterns. I was inspired by a conversation I had with my dad; we were talking about seeing patterns in things. There’s a lyric on the b-side ‘Money’ that’s also inspired by that conversation: “Every high has a low, every ebb has a flow, the tide goes out but it always comes back in again’. I thought it would be cool to really simplify that idea; the verses mention Summer/Winter, Night-time/Daytime patterns that repeat and how this is comforting when you think about it. When we’re in the middle of winter we can cheer ourselves up by dreaming of spring.”

Musically the song also captures that great balance the couple have between sweet bubblegum pop and grungy garage rock.

Maria: I’d done a lot of pop and electronic music before and I wanted to make heavier guitar music, like the music I listen to, but without compromising my voice. We thought if we combined the two styles it might sound kind of cool. This has presented problems when we try to figure out how to work it live but I love it, it makes me listen to music differently and explore different ways of playing and writing.”

Richie: “I’ve always loved Veruca Salt and we’ve been listening to a lot of their stuff again

recently. Their first single ‘Seether’ is a great example of female vocals, sweet harmonies and grungy guitars. And lately bands like Honeyblood, Blood Red Shoes and Black Honey. I’ve always been into bands that are melodic but heavy.”

Nightshift said in a recent review of The Other Dramas that one of the big differences between them and a lot of two-piece bands of late is that they create space within their songs rather than try and fill it with noise via effects etc. We wonder if that’s a conscious thing.

Maria: “I’m influenced by art and design where the space can be just as important. When we first started playing together my idea for the band was that the sound should only be created live by us at that moment, with the natural sounds of the two instruments – no effects. I liked the fact that that pushed me to explore different ways of playing the guitar and use song arrangements; it also gives Rich space making his playing more central to the sound. Since then I’ve relaxed the rules! I use different guitar pedals but still try to keep the basis of my original idea. Whenever we write a new song we rehearse it acoustically first it has to be able to work that way.”

OXFORD SEEMS TO DO COUPLE BANDS particularly well at the moment. Alongside The Other Dramas we have The August List and Candy Says; what, we wonder, are the best and worst things about being in a band with your partner and no-one else?

Maria: “I am so lucky to be able to do this with Richie; we experience all the highs and lows together and support each other. I also enjoy working spontaneously; I can show ideas to Rich straight away. It’s fun when we play out of Oxford; we like a road trip and can fit everything in the one car. We often book somewhere to stay and turn it into a mini break. The down side is we both get nerves at the same time and everything is more expensive as it’s only split two ways!”

Have you ever written a song about each other?

Maria: “I write about life in general and Richie is central to that, so yes, he does make an appearance! Often as a presence or feeling. There’s a song, ‘Break My Heart’, that I wrote when we first got together about the idea of feeling it was all too good to be true. “Now you’ve got me, I’m never home / You’re going to break my heart and I’ll be all alone” Thankfully that didn’t happen!”

IF THE FUTURE FOR THE OTHER Dramas isn’t exactly going to be a holiday, the next few months look like being the best yet for the highly personable couple whose enthusiasm for music, and for writing and performing it, hasn’t dimmed one jot after well over two decades playing separately and together. Hopefully their hard work will be properly rewarded. Before they go though, *Nightshift* wonders, given their long experience of the Oxford music scene, what their favourite memories are from the past 20 years.

Richie: “Seeing The White Stripes at The Point back in 2001 was a highlight. I remember going for a cigarette and Jack and Meg were outside chilling after a hot and sweaty gig. It was funny seeing them at a little pub down Cowley Road.”

Maria “We played at a jumble sale once, that was funny! I do love a good jumble sale.”

‘The Future Is A Holiday’ is released on the 29th June. The Other Dramas play at The Cellar on the 28th June, supporting LA Witch. Visit theotherdramas.bandcamp.com

RELEASED

CATGOD

‘Heartbeat In My Hand’ (Self released)

It’s often difficult, listening to this five-song EP, to reconcile the swish, atmospheric accomplishment and adventurousness of Catgod now with the sometimes timid band that emerged from the ruins of Neverlnd a couple of years back. Back then there was a sense they were uncomfortable being lumped into any single genre, but this set of songs, while gentle and genteel, oozes the easy confidence of musicians who’ve found a sweet spot between but also beyond their influences.

In this Catgod are ably abetted by guest contributions from drummer Caspar Jacobs (Coldredlight / Le Feye) and guitarist Chris Barker (Premium Leisure), but really this is all about brother and sister team Robin Christensen-Marriott and Catherine Marriott, whose dewy-eyed duets often sound more like lovers’ laments. Their voices are precise and complementary while each bringing their own idiosyncrasies to the music. Cat can be almost Björk-ish at times, while elsewhere possessing a similar purity to Karen Carpenter or Eva Cassidy, or the silky jazz lounge tones of Nora Jones, while Robin unearths his inner Anohni at one point, to provide a cracked counterpoint.

‘Compare Me’ has the feel of a big stage musical piece – probably the bit where the lovers become separated and sing to each other across the void, and is perhaps a tad saccharine, while

BURT COPE

‘Warlord’

(Project Allout)

Like Xanax and Fortnite UK bassline is something few people over the age of 25 are meant to understand. The house sub-genre that grew out of UK garage just over a decade ago never enjoyed quite the levels of tabloid hysteria afforded grime and drill but the deeply visceral impact of its 4x4 beats, cavernous bass and what might well be the theme tune to *Rhubarb and Custard* re-imagined by a chronic speedfreak is generally enough to get Generation X’ers scrabbling for their old trance mixtapes and wondering how the hell you’re meant to move to this.

Nights like Fluid and Freerange have provided fertile ground for local producers and DJs and chief among these is Burt Cope. His dad was the singer in local legends The Candyskins and is now an acclaimed kids songwriter, so Burt’s hardly following in the family footsteps style-wise. ‘Warlord’, his second EP after last year’s ‘Call My Name’ on Project Allout, continues his trademark mix of old school bassline and UKG, fractured beats and bass wobbles layered with big, bold synth wows and queasy flutters, fleeting dub intermissions and ragga vocal samples to make for a sometimes dizzying dancefloor experience.

It’s dance music that sounds almost lab-made to confuse older clubbers; it’s enjoyably mental in



‘Keep My Promises’ is as close as they get to rocking out, the epic stadium-rock build shutting down before it can pass the overwrought mark. The EP’s title track – released and reviewed last month as a lead single – finds Cat fully in the spotlight, one she revels in, the dappled minimalism of the piano-led music letting her plaintive but neatly restrained voice to shine. Only closer ‘Owing You’ disappoints – it’s muddled and mumbled, possessed of none of the other tracks’ gilt or glister. You also wonder how music like this is expected to be at its best in a hot, sweaty pub venue rather than some more rarefied concert hall, but intimacy is the key to its success and if the chattering barflies give it the respect it deserves, it’s music well worth getting up close and personal with.

Dale Kattack

the same way a bewitched robot production line might be and, I’ll confess, attempting to critically dissect it makes me feel like a badger that’s been asked to explain dark matter. We’ll call that 1-0 to the kids.

Dale Kattack

LITTLE BROTHER ELI

‘Our Kind of Love’

(Self released)

The follow-up to February’s ‘Tooth’ single, which apparently saw the birth of Little Brother Eli Mk.II, now with syncopated beats and a nu-disco vibe, ‘Our Kind of Love’ does more to back up the band’s claim to have moved on from their bluesy roots, with its chopped-out guitar lines, catching that late-70s disco/funk feel and the tightened-up electronic beats trying to move the party on from the banks of the Mississippi to Studio 54.

Singer Alex Grew is no Sylvester though and his rounded vowels and earthy approach keeps LBE within rock’s corner, one foot twitching to get out and strut its funky thing under the mirror balls, the other wanting to stomp on the nearest monitor; it’s sort of where Aerosmith meets The Trammps, with the former currently holding the upper hand. By the end of the year we’re hoping they might have gone the full Moroder.

Victoria Waterfield

Sponsored by



YEAR OF THE KITE

‘With Sparks Flying’

(Diversio

There are songs that, when you first hear them, grab you firmly by the lapels, or maybe even the throat, and bluntly demand your attention; conversely, there are songs that make no such forcefully direct request but that nevertheless seem to subtly compel you to return to them time and again. ‘The Upper Reaches’ is a prime example of the latter; one listen was all it took to convince me that its creators, Year Of The Kite, had the definite potential to become my new favourite Oxfordshire band. The fear, though, was that their debut LP would turn out to be a letdown, ‘The Upper Reaches’ the indisputable standout. I needn’t have worried; on ‘With Sparks Flying’ it’s in almost universally excellent company.

Whether or not that track is a sad ode to the hotel of the same name that stands abandoned on the banks of the Thames in Abingdon, it fits the overall mood: contemplative, verging on mournful. There’s a beauty throughout the album – in the starkest moments (the piano chords that open ‘Somewhere After Sunday’) as well as when the instrumentation swells to a slow, modest majesty – though it’s frequently of the bleakest kind. It came as no surprise to learn that they rehearse in an old church.

The somnolent pace recalls ‘Low’, while on the wonderful ‘Distance’ in particular singer/guitarist Matt Walsh delivers his lyrics (choicest example: “I wouldn’t say I’m a loser / But there are things I have lost”) in a voice not unlike a muted Mark Lanegan with access to throat lozenges. Musically speaking, the titular nod to A Silver Mt Zion’s 2001 record ‘Born Into Trouble As The Sparks Fly Upward’ seems unnecessary and a bit clumsy; the songs are love letter enough to the Canadians.

While the steadfast refusal to deal in the clichéd post-rock currency of crescendos is admirable, the listener might have wished for a few more fireworks, and the three sub-two-minute tracks in the second half unhelpfully fragment the album’s flow. But overall ‘With Sparks Flying’ is hugely impressive, a work of quiet but thoroughly justified self-assurance.

Ben Woolhead



PREMIUM LEISURE

‘Plug The Leads In’

(Beanie Tapes)

The first release from the trend-surfing cassette label Beanie Tapes – run by Candy Says – which aims to provide ongoing musical output in this bizarre, daft format. I’ve seen the psychedelic tag applied to Premium Leisure in various places, but on the evidence presented in five-track debut this is psychedelia as filtered through an ordered, considered, psychoactives-

THE OTHER DRAMAS

‘The Future is a Holiday’

/ ‘Money’

(Self released)

The band that once seemed to forever fall between two stools – pure pop and garage rock – now comfortably straddle the divide, no so much like a colossus but like a particularly fluffy cat: feisty and no nonsense but still cute.

If last year’s ‘Radio’ proved to be the duo’s pivotal moment, proving they have the melodies to match the moves, ‘The Future is a Holiday’ is another step up, all warm, woozy harmonies and Maria Ilett’s purred vocals spread like languorous lacquer over a simple fuzzgun pop tune. For a band whose natural home has always been darkened gig venues it’s a little like musical summer, a sunny interval that’s done and dusted in under three minutes before the clouds that infect its lyrics roll back over. Genuinely lovely.

B-side ‘Money’ kicks a little harder, not as dark as The Kills but brattier and with more serrated edges, like The Jesus & Mary Chain persuading The Lovely Eggs’ Holly Ross to pop round and jam out some old Runaways tunes. A concept that is more fun than this world probably deserves.

Dale Kattack

ZURICH

‘My Protocol’

(Self released)

Hot on the heels of their recent collaboration with Dolly Mavies, Zurich release a second single, more in keeping with the bold, black-sun spirit of their live sound: heroic, stadium-ready electro-tinged indie rock cut from a similar cloth to Interpol and Editors but equally at home mixing it with New Order. Backed

free Millennial professionalism, à la Washed Out, Tame Impala, latter-day Grandaddy, and any number of interchangeable dreamy pop acts.

It’s good-natured, slick indie rock that’s been buffed to such a level of finish that it’s in danger of eroding any sense of edge, tension or urgency. Not that these things are necessities, of course: ‘Water Pistol’, ‘Gold Tunes’, ‘Crystal’ and ‘Plug The Leads In’ have a pleasant core, with a delicate, skittering rhythm section that gently backs warmly overdriven guitar lines, and a vocal style (in terms of sonics and production) that has the playful quirkiness of Marc Bolan. ‘Daydream Drive’ is the slow song – every band must have a slow song – and it seems heartfelt and touching; it builds to a rich finale and is the high point of the EP.

Overall, it’s like an extended hug from a stranger who’s a bit too easy with giving out hugs. I was tempted to say it’s forgettable, until I found its melodies popping up in my mind several hours later. So maybe, instead, it’s artful: the trick pulled off being to sound rather inconsequential and MOR while in fact burrowing into your brain. I like a little more fire and chaos in my music, but it’s hard to argue with decent examples of the craft of songwriting.

Simon Minter

by a kitchen sink production ‘My Protocol’ struggles to bring its chorus to the surface but builds to a tower of strength via cascading drums, heroic, effects-laden guitars and Adrian Banks’ passionate baritone. It doesn’t stand on ceremony, wearing its bombast as a badge of honour and demanding to be heard on the biggest stages and radio stations forthwith; on this evidence, those demands don’t seem so unreasonable.

Ian Chesterton

MEANS OF

PRODUCTION

‘EP2’

(Self released)

Obsessions with first-wave synth-pop, post-punk and brutalist architecture come together in suitably stark and atmospheric fashion on Means of Production’s new EP. It’s the first under the name, although they released a previous one last year under the name Golden Cities. The new moniker serves them well, capturing the monochrome, almost militant, minimalism of early-70s Kraftwerk, Cold War-era underground electro-goth and Ballardian dystopia. This pulsing, motorik machine music may have cold, sleek lines but they’re the cold, sleek lines of nuclear bunkers rather than brightly lit starliners. Tim Day’s hollow-eyed vocals take the uncaring factory rhythms of ‘100 Days Before the Rain’ and layer them with dispassionate gloom, reminiscent of Dutch dark-rock cult heroes Clan of Xymox. It’s music for battleship grey skies, acid rain and some intangible dread lurking beyond the horizon. Music from a pessimistic past that is rapidly becoming a tense, claustrophobic near future.

Victoria Waterfield

KEVIN JENKINS

‘Spider Mind Safari’

(Self released)

Artistic self control and a sense of adventure aren’t necessarily mutually exclusive as local singer-songwriter Kevin Jenkins’ new album clearly demonstrates.

Alarm bells ring as soon as we notice the album’s twelve tracks clock in at 76 minutes and by the time we finally get to that far-off finishing line we’re wondering what we, and he, could have done with some of those precious minutes.

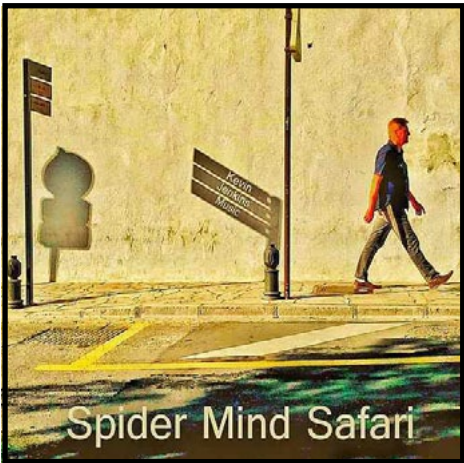
No, a sense of brevity isn’t seemingly in Jenkins’ lexicon, with most songs here nudging the five or six minute mark, with a few closer to ten. It takes a wild sense of imagination, not to say some musical virtuosity to make that work and we’re not sure Kevin has enough of either. The Album, though, isn’t a complete trawl. For one thing Jenkins isn’t afraid to shake things up stylistically, or head off down different paths: from the switch between folk to funk to flamenco, to odd diversions into musical hall and fairground organ.

For another he has a very decent voice when he uses it well: a clear, slightly overwrought croon with a hefty lining of drama that gets you to thinking of Scott Walker at times. Certainly such a voice deserves something more ambitious to carry it than the rudimentary acoustic thrum of album opener ‘Made In Wales’, with its clumsy social commentary.

He can be portentous, solemn and wistful (‘Small Town Minds’); mix up 50s crooning with something akin to *The Goon Show* (‘What Did I Do To You?’), and funk it all up when so inclined (‘Infinity’). But he can also do ungainly acoustic mithering (‘Looking Through Windows’) and hamfisted folk-rock thump (‘Fucked Up Fairytale’), although even here he’s capable of just about rescuing himself with an unrestrained vocal performance and a bold melodic hook.

The record’s twin highlights come towards the end: the almost motorik ‘Only Seven Days’, with its human beatbox opening, squelchy electronics and Spanish flair, although it probably doesn’t have enough ideas to warrant its eleven minute duration; and closer ‘Dance Til Daylight’s Dawn’, which carousels like an end of pier Hoegaarden hoedown, which throws any sense of self consciousness into the sea as its climbs aboard the nearest merry-go-round. Again though it’s too long, still waltzing into the night past the fifteen minute mark, symptomatic of an artist, like a drinker, who maybe needs someone to let them know when they’ve had enough.

Dale Kattack



G I G G U I D E

FRIDAY 1st

CARCER CITY + PERCEPTION + MSRY + THE HOROLOGIST: O2 Academy – Liverpool’s metalcore heroes come to town as part of their UK tour to promote fourth album ‘Infinite/Unknown’, the influence of bands like Architects, Bury Tomorrow and Bring Me The Horizon apparent in their technically inventive hardcore sound. Among the supporting cast are local hardcore dervishes MSRY, fresh from playing Common People and kicking it out with maximum misanthropic force.

BOSSAPHONIK: The Cellar – Latin dancefloor, global grooves, Afrobeat, Balkan beats and nu-jazz club night.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with RADICAL

Friday 1st

MELT DUNES: The Library

These are good times for psychedelia with the likes of Hookworms, Goat, Jane Weaver, Josefin Öhrn and Flamingods all putting their individual stamp on tripped-out music, while labels like Strong Island and Fuzz Club have become kite marks of quality for the genre. Portsmouth’s Melt Dunes have released EPs on both those labels and shared stages with some of those acts mentioned (including supporting Flamingods at their sold-out show at The Cellar earlier this year), so what better time to get them back to Oxford for a headline show in the suitably subterranean confines of The Library where their fuzz-fuelled grooves can wreak the most damage. The band’s new ‘Flesh’ EP mixes dense, rhythmic attack with dark, dreamy kosmische; at their lightest and brightest they recall Syd-era Pink Floyd, while their heavier, more motorik pieces fuse Hawkwind’s space-rock with Neu! and Can’s Krautrock journeys and a pint or two of The Stooges’ garage raucousness, at their best the whole thing reminiscent of Hookworm’s earliest shows, while sometimes prone to heading off on wiggled-out jams or flights of lysergic fancy. Feed your head and get your ticket early – there’s only room for 50 in The Library.



JUNE

DANCE FACTION + THE MIGHTY REDOX + SUMMIT 7: The Wheatsheaf – Monthly live music club night Klub Kak welcomes free festival veterans RDF to town, the political punk/dub/ska outfit still helmed by founder and frontman Chris Bowsher over 30 years after they formed (having split and reformed in the interim). KK hosts The Mighty Redox join them onstage for what will be a proper old hoedown.

MELT DUNES + FREEMANTLE + THE ELEPHANT TRIP: The Library – Prepare for the psych/doom/fuzz storm – *see main preview*

ABSOLUTE BOWIE: The Bullingdon – Tribute to the late, great Mr B.

CATGOD + TOM HYATT: Magoo’s, Henley-on-Thames – Elegant, starlit balladry and electro-pop from Catgod.

DOG OF TWO HEAD: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribute to early-70s Status Quo.

SATURDAY 2nd

OMYO: O2 Academy – London/Oxford “acoustic urban pop,” or, alternatively, “the sound of dribble.”

MILES KANE: O2 Academy – First Oxford show since 2011 for the former-Rascals singer and Last Shadow Puppets co-frontman, alongside Alex Turner. He’s back out on tour in his own right to promote new album ‘Coup de Grace’, the follow-up to 2013’s Top 10 ‘Don’t Forget Who You Are’.

METAL 2 THE MASSES SEMI FINAL: The Wheatsheaf – The heavyweight battle of the bands to win a slot at this summer’s Bloodstock reaches the semi-final stage, tonight with Imminent Annihilation, 13Burning, Damaged Reich and Violence is Golden.

OLD SKOOL OXFORD with DJ RATTY: The Bullingdon – Star of 90s hardcore club nights like Fantazia, Fibre Optic and Dreamscape, Ratty pops into Old Skool Oxford for some retro dancefloor fun.

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

SPARKY’S SPONTANEOUS SHOWCASE & SPOTLIGHT JAM: The White House – Sparky hosts his monthly bands and open mic night, tonight with sets from Jem Kid Company, Firegazers and Storyteller.

JAY WALKERS + TERRY PAGE: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Acoustic Americana at tonight’s Wychwood Folk Club show, ranging from old time, bluegrass and folk to country and western swing.

DAMN GOOD REASON: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon – Classic rock covers.

SUNDAY 3rd

MONKEYFISTS + TONY BATEY & SAL MOORE + GOOD CANARY + SEBASTIAN JAMES + GLENDA HUISH: The Wheatsheaf (3.30pm) – Klub Kakofanney host an afternoon of free live music in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar.

LARRY REDDINGTON + MARK ATHERTON & FRIENDS + FRANKLIN’S TOWER + BEARD OF DESTINY: Donnington Community Centre (6pm) – Free early evening of acoustic music, tonight with 60s r’n’b guitarist and singer Larry, plus Grateful Dead tribute Franklin’s Tower and Delta blues from Beard of Destiny.

OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms – Weekly open session.

FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon – Weekly open folk jam.

MONDAY 4th

JIM MORAY: Nettlebed Folk Club – Updated trad folk from longstanding champion of English indie and folktronica Moray at Nettlebed’s legendary club, the singer and multi-instrumentalist’s ‘Upcetera’ nominated for the 2017 BBC Folk Awards Album of the Year.

TUESDAY 5th

HOUSE SWEET HOUSE: The Cellar – Deep house, jazz and soul grooves and techno club night.

SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: James Street Tavern – Weekly open mic night.

WEDNESDAY 6th

ROBOCOBRA QUARTET + LUCY LEAVE + DEATH OF THE MAIDEN + LEATHERHEAD: The Library – Intense, abstract jazz-infused post-punk and no-wave from Belfast’s nebulous collective Robocobra at tonight’s Pulling Sickies gig night, the band mixing Fugazi’s post-hardcore with Charlie Mingus, John Zorn and NYNW acts like Mars and James Chance. Top drawer local support from weird and wonderful jazz-rock/post-punk/skitter-pop crew Lucy Leave and drama-laden Brechtian baroque popsters Death of the Maiden.

THURSDAY 7th

PREMIUM LEISURE: Truck Store (6pm) – Chris Barker’s slack-pop band launch their three-show residency at The Library this month with a low-key instore at Truck as they prepare to release debut EP ‘Plug the Leads In’ on new cassette label Beanie Tapes.

PREMIUM LEISURE: The Library – First of the three weekly shows from Chris and heavy friends – *see Introducing feature*.

DRAHLA: The Cellar – Leftfield post-punk

from Leeds’ rising DIY stars – *see main preview*

BRASSICA: The Cellar – Balearic house, Italo-disco, new wave, rave and techno club night with Feel My Bicep’s Brassica guesting.

THE WEDDING PRESENT: O2 Academy – David Gedge’s enduring indie heroes head out on the road again, this time celebrating the 30th anniversary of ‘Tommy’, the compilation that collected the band’s earliest releases in one album, so expect old-time faves ‘This Boy Can Wait’, ‘Go Out & Get ‘Em Boy’, ‘Felicity’ and of course ‘My Favourite Dress’.

TONY CHRISTIE: O2 Academy – The veteran Sheffield singer makes an unexpected visit to the O2. Having made his name with million-selling early-70s hits with ‘Is This The Way To Amarillo’ and ‘I Did What I Did For Maria’, he continued to enjoy success across Europe before Peter Kaye’s use of ‘Amarillo’ revamped his popularity back in the UK.

THE SPIN with PAUL McCANDLESS & CHARGED PARTICLES: The Wheatsheaf – The longstanding weekly jazz club welcomes Californian oboe player McCandless to town.

THE DOLLYMOPS: The Jericho Tavern –

Thursday 7th

DRAHLA: The Cellar

Not fitting in is the driving force behind Leeds’ Drahla. They didn’t fit in in their native Wakefield, so moved to south London, where they failed to fit in. So they moved back north and found a home in Leeds’ burgeoning DIY music scene, finally fitting in to an extent while making music that fails to fit into conventional song structures or current musical trends. The trio, led by singer/bassist Luciel Brown and singer/guitarist Rob Riggs, take an oblique approach to post-punk and grunge, inspired by Wire and The Fall as well as Sonic Youth’s exploratory art-rock. Brown’s somnambulating, stream-of-consciousness spoken/sung vocals and cryptic lyrics are immediately reminiscent of Kim Gordon, while Rigg’s guitar sound owes something to Wire circa-‘154’, but they’re not in thrall to their influences, possessed of strong melodic edge as on tracks like ‘Fictional Decision’ and the superb ‘Silk Spirit’, which earned them a whole new set of fans. Unsurprising given their ethos and location, they hooked up with Hookworms’ MJ, who produced their ‘Third Article’ EP and they’ve been out on tour with Subpop’s METZ as well as Ought. As they release a cassette-only compilation, ‘A Compact Cassette’, they’re off on a full headline UK tour, deservedly championed by 6Music and any indie blog with its salt. Finally they fit in. Even though they really don’t.



New local indie rockers launch their debut EP.

LISA KNAPP: The North Wall, Summertown – A return to town for the south London folk songstress, last seen round here playing as part of the Broadside ballads tour. Her passionate, tremulous voice has seen her described as “the sexiest voice in modern folk music”. As well as being nominated multiple times in the Radio 2 Folk Wards. She’s out on tour to promote last year’s ‘Till April is Dead – A Garland for May’ album.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre – Oxford’s longest running open night showcases singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists every Thursday.

ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure – Unplugged open mic night.

BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford – Open blues jam.

SPARKY’S NEW MOON: The Half Moon – Sparky hosts his open mic session on the first and third Thursday of every month.

THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Wheatsheaf – Free show in the downstairs bar from the local swamp blues, funk, ska and rock faves.

FRIDAY 8th

OUT OF THE BLUE: O2 Academy – Oh, good.

SEAN McGOWAN: The Cellar – Return to town for the Southampton troubadour after supporting Billy Bragg at the O2 last year, the singer’s folk/rap taking influence from Mike Skinner, Kate Tempest and Bragg himself.

WOI FM: The Cellar – Funky, hip hop and bashment club night with DJ Fabes, Woi FM and Honey.

RYAN MCGARVEY: The Bullingdon – Delta slide blues and heavy rocking from guitarist Ryan McGarvey at the Haven Club tonight, McGarvey having been voted best new talent by *Guitar Player Magazine* and out on a headline tour of the UK having previously played alongside Eric Clapton, BB King and Jeff Beck.

TOKA + MADCAP + THE PREACHERMAN + TERAQ: The Wheatsheaf – Roots reggae and dub from former Dublings fella Toca, alongside Bristol’s high-energy rapper Madcap, local conscious hip hop MC The Preacherman and Inner Peace Records chap Terao.

SATURDAY 9th

LOMA: The Cellar – Ghostly psych-folk from the Austin supergroup – *see main preview*

TEQUILA MOCKINGBYRD + AT THE SUN + SPYDER BYTE + TRAUMA UK: The Wheatsheaf – Melbourne garage rock and pop-punk trio Tequila Mockingbyrd return to OxRox, back over in the UK to plug their album ‘Fight & Flight’.

A BAND CALLED MALICE: O2 Academy – Tribute to The Jam.

MUSICAL MEDICINE with DAN SHAKE B2B MAGNIER: The Bullingdon – All-night B2B party set from Lumberjacks in Hell and Mahogany Music selector Dan Shake – responsible for 2014 floor killer ‘3am Jazz Club’ – and House of Disco’s Magnier, back at Musical Medicine.



Saturday 9th

LOMA: The Cellar

Oh my days, what a treat this should be. Loma are a band formed by happy happenstance, but one whose music is a long way from happy. The trio came together when Shearwater’s Jonathan Meiburg was introduced to Emily Cross and Dan Duszynski of Cross Records by Badabing! Records’ Ben Goldberg (responsible for launching the careers of Sharon Van Etten and Tune-Yards). They got on so well the two bands went on tour together. In the back of the van shared ideas became shared writing and jam sessions, which became a series of full-on recording sessions in Meiburg’s Austin, Texas studio. The resulting songs – given added tension by the break-up of Cross and Duszynski’s marriage at the time – became the band’s eponymous debut album, released earlier this year on SubPop and it’s already being talked about as one of the underground records of 2018. It’s a saturnine set of tunes that range from ghostly and ephemeral to starkly rhythmic, 60s acid folk, spaced-out Americana and spectral psychedelia drifting and huddling around Cross’s breathlessly haunted voice. With one track titled ‘Dark Oscillations’ it’s not surprisingly to hear echoes of electro/psych pioneers Silver Apples in the mix. Fans of Shearwater’s elegant melancholy won’t be disappointed either but really it’s just a beautiful, subtly constructed album that sounds like it was conceived in a deserted forest glade or a spooky haunted house rather than the back of a musty old tour van.





Thursday 14th

DAVID BYRNE: The New Theatre

Purely and simply as frontman of Talking Heads, David Byrne has earned his status as bona fide musical legend, but his talents have spread well beyond even that sublimely inspirational band, most notably his collaborations with Brian Eno. Together the pair created 1981’s epoch-making ‘My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts’, an album well ahead of its time in its use of sampling and electronics as well as its world music influences and found sounds. Eno, unsurprisingly, pops up on Byrne’s new album, ‘American Utopia’, the follow-up to his excellent 2012 collaboration with St Vincent, ‘Love This Giant’. One of pop music’s great thinkers, Byrne continues to find poetry in anxiety, quirkiness and the banal, the new album managing to bring philosophical discourse to the idea of dogs not being able to drive cars, what chickens think about and a love song written through the prism of a bullet shot from a gun. The man is one of music’s great collaborators too, whether it’s Eno, St Vincent or Fat Boy Slim, his palate extending into a whole world of music, which began back in his Talking Heads days. He still manages to squeeze a few of those old classics into his live set, plus the occasional unexpected cover (he’s been doing Janelle Monáe’s ‘Hell You Talmbout’ recently), and he remains one of the most adventurous and influential musicians around. No wonder tonight’s show sold out in a matter of minutes.

THE TOM IVEY BAND: The Harcourt Arms – Blues and rock covers and originals from the local singer and guitarist.
HAVANA RUMBA: The Old Fire Station – Night of Cuban dance in the company of Havana’s Gerado y Su Rumbacho, plus a rumba dance class from Ariel Rios and Cuban big band dance tunes from local ensemble Ran Kan Kan.
CHARLES HOWL: Fusion Arts – Tripped-out, modish mix of psychedelia, shoegaze and pop from south London’s quirky songwriter and Marc Riley favourite, out on tour to promote his second album, ‘My Idol Family’.
MOVE: The Cellar – Drum&bass, hip hop, garage and house club night, playing UK bass music and tonight featuring Sound Affect & D Raw, plus Stinkin’ Beats showcase and Slippery Slopes Collective.
THE NIGHT WRECKERS: The White House

SUNDAY 10th

THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Tree, Iffley
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon

MONDAY 11th

OXFORD CLASSIC JAZZ: The Harcourt Arms – Classic jazz and ragtime from the local ensemble, playing Jellyroll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Fats Domino and more.
JAZZ RIOTS: The Bullingdon – Free live jazz in the front bar with veteran local trumpeter Denny Ilett, joined by Other Dramas duo Maria Ilett and Richie Wildsmith.
DANCE KAPITAL: The Cellar – Hip hop club night with OULC DJ s.
CHRIS & KELLIE WHILE: Nettlebed Folk Club – St Agnes Fountain singer Chris While teams up with daughter Kellie for a night of traditional folk tunes.

TUESDAY 12th

SISTERS OF FUNK + DOT’S FUNKY ODYSSEY: The Bullingdon – Funk, soul and disco party.
INTRUSION: The Cellar – Goth, industrial, ebm and death rock club night, with Doktor Joy and Bookhouse keeping it dark on the decks.
SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 13th

HUMMINGBIRD + THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE + BEAVERFUEL: The Wheatsheaf – Serene harp-led pop from Hummingbird plus psychedelic acid-surf rocking from the sublime Pink Diamond Revue and acerbic pop-punk from Beaverfuel.
BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE: The Cellar – 80s hits, new wave, disco, glam and synth-pop club night.

THURSDAY 14th

DAVID BYRNE: The New Theatre – Sold out show from the ex Talking Head honcho – *see main preview*
ISRAEL NASH: The Bullingdon – Gritty, melancholy Americana and Laurel Canyon grooves inspired by Neil Young and Crosby, Stills and Nash from the Texan songsmith, out on a solo UK tour ahead of the release of his fifth album.
THE SPIN with JULIAN NICHOLAS: The Wheatsheaf – Tenor saxophonist Nicholas returns to the weekly jazz club night.
CARNIVAL FUNDRAISER: Truck Store (6pm) – Fundraising instore show for this year’s Cowley Road Carnival, with Deadbeat Apostles and more.
PREMIUM LEISURE: The Library
MINOR SCIENCE: The Cellar – Leftfield techno from Minor Science alongside Peach.
KRIS DOLLIMORE: The Rose & Crown, Charlbury – John Lee Hooker-inspired blues from the founding member of The Godfathers, former member of The Damned and current guitarist of Del Amitri.
ANNA RYDER + WATERFAHL: The Unicorn, Abingdon – Traditional and contemporary English folk from the singer-

songwriter and multi-instrumentalist who has collaborated with Fairport as well as playing in Iota with Sally Barker.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure
BLUES JAM: Catherine Wheel, Sandford

FRIDAY 15th

NICK HEYWARD: O2 Academy – The former-Haircut 100 singer tours his new album, ‘Woodland Echoes’ – his first release in over a decade, plus songs from his 80s pop career - ‘Love plus One’, ‘Favourite Shirts (Boy Meets Girl)’, ‘Fantastic Day’ etc.

Thursday 14th – Sunday 17th

NOCTURNE LIVE: Blenheim Palace

Well ain’t we a posh bunch here in Oxford. Our festivals take place in idyllic country parks and this series of summer shows is held in the grounds of an actual palace. Taking a break from horse shows and serving cream teas, Blenheim gets it’s groove on, cranks up the volume and pours itself a beer to the strains of funk and disco legend **Nile Rodgers & Chic** (Thursday); **Noel Gallagher’s High Flying Birds** (Friday); **Elvis Costello & the Imposters** (Saturday), and **Gary Barlow** (Sunday). Nile Rodgers’ contribution to music is hard to measure, from his pioneering hitmaking with Chic, to his in-demand guitar playing, to a production career that reads like an A-Z of music from the 70s onwards. Expect all the Chic greats - ‘Dance, Dance, Dance’, ‘Le Freak’, I Want Your Love’, ‘Good Times et al. alongside songs from his myriad collaborators. And if that isn’t temptin enough, **Soul II Soul** provide support. The following night Noel Gallagher brings the rock, surprising even *Nightshift* with a decent recent new album. Throw in a sizeable handful of old Oasis numbers and a support from **The Coral** and you’re sorted. Elvis Costello is the star turn on the Saturday, his vast back catalogue providing ample room to please loyalists and them what want the big hits on a bill that’s bolstered by **The Waterboys**, back in the Shire after playing the New Theatre last month, and Britrock veteran **Nick Lowe**. And in case you thought it was all going so well, Sunday brings an already sold-out show from Gary Barlow, who has at least agreed to donate his fee to HMRC. Only kidding – he has a man to sort that kind of stuff for him. Expect the big Take That hits and the big Barlow face.



CANDY SAYS: Modern Art Oxford – Free gig from the atmospheric local electro-pop duo.
PUPPET MECHANIC + PORT ERIN + ZERO UK: The Bullingdon – Thoughtful, downbeat indie in the vein of Tindersticks and Radiohead from Puppet Mechanic.
DR FEELGOOD: The Bullingdon – Disco, afrobeat and house club night..
SOUL SESSIONS: The Cellar – Classic 60s, 70s and 80s funk, soul and disco classics.
K-LACURA + SLEEPER UK: The Wheatsheaf – Church of the Heavy with super heavyweight thrash and metalcore crew K-Lacura.
JOHN OTWAY: The Newlands, Eynsham – The Clown Prince of Pop brings his one and a half hits to the Shire.

31HOURS + JOEL GARDNER: Magoo’s, Henley-on-Thames – Twinkly electro-pop and intricate psychedelia from rising local starlets 31Hours.
THE FACTORY LIGHTS + WATERFAHL + THE LEVY: Woodstock Acoustic Club – Unplugged night with soulful pop storytellers The Factory Lights and folk-pop duo Waterfahl.

SATURDAY 16th

FLOFEST / GLOFEST: Florence Park (11-5pm / 6.30-11pm) – Free family festival followed by ticketed evening show at the community-run park festival – *see main preview*
SIMPLE with YOUNG MARCO: The Bullingdon – An eclectic blend of tropical rhythms, Afrobeats, Middle Eastern disco, house, techno and jack from Amsterdam’s cult hero Young Marco at tonight’s Simple club night.
THE HERETIC ORDER + FLEISCH + FYRESKY + MUX: The Cellar – Old school horror metal from London’s The Heretic Order at tonight’s OxRox show, the band taking inspiration from King Diamond, Black Sabbath and Angel Witch. Support comes from Oxfordshire industrial/gothic metallers Fleisch and Essex’s gothic hard rockers Fyresky.
FLUID: The Cellar – The Bassline, drum&bass and UK garage club night celebrates it seventh birthday with a night of underground tunes from resident DJs.
ANDA UNION: St. Barnabas Church, Jericho – spectacular display of ancient Mongolian music, collected and reinterpreted by Anda Union – last seen in the UK at WOMAD festival – combining massed strings and percussion to evoke the traditions of their homeland.
GENESIS CONNECTED: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Genesis should probably have been connected to the mains. Might have saved us a lot of suffering.

WINTER/WILSON: The Swann Inn, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Wychwood Folk Club host acoustic duo Winter/Wilson, touring their new album ‘Ashes & Dust’.
MISSING PERSIANS: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon – Live blues and rock.

SUNDAY 17th

LOUISE JORDAN: Holywell Music Room – Gig/theatre experience from acclaimed folk singer, guitarist and pianist Louise Jordan, on tour to play songs from her new ‘No Petticoats

Here’ production, telling the stories of women from the First World War, including spy Louise de Bettingniers and journalist Dorothy Lawrence, via original songs and recorded sounds, in conjunction with theatre director Lizzie Crarer and sound designer Jules Bushell.
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon

MONDAY 18th

GRANNY’S ATTIC: Nettlebed Folk Club – Lively English, Irish and Scottish folk songs and dances from the fast-rising young trio, nominated for the BBC Folk Awards Horizon Award.

TUESDAY 19th

THE SUBWAYS: The Bullingdon – Welwyn Garden City’s enduring pop-punk trio The Subways return to town, set to release their fifth album – the follow-up to 2015’s eponymous release.
GRADUATION: The Bullingdon
SUMMIT 7: The Bullingdon – Free live funk in the front bar.
SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 20th

ROB TOGNONI: The Bullingdon – The Tasmanian blues devil returns to the Haven Club, displaying the powerful and versatile electric style that’s served him well in his 30-plus years on the road, his powerful electric style owing much to Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan.
CREATURES + MOLLY DAVIES: The Wheatsheaf – It’s All About the Music showcase.

THURSDAY 21st

PREMIUM LEISURE: The Library – Third and final night of the band’s EP launch residency.
THE SPIN with CHRIS ALLARD: The Wheatsheaf – Jazz guitarist Allard returns to the Spin Club having previously played in Russell Watson’s band on tour.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford
SPARKY’S NEW MOON: The Half Moon

FRIDAY 22nd

ZODIAC REUNION PARTY: O2 Academy



Saturday 16th

FLOFEST / GLOFEST: Florence Park

Initially run as a free, small-scale, family-friendly daytime get-together in the Cowley Park, Flofest has expanded a fair bit since 2013 and this year takes an extra step up towards becoming one of the main summer music events in Oxford with the introducing of Glofest, a ticketed evening event that keeps the party going a bit longer. From 11am til 5, Flofest does its thing, proving a mix of live music, kids activites, educational lectures and world food for a family audience. Up on stage during the day will be Larkrise Samba Band; Collision Theory; Whale; The Heavy Dexters; Art Theefe; Nick Cope; Band of Hope; Papa Nui and a closing set from Count Skylarkin, while the variety tent provides a mix of poetry, dance, singalongs and storytelling. Come half six things get going in earnst on the music front with the inaugural Glofest, aimed at being a laidback but upbeat gig party. Cuban rumba ensemble Ran Kan Kan open the evening bill and are joined by country-soul crew The Deadbeat Apostles; psychedelic electro-rockers Flights of Helios; cheesetastic rave covers band Audacity Live; soulful, pop-friendly reggae faves Zaia (*pictured*), plus dance tunes from DJ James Ussher accompanied by a late-night light show. All that for a fiver, with kids going free. Everything is community organised with all proceeds going to local community projects and back into next year’s event. Grassroots festival going at its best.

– Eleven years after it closed to become an Academy venue, The Zodiac is celebrated with a party featuring bands and club nights from that era. DJs from lounge night Disques



Vogue; 80s, trash and glam night Trashy; reggae, dancehall and ska night Skylarkin’; indie night Transformation and old-school acid house night Audacity come together for two rooms of nostalgic club fun, while local post-punk heroes Earinade, and Osprey & the OX4 Allstars play live.

ZODIAC REUNION AFTER-PARTY: The Bullingdon – The reunion party continues into the early hours as veterans of the old venue attempt to stay awake after midnight.

CHEROKII: The Cellar – Heavy duty riffs’n’beats from the garage rock duo.

THE JIVE ACES: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Livewire jive classics – including ‘Mack the Knife’; ‘Sing, Sing, Sing,’ and ‘When You’re Smiling’, plus originals from the ever-gigging sextet and *BGT* finalists.

EVENLODE JAZZ: The Rose & Crown, Charlbury – Live swing, Latin jazz and blues.

Wednesday 27th

KARMA TO BURN / DESERT STORM / BAD BLOOD RECOVERY: The Cellar

Beards. Hair. Marshall stacks. Riffs. These are the building blocks of West Virginia’s grizzled stoner rockers Karma To Burn. No frills, no prisoners, just... riffs. The band have been around as long as the mountains from which their instrumental opuses seem to be carved it seems, certainly since the mid- 90s, though there were a few years off in the middle while everyone seemingly went off to play for someone else. The trio’s granite-like sound is based on the steady bedrocks of Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin and they share plenty of ground with Kyuss, with whom they have extensive connections (Scott Reeder produced their ‘Appalachian Incantation’ album, while John Garcia guested on vocals). Their last visit to Oxford was a suitably monolithic set at the O2 Academy back in 2014 and tonight’s Buried In Smoke show should be cut from equally heavy-duty cloth. Great heavyweight stoner support from Oxford’s leading metal warriors Desert Storm, whose recent ‘Sentinels’ album is by far their heaviest to date and has seen them win widespread national and international press praise, alongside an opening set from Bad Blood Recovery, formed by former members of Suitable Case For Treatment and The Domes of Silence and thus with heaviosity guaranteed.



SATURDAY 23rd

CATGOD: The Cellar – A free gig from the cinematic local pop crew, fusing dreamy electro-pop with jazz, funk and experimentalism for a sound that touches base with Bat For Lashes and Kate Bush at times.

GROOVE: The Cellar – Disco, funk and house club night with Mac White, Only Child, Ess Gee and Cuba Jacobs

NIGHTSLUGS: The Bullingdon

URBAN FOLK QUARTET: The North Wall, Summertown – Lively folk and roots from the acclaimed quartet, out on another mammoth UK tour ahead of festival season, fusing global sounds, from traditional English and Celtic, to Eastern European, Middle Eastern, Afrobeat, Indian, Cuban, bluegrass and funk into their jigs, reels and songs.

FRACTURE + FUJI + KHAMSA + OVERLOAD: The Wheatshaf – It’s All About the Music local bands showcase.

THE SHAPES + PEERLESS PIRATES + BEARETHISBOY + THE FACTORY LIGHTS: Waterperry Gardens, Wheatley – Benefit show for Helen & Douglas House hospice with party-starting r’n’b, roots rock, folk and new wave faves The Shapes alongside indie and rockabilly-flavoured pirate pop crew Peerless Pirates; political trad-folk storytellers Bewarethisboy, and soulful, reflective roots-pop nostalgists The Factory Lights, all performing in the Waterperry Gardens amphitheatre.

BÖTLEY CRÛE: Tap Social, Botley – Indie, new wave and Britpop covers from the local outfit.

THE BITE: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon – Classic rock covers.

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

THE MIGHTY REDOX: The White Hart, Eynsham

SUNDAY 24th

PIERANORMAL: The Bullingdon (2-11pm) – Special memorial show for the late and much missed photographer and music fan Pier Corona who passed away last year. A gathering of his favourite bands and artists includes a rare hometown show from The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band and a one-off reunion set from Undersmile. Basically a fantastic day of leftfield and experimental music in memory of a very splendid gentleman – *see main news story*

WATERFAHL: Tap Social (5-7pm) – Album launch gig from the acoustic folk-pop duo.

OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Bell, Wantage – Rock and blues covers from the veteran local singer and his band.

FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon

BLUES JAM: Fat Lil’s, Witney (3pm)

MONDAY 25th

KIEFER SUTHERLAND: O2 Academy – Bit of bona fide Hollywood A-list action tonight with Keifer Sutherland bringing his grizzled and gravelly, whisky-soaked country to town, his ‘Down a Hole’ album proving to be a superior cousin to other Hollywood hobby band efforts, his rough-hewn rumble of a voice taking him into Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings territory.



Thursday 28th

LA WITCH / THE OTHER DRAMAS: The Cellar

The flipside to LA’s sunset boulevards has always been its seedy underground rock clubs and LA Witch aren’t about to up-end too many clichés on that score. Black-clad, drenched in reverb and fuzz and singing about death, faded glamour and bad lovin’, they studiedly position themselves between LA rock chick glam and scuzzy goth/punk chic. And really, who can resist some good old fashioned subterranean death-surf-rock dished out with a sizeable chunk of bad-ass attitude. And so Sade Sanchez, Irita Pai and Ellie English ramraid their local record store for The Kills, The Raveonettes, The Cramps and a whole lot of Mazzy Star, strip it down 60s girl group style, crank up the reverb to max and play it simple, loose and decidedly rough-hewn. Result? Great fuzztone songs like ‘Drive Your Car’, a highlight of the trio’s 2017 eponymous debut. As much as anything they remind us of San Francisco’s hugely underrated grunge heroes Frightwig and we don’t dish out compliments like that every day. Stripped-down, simple, fuzzy and with a dark pop heart? Who else could provide support than this month’s *Nightshift* cover stars The Other Dramas. They got hair worthy of Sunset Strip and great garage-pop tunes to match. Helluva double feature show.

CHARLIE DRORE + MEGAN HENWOOD: Nettlebed Folk Club – Two of the leading ladies of trad folk share tonight’s bill at Nettlebed, with veteran, multi-award-winning singer-songwriter Charlie Drore teaming up with Steeleye Span’s Julian Littman to play songs from her new album ‘Dark Matter’. The pair are joined by Nettlebed regular Megan Henwood, also playing songs from her new album, ‘River’.

STEAMROLLER & FRIENDS: Red Lion, Cassington – Bikers night with classic heavy-duty r’n’b from veterans Steamroller, kicking it out in the style of Cream and Hendrix.

TUESDAY 26th

TRAVIS: The New Theatre – The crisis of antibiotic-resistant bacteria continues.

THE WAVE PICTURES: Jericho Tavern – David Tattersall’s seedily romantic, elegantly dour and scarily prolific rockers return to town after their show at The Cellar last year, the band

almost the epitome of enduring heroic underachievement as well as consistent quality, notably recent album ‘Bamboo Diner in the Rain’, channelling the 70s sounds of Lou Reed, Tom Verlaine and Jonathan Richman, a band with “cult favourites” stamped all over them, though as is so often the case, they should be more widely loved. New album ‘Brushes With Happiness’ is out this week.

DIGIT4: The Cellar – Bass, drum&bass and tech house launch night with Wavy D, Burt Cope, Xodos and Joca

SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: James Street Tavern

WEDNESDAY 27th

KARMA TO BURN + DESERT STORM + BAD BLOOD

RECOVERY: The Cellar – The riffs! The riffs! – *see main preview*

GALICIAN MUSIC SESSION: James Street Tavern – Traditional music from northern Spain.

THURSDAY 28th

YWMP TAKEOVER: Truck Store (6pm) – Young Women’s Music Project take over the decks as they launch their crowdfunding campaign for their new base.

LA WITCH + THE OTHER DRAMAS: The Cellar – Californian sunshine pop, without the sunshine from the LA goth-rockers – *see main preview*

OFF KEY: The Cellar

GAZM + CELL + GUILT

POLICE: The Library – Riff-heavy, splenetic hardcore punk from Montreal’s Gazm at tonight’s pay-what-you-can Smash Disco show. They’re on tour with near neighbours Cell, mixing up hardcore and metal, plus local Am-Rep / crust beasts Guilt Police.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

ACOUSTIC THURSDAY: Jude the Obscure

FRIDAY 29th

METAL 2 THE MASSES

FINAL: The Bullingdon – The Competition to win a slot at this summer’s Bloodstock reaches its finale, with four local rock and metal bands going head to head.

STRIKE ONE + ALBOA + BLUE ORCHID + FULL CIRCLE + FOLLIANTS + JONNY RACE: O2 Academy – It’s All About the Music showcase night.

Nightshift listings are free. Deadline for inclusion is the 20th of each month, no exceptions. Listings are copyright of Nightshift and may not be used without permission.

BIKINI DEATHRACE + THE OTHER DRAMAS + JACK LITTLE: The Bell, Bicester – Electroclash and punked-up synth-pop from bemasked boy/girl duo Bikini Deathrace, with support from this month’s *Nightshift* cover stars The Other Dramas.

GARY STEWART’S GRACELAND: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Paul Simon’s classic album in its entirety.

STEAMROLLER: Cowley Workers Social Club

BIG AZZA & THE JUKESTERS: Prince of Wales, Shippon – Live r’n’b, jump jive and swing classics.

SATURDAY 30th

BLACK SKIES BURN + MY DIABLO + LAST RITES + HYMN TO APOLLO: O2 Academy – Church of the Heavy hosts another night of heavyweight rock and metal local action, tonight with extreme black/death and grindcore monsters Black Skies Burn, raging in between Extreme Noise Terror, Dying Fetus and Cannibal Corpse, and whose travels have seen them supporting Napalm Death and Sepultura. Among the support are grime-coated, volume-heavy groove-metal duo My Diablo, mixing up Sabbath, Led Zep and Smashing Pumpkins.

KANADIA + QUARTERMELON: The Cellar – Stadium-ready rock and pop from Abingdon’s Kanadia, taking in U2, Radiohead and INXS as they mix nervous intensity with grand anthems.

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with OAKLAND ROAD + MANAKING + SEMI-URBAN FOX: The Wheatshaf – GTI’s monthly live music club mixes it up again, tonight hosting indie-soul newcomers Oakland Road alongside Bradford’s funky rap-rock act Manaking, mixing up Beastie Boys, Eminem and Tupac with RATM and Nine Inch Nails. Local Libertine and Arctic Monkeys-leaning rockers Semi Urban Fox open the show.

DIRTY WORK + DADA PARADOX: The Harcourt Arms – Classic r’n’b and rock’n’roll covers from local quartet Dirty Work.

VOLUME DNB: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass club night.

PITCH BLACK: The Cellar – Techno summer party with Rortingah, Kamil Maczewa and John Swede.

THE CELLAR

WHAT’S ON IN JUNE

Sat 2nd FREERANGE <i>UKG / Grime / Bassline</i> 11pm–3am • £5	Tues 12th INTRUSION <i>Goth / EBM / Industrial</i> DJS DOKTOR JOY + BOOKHOUSE + GUESTS 8.30pm–2am • £4 otd • Alt Dress Code	Sat 23rd Future Perfect CATGOD + GUESTS 7.30pm–10.15pm • FREE / 16+
Tues 5th HOUSE SWEET HOUSE <i>Soulful / Jazz/ DeepTech House</i> 11pm–3am • £6	Wed 13th BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE <i>80s / New Wave / Disco</i> 11pm–3am • £5	Sat 23rd GROOVE <i>Disco / Funk / House</i> MAC WHITE + ONLY CHILD + ESS GEE + CUBA JACOBS 11pm–3am • £4 adv • £5 otd
Thurs 7th Future Perfect DRAHLA + GUESTS 7.30pm–10.15pm • £6 adv / 16+	Thurs 14th GOODNESS MINOR SCIENCE + PEACH 11pm–3am • £5 • motd	Tues 26th DIGIT4 - LAUNCH PARTY <i>Bass / Dnb / Tech House</i> WAVY D + BURT COPE + XODOS + JOCA 11pm–3am • £4 adv • £6 otd
Fri 8th Future Perfect SEAN MCGOWAN + ANN’S ANCHOR + LOST DARREN + RESTRUCTION 7.30pm–10.15pm • £7 adv	Fri 15th SOUL SESSIONS <i>Disco / Soul / Funk</i> 11pm–3am • £5 all night	Wed 27th BURIED IN SMOKE <i>Stoner rock / rock / heavy metal</i> KARMA TO BURN + DESERT STORM + BAD BLOOD RECOVERY 7pm–10.30 • £12 adv • £15
Fri 8th WOI FM Presents: NO LONG TALK <i>Funky / Hip Hop / Bashment</i> DJ FABES + DJ WOI FM + HONEY Y 11pm–3am • £5 otd	Sat 16th FLUID’S 7TH BIRTH-DAY <i>Bassline / Drum & Bass / UKG</i> 11–3am • £6	Thurs 28th Future Perfect LA WITCH + GUESTS 7.30pm–10pm • £12 adv / 16+
Sat 9th Future Perfect LOMA + ADAM TORRES 7.30pm–10.30pm • £9 adv / 16+	Mon 18th CINEMA UNDER THE STAIRS <i>Oxford’s / Underground / Cinema</i> TERMINATOR 7.30pm for 8.30pm start • £4	Sat 30th PALADIN PROMOTIONS KANADIA + GUESTS 7.30pm–10pm • £6 adv
Sat 9th MOVE SOUND AFFECT & D RAW + STINKIN’ BEATS SHOWCASE + SLIPPERY SLOPES COLLECTIVE 11pm–3am • £6	Fri 22nd PALADIN PROMOTIONS present ... PUNK N’ ROLL CHEROKII + GUESTS 7.30pm–10pm • £6 adv	Sat 30th PITCH BLACK: Summer Techno Party RORTINGAH + KAMIL MACZEWA + JOHN SWEDE 11pm–3am • £5 otd
Mon 11th DANCE KAPITAL <i>Dance / Hip Hop / much more</i> OULC DJS + GUESTS 11pm–3am • £5 otd	Fri 22nd TOTAL LIFE FOREVER <i>Indie Hits All Night Long</i> 11pm–3am • £4 adv • £5 otd	

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



WITCH FEVER / DEATH OF THE MAIDEN / RAINBOW RESERVOIR

The Jericho Tavern

Barely two months after the release of her debut album Angela Space has seen another Rainbow Reservoir line-up dissolve around her, so the new incarnation of her band sees her playing drums as well as singing as part of a straight-up duo. It doesn't detract too much from her songs though, simple and straightforward as they are, like the exuberant thrash-pop of 'Forest Fire' and the bubblegum cynicism of 'Gold Star Girl'. Things are less fun when guitarist Ian Hargest takes vocal duties, a messy Mouldy Peaches-like thrash, but set closer 'Brenda' is what Rainbow Reservoir do best: four-to-the-floor beats and a hurry and flurry of exuberant Ramones-y garage pop all wrapped up in three rapidfire minutes. Any good cheer left in the room is quickly banished to the venue's darkest corners by Death of the Maiden. Opener 'Soldier' is a stunning

statement of intent, a militant march from Jaques Brel to The Mekons via Marc & the Mambas, Tamara Parsons Baker's ice-cold, crystal cut voice picking over the bones of the emotional toll of fighting against injustice. It's an absolute picnic compared to 'Horses' though, a song inspired by a nightmare that comes laced with foreboding and a sense of drama that reminds us of Aldous Harding. While Tamara's songs generally find her baring her soul in the starkest of fashions, there's humour even in the bleaker moments, Hannah Bruce's litany of profanities that provide the harmonies in 'Shut Up' provoking laughs both on and off stage. But it's those dark corners where Death of the Maiden are at their very best: "I had a baby and I named him sorrow" sings Tamara at one point, sounding like Anna Calvi unearthing one of Dolly Parton's most traumatic tales, and even the

occasional dip into angst overkill, as on 'Take Me', can't detract from the fact Death of the Maiden are one of the most striking and essential bands in Oxford right now. They have invited Manchester's Witch Fever to Oxford as a show of solidarity after both bands experienced depressingly predictable sexism at recent shows, and the visitors repay the invitation with a show of seriously malevolent punk/metal firepower. Singer Amy is an alternately cheery and splenetic pocket battleship, firing out lines like "Keep crawling from me and I'll break your fucking jaw" over panzer-heavy riffage, her rich Lancastrian accent making the band sound like a cacophonous coming together of The Lovely Eggs and Black Sabbath. 'Flesh Casket' is bulldozing and spiteful and there's a hefty shot of Babes in Toyland-like venom in their grunged-up garage-noise cocktail. For a band who were catcalled onstage in Bristol for not being proper punk, they're near as dammit the epitome of its sound and attitude. So, to paraphrase another great punk band: get outta their way or they're gonna shove. **Dale Kattack**

UNDERGROUND YOUTH / SHOTGUN SIX / CIPHERS

The Cellar

We say it again and again: turn up for the first acts on the bill. Not to "support the scene", just to ensure you don't miss a great band you've not heard of. Those who arrive early tonight get a real treat, an opportunity to tour Ciphers' charred cathedral of dark-hearted pop. Their first number moves from the brooding menace of 'Mezzanine'-era Massive Attack to the melodic ire of Skunk Anansie, and the set blossoms like *les fleurs du mal* from thereon. The sound is vast, but there's still space for intricately interlocking guitars and chunky unfunk bass *a la* 23 Skidoo. A new but deeply intriguing band. "Just because a record has a groove, don't make it in the groove", sang Stevie Wonder, and how right he was (as well as presciently predicting a time when Truck Store would stock more vinyl than CDs). It's not just funk and soul that ride on the mighty groove, though; many genres benefit from a deep

rhythmic furrow, such as the stoner grunge of Shotgun Six. They make a huge, satisfying noise for a trio (though the giant gong should possibly count as a band member): seismic at the bottom end and psychedelically shimmering at the top. Our single criticism is that the set is back to front, starting with the two heaviest, most hypnotic tracks. Scrub that, they should have *only* played the first two tracks, for 15 minutes each. The groove abides. At *Nightshift*, we don't believe in style over substance; we believe in honesty, quality, talent and – wait... Underground Youth look *really* cool. Black leather, floppy hair, stand-up drummer bashing out elemental Mo Tucker/Phil Spector beats, insouciant stares, the lot. The music is good, too: impassioned yet unruffled scuzz pop with an Andrew Eldritch baritone, that's not far from Black Rebel Motorcycle Club doing Joy Division. Their songs start brilliantly, but do tend to stumble to an end when you want them to explode (or go on forever). The last two numbers, perfectly balanced and building to an inverse stage invasion crescendo, are so good you almost begin to suspect they were fumbling on purpose earlier to ensure a big finish. That's a dangerous game, but, on this evidence, one they're winning. **David Murphy**

RADIATOR HOSPITAL / RESPECTFULCHILD / THE COOLING PEARLS

The Wheatsheaf

Three bands in possession of good names tonight for a change. Tonight's local presence comes in the form of The Cooling Pearls, among whose line-up are tonight's promoters, Divine Schism. Touted as alt-folk there's inevitably nothing particularly alt about them, except for their youth, and only two sport beards. Most endearing are the male/female call and response parts, which helps us immerse ourselves in the woozy, seductive, almost narcotic blend of violin, accordion, acoustic guitar and the most gentle of drums. 'Pablo Picasso, You Helped Me Paint My Life' is a perfect title in that, like the band, it makes sense in a way we only vaguely understand. Respectfulchild is the solo project of Melissa Ginger Gan, the title being the literal translation of their (Melissa's preferred term) Mandarin name. Notes are picked out by plucking a violin, which are then looped and built up into textured soundscapes, which make more sense when you learn they were brought up on the Canadian Prairies. The music is all about space and the void between sounds, something it's too

easy to overlook in a busy city. The result bears comparisons with the ambient electronics of the likes of Pete Namlook and Petar Dundov, and the room is held in respectful silence as they hold us in a delicate web of sonic intricacy. Headliners Radiator Hospital's origins lie in Grand Rapids, Michigan, though now based in Philadelphia where they've crossed paths with Swearin', Waxahatchee and other bands of that scene. Unpretentious indie punk-pop in the vein of a lightweight Dinosaur Jr, they make up for a dearth of variety with a decent singer and an excellent bassist, skilfully keeping matters tight, light and bouncy. "This is 'Ghosts', which you must have a lot of round here, 'cos this place is old as fuck," declares main man Sam Cook-Parrott (another great name), before disappointing us by not launching into the Japan classic. The three acts tonight are very much products of their home environments and all respect to Divine Schism for bringing them together in the kind of night this city does so well. **Art Lagun**

SWEDISH DEATH CANDY / JUNIPER NIGHTS / BLUSHES

The Cellar

First impressions can't always be trusted. As we amble down the stairs into The Cellar, Blushes are just launching into their set, and it would appear that they've have taken Foals spidery, icy-cold riffs and added a sheen of poptastic glitter to them. As their set progresses, however, the intricate guitar patterns quickly become supplanted with rather ordinary and occasionally out of tune indie-pop fare. It's a shame, because clearly at some point, they were onto something quite interesting, and if they can harness those more unusual ideas, then Blushes could blossom. Another band that bears a passing resemblance to Foals are Juniper Nights, but their taut riffing also bears the ambition of the more prog aspects of Radiohead. Their instrumental 'Black Skies' ambles into discordant territory although it's hard to tell whether it's entirely intentional. Just as they sound as if they're going to explode in that classic post-rock manner, they grind to a halt, which is nothing if not original. At times chaotic and with the ambition of a prog-band, Juniper Nights could well be worth keeping an eye on, particularly if they develop their occasional forays into the more

restrained aspects of their set. Swedish Death Candy's name is oddly appropriate. There's something distinctly unsettling about their songs, in the way that they lurch from taut restraint to unbridled explosions of noise and pass it through a filter of sweetness and light. At times they sound as if they've been plucked from 1960s America at the height of Flower Power, only to have their love and peace approach completely subverted. A quick check establishes that Charles Manson isn't amongst their ranks, which is a blessed relief. On paper they sound like a complete mess as elements of the Misfits horror punk mix with stoner riffs, swirling psychedelics, driven motorik beats and classic rock riffs. Louis Perry's vocals are surprisingly dainty and light considering that they're floating on top of a soundtrack that wilfully veers from 'Pretty Woman'-style riffing, through Bootsy Collins rubber bass expositions and at least one section that SUNNO))) might consider a bit too loud. Yet somehow it all combines to create a celebration of music in all its forms. Genres? Where Swedish Death Candy are going, they don't need genres. **Sam Shepherd**

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The Bullingdon

equally flamboyant band include a man mountain of a drummer whose huge beard and green mask make him look like something out of *Pirates of the Caribbean*. As you'd expect, the band exist to put on a show and get a party started, Angel's Tom Waits-like rasp leading the band through frantic polka, gypsy swing, flamenco flourishes, gothic rockabilly, the odd Tarantella, a bit of klezmer and a whole lot of Vaudevillian theatricality. Nick Kenny joins the band on guitar for a few numbers – the position in the band vacant since the tragic death of Nick Marsh –

and proves himself to be the better of Angel.

It's all good unselfconscious fun. But we wonder if maybe it should be *more* fun. All the ingredients are here, but tonight at least, Urban Voodoo Machine hoist the reins on their own party by breaking the set up too much. Instead of building from gutter blues laments to a rousing polka finale they keep taking the mood back down again, losing momentum at each stage. It's a shame because, as Gogol Bordello and even Oxford's own Balkan Wanderers show, there's no party like a gypsy party. Urban Voodoo Machine are a very good party band, but they've got it in them to be a great one.

Dale Kattack

The Cellar

is new material traversing more introspective guitar-led numbers and a final track that is “a bit dancey”, but resolves into guitar-washed joy. Set highlight ‘You Are’ starts with the two word title looped and layered into a mesmeric vocal drone evoking Yndi Hilda and American Football only then to be overthrown by fuzzy chords and bone-shaking synth bass; we feel we could listen to that song for hours.

It’s always encouraging when a pedalboard comes out with a cello bow laid across it, and that initial raising of expectations is not just met, but sailed over. Eyre Llew embrace ambience and power to wash you away into a beautiful haze of reverb and catharsis.

There are clear touch-points in their sound within the post-rock canon, but such academic analysis would remove what is most enjoyable

about them. Bright and crisp chords organically shift and morph into walls of noise that then decay and crumble into effected guitar drones that then pull away to reveal melancholic piano underpinning the whole thing. The sparse moments of vocals add another texture to the mix, though their content is a little lost to the ether. One new track adds Icelandic expanse to what in another life could have been a stadium rock anthem and it's confounding how well it works.

We'd never heard Eyre Llew before tonight, but the quality of their arrangement and delivery leaves us with that warm feeling that comes from your favourite band playing a set of all your favourite songs. Any post-rock fans out there who haven't heard them yet, are definitely missing out and should rectify the situation as soon as possible but really, everyone should go and see Eyre Llew, because great music like this transcends taste and pigeon-holing.

Matt Chapman-Jones

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OXFORD FOLK WEEKEND

Various Venues

For two and half days the Folk Weekend once again brings more enjoyment than there are bells on a Morris dancer’s ankles as it spills out from the city centre venues and pubs onto the streets. Born out of adversity when a few enthusiasts decided that the city would continue to have a weekend celebrating the broad church that is folk after the Oxford Folk Festival folded, the event started in the lower reaches of the Evo-stick League of festivals but just seven years later it is established in the Premier League. This is all the more amazing as the event is run entirely by volunteers.

If trying do the whole weekend can be exhausting – at the end of Sunday there’s a “Survivors’ Session” – it’s also great fun. There are ceilidhs; dances; Morris sides galore; sessions in pubs; workshops; unusual venues, and accessibility for people with special educational needs.

The music tends towards mainstream folk in all its variety but there are acts who push the boundaries, like Jim Moray’s outstanding solo set last year. He’s back this year again headlining Friday night, but this time with **FALSE LIGHTS**, the electric guitar and electronica-driven band he fronts with fellow award winner Sam Carter. They play big and loud – there can’t ever have been a

louder band in the Wesley Memorial Church – but they’re subtle too as they sing of pirates who end on the gallows. Though one number sounds very Fairport Convention like, they are more post-rock than folk-rock with Moray’s tenor and Carter’s baritone creating harmonies to die for. While the highlight in a set of highlights is the whole band singing an *capella* encore, this is a band that would be at home in any of the city’s rock venues.

After that we think Folk Weekend may have peaked early; happily, we’re very wrong. Saturday’s headliner is **ELIZA CARTHY**, MBE and twice Mercury nominated, who gives a performance to match her status as folk royalty. It’s a rare solo appearance – only her second ever, the other being at Towersey Festival way back when she was starting out, she informs us. The rarity of the situation might be why she starts tentatively, but in the second half she comes into her own both own musically and by filling the hall with her large personality, and it all builds to an absorbing climax.

Sunday’s headliners **THE FURROW COLLECTIVE**, are another major folk act. Formed by four notable soloists, including Emily Portman and Alasdair Roberts, they are more understated than both previous

nights’ headliners but command no less attention. Each band member leads a song and the others provide sparse, subtle accompaniment with Alasdair Roberts playing minimalist electric guitar. The foursome spin a seductive web of poignant laments, supernatural ballads and a quirky song about an ailing horse.

So strong is the main programme that we have hardly a moment to visit to any of the free stages. However, we make it to Blackwell’s early on Saturday and catch **SGREPANE**, the never-heard-of-them-before family trio of two sisters and a brother from an Italian Alpine valley who are only here as one of them happens to work in Oxford. They blow our proverbial socks off with their superbly expressive unaccompanied singing, telling of the impact of two world wars on their valley. Plus they are totally charming and we are so taken we make sure to be in Westgate Library for their second performance of the day, and are annoyed when their set is cut short by the library closing. They are the surprise hit of the weekend.

It’s certainly a weekend of difficult choices and we regret we cannot clone ourselves to see either Harri Endersby or Kim Lowerings, both of whom may become big stars of the folk firmament shortly. But we are there for **SOUND OF**

THE SIRENS, a duo whose self deprecating humour makes their gig fun, plus they are pretty good singers and instrumentalists. As well as co-leading False Lights, **SAM CARTER** plays a solo set in which he deploys his warm tenor as well as his baritone voice, shows he is a top class finger-picking guitarist and, big surprise this, a very political singer. The instrumental duo of **ROSS COUPER**’s fiddle and **TOM OAKES**’ distinctive guitar sound seem to breath as one. Couper plays in Peatbog Fairies and the duo are impressively dynamic and fiery but it’s their melancholy tunes which linger longest in the memory.

Anglo French instrumental outfit **TOPETTE** specialise in the dance music of a specific region of France, which might sound a recipe for tedium, but with award winning melodeon player Andy Cutting and a virtuoso bagpipe player in the line-up, it’s the quite opposite.

Welsh trio **ELFEN** takes us on an atmospheric tour, mainly of Celtic countries. Their secret weapon is the dazzling double bass playing of Jordan Price Williams, a man who makes the big beast sing and who, in a high quality field, would get our instrumentalist of the weekend award if we had one to give.

Picking the winner for most emotional moment is much easier. **JENKINSON’S FOLLY**’s version of the epic Rye Lifeboat (the Mary Stanford) Disaster song completely transforms what until then is an ordinary set, and leaves all who hear it in tatters. They perform at the Quaker Meeting House, our favourite venue, with a beautiful garden where we take tea and a few minutes timeout in the sunshine.

For a couple of hours also it’s the venue for stalwarts of the local folk scene **OWL LIGHT TRIO**, all of whom were in the much missed Telling The Bees and who entertain with tunes mainly from Ireland and Brittany. Two of them then join **JON FLETCHER** for his pleasing set of blues and jazz influenced folk and original material.

There are a one or two acts that do disappoint, but overall this year the organisers and artists manage to raise the bar yet again. Cat and her team are going to take a well earned sabbatical from putting on the Folk Weekend next year but when they bring it back in 2020 we know it will continue to hit the heights of the Premier League.

Colin May



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BLACK HONEY

O2 Academy

Like Pale Waves a couple of months ago, Black Honey’s audience is mainly teenage. The crowd a band attracts doesn’t always say something about their music, but tonight’s crowd is cooler and rowdier than usual. Before Black Honey take the stage, a tall pimply guy is taken away by security for clearly being too drunk, while during the gig the moshpits are sweaty whirlpools of 17-year-olds smelling of illicit beer and excitement.

They do love the band, though. There are no stage times, but we’ve been waiting for a while when they finally come on stage near 10pm. Black Honey, fronted by Izzy Baxter, who tonight is wearing a pink glitter dress with cowboy hat and boots, is like an indie rock version of Lana Del Rey, and to be honest, I’m not entirely convinced. It’s not that they’re doing it by numbers – Black Honey are definitely giving what they have, and so is the crowd. But neither is it exactly original, and were it not for Baxter’s distinctive voice I suspect most songs would lose their shine. Exceptions are the excellent ‘Somebody Better’, which is the night’s favourite, and new track ‘Bad Friends’, which shows a different and perhaps more interesting side of the band. And although they’ve dressed up nicely, there’s also not much genuine audience interaction. Izzy Baxter goes through the motions – “Oxford, you look amazing!”, “Are you having fun?” et cetera – but there’s no spark. It’s clear that Black Honey are now a professional touring

band with a successful debut under their arm. At a festival (they’re playing Truck this year), their set would probably work a lot better. But upstairs at the O2, it’s just not it. Caspar Jacobs

FRANK TURNER & THE SLEEPING SOULS / ARKELLS / THE HOMELESS GOSPEL CHOIR

O2 Academy

The phrase ‘it’s not a cult’ is used by Frank Turner devotees to justify their zealous appreciation of the man and his music: tongue-in-cheek I’m sure, but certainly warranted and glaringly apparent this evening. Fast-forwarding a few hours before the faithful lose their collective inhibitions, the lone folk-punk guitarslinger Derek Zanetti (aka The Homeless Gospel Choir) commands the stage with mic, guitar and songs chiefly of a political and mental health nature. Canadians The Arkells’ pop sheen, use of beats and plain lyrics are as saccharine as they are uplifting and provide the perfect introduction to the main attraction. Handpicked by Frank, both supports went some way to influencing the sound and direction of his new LP. A departure of sorts from the usual guitar-driven folk/punk, synth heavy ‘Be More Kind’, while not strictly a political

album, certainly addresses the current political climate and our reaction to it. Frank’s back catalogue of his loves and failings still fill a good part of the set. Now happily in a relationship, he states he can now move on from writing songs about his own romantic ineptitude. This is evident by tonight’s blistering performance of ‘Make America Great Again’, with the valiant urge to, “Make America great again, by making racists ashamed again.” A little naïve perhaps, but the sentiment is admirable. Beefed up from the recorded version, ‘1933’ is a state-of-the-nation anthem of outrage that goes straight for the jugular. Of the other new material aired, ‘There She Is’ flips things completely, being a straight up love song to Frank’s new partner. It has a hint of ‘Underdog’ by Imagine Dragons about it, which brings forth the old adage “targeting the commercial market”: but Frank has never been one to pander to trends and has only ever ploughed his own furrow. Always one to break the barrier between artist and audience, the punk-at-heart Frank crowdsurfs and does his now customary dance with a female member of the audience during the blistering fan favourite ‘Four Simple Words’. A sublime rendition of ‘Polaroid Picture’ seals the deal on this most wondrous performance. Just like a Polaroid picture, a moment is captured and revelled in, before we move on to the next. Now, with solo show 2168 (yep, Frank counts ’em) in the bag and the touring road beneath his feet, Frank Turner’s journey is as unknown as it is endless. Gary Davidson

EASTER ISLAND STATUES / LIFEINC. / BREEZEWAX / AUDACITY LIVE / ZURICH O2 Academy

Picked from almost 100 entries, tonight’s final of the I Want to Play at Common People suggests quality is assured from the off and none of the acts disappoints, even if Breezewax suffers the sort of technical horrors all artists have nightmares about. Zurich’s elegant, dark-hearted electro/indie rock is black clad and polished and comes shrouded in a sense of epic gloom akin to Interpol. Their experience is obvious with a big sound and production that suggests festivals and arenas are in their sights, while songs like ‘Alone’, which closes their short set, could easily bridge the gap between 6Music and Radio 2. Nothing gloomy about Audacity Live who bring the cheese and a sense of silliness to the show. What they do is a simple, effective trick: take a bunch of 70s and 80s hits and give them a rave makeover – acid-okie if you will. So ‘Sweet Dreams’, ‘Born to Be Wild’ and ‘She Sells Sanctuary’ are belted out via four-to-the-floor trance beats and some unselfconscious stadium rock guitar bombast. That the vocals don’t always hit the right note doesn’t matter much and we can even just about forgive their butchery of Blondie’s ‘Atomic’; they’re simply the best kind of daft fun. If Audacity Live suffer a brief moment of


technological failure, Breezewax is forced to cancel his entire set when his laptop fails to fire up. He later manages to play one song at the end, with a far funkier vibe than his recent chill-hop EP, and you can only feel for the poor fella; he deserved to be dealt a better hand. It’s left to Easter Island Statues and Lifeinc. to go head to head for the prize; the latter are newcomers to the scene but already looking and sounding impressively assured, three guitars combining for a sense of uptight euphoria and a stadium-friendly sound that goes the full U2 at the end, stopping off at Nirvana, INXS and Echo & the Bunnymen along the way. Easter Island Statues, though, pip them to the post, the most adventurous and dramatic of the acts here tonight and with the sharpest sense of melody, occasional trumpet intermissions brightening bold, groove-heavy guitar workouts that take The Wedding Present’s repetition through Maximo Park’s abrasive pop and onto something almost bluesy at times. They get the judges’ vote and the chance to open Common People, but it’s obvious from every set tonight that there could and should be room for all five acts on the Uncommon stage next year. Ian Chesterton

THE ACADEMIC / SEA GIRLS

The Cellar

In amongst a seemingly never ending sea of chirpy indie bands with chirpy choruses and chirpy hairdo’s come two more pretenders to a most coveted and fought over throne. From Sundara Karma through to The Hunna via The Magic Gang, Fickle Friends and The Night Cafe, the personnel is the only real change in an endless barrage of happy go lucky personas and non threatening chorus lines. The Academic and Sea Girls have both found their foothold on this well-oiled pole of radio-friendly unit shifting and begin their formal ascent this year, both tipped for greatness by the very people who thrive off their success. First up are Sea Girls, a band whose vessel has clearly hit rocks, the four piece seemingly marooned on a desert island, desperately searching for a USP. The formulaic and unimaginative nature of their compositions and their refusal to take any risks is quickly tiresome, the band sounding like a collage of their contemporaries, the cheeky little guitar licks of Fickle Friends and the chipper hooks of The Magic Gang, and it all starts to feel like going to the fifth sequel of a film that was never that good in the first place. Step forward The Academic, who do have a little more craft to their boppy, shiny songs. There’s a little depth in places and they generally have more backbone, but the overall tonality is the same and stylistically there’s little to call idiosyncratic. It leaps along like a baby lamb, enjoying its time in

the fresh air and having no concept of the abattoir that waits around the corner. You can’t help but feel this indie quicksand we currently seem to be sinking into needs to reach a conclusion as soon as possible. Like all movements it started with a clever amalgamation of a few different ideas and for a year or two sounded vaguely passable: watered down math rock guitar work mixed with super sugary choruses and an upbeat, dance-friendly rhythm section became a foolproof (literally) way of making coherent pop songs for the masses. Skip forward a few short years and we are still stuck in this cyclic monotone, the record labels only just rediscovering how to eek their pound of flesh out of these young groups so unwilling to take risks on fresh ideology just yet. Its predictability is nauseating at times. But it’s also important to remember that when you pick up a guitar, a microphone or a paint brush you are becoming an artist and art should challenge its audience, never mimic and absolutely always attempt to show fresh and invigorating concepts which allow us to escape ourselves and our personal world views. Call me a purist, pretentious or pathetic but for me the current glut of bands on this colourless conveyor belt have no notion of their roles as artists and instead gone for the easy option, the brainless shadow puppetry of their predecessors. Richard Brabin



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THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

5 YEARS AGO

“The day we start being nice is the time to give up” boasted **Headcount** from the cover of June 2013’s *Nightshift*. The band, photographed glowering beefily in front of a shipping container, released their new album ‘Lullabies For Dogs’ this month, their first release in five years, and there was a lot of pent-up anger to vent, with frontman Rob Moss raging against the Murdoch empire as well as remembering his late friend Paul Raven from Killing Joke who had helped the band in the past. “Rob has an opinion on everything” said his bandmates. How we wish more rock bands did.

Up and coming but quickly gone and forgotten this month were **LAC** (Law Abiding Citizens) who released their debut single ‘Borstal Boy’ this month, the band, fronted by locally-based singer Michael Davies’ were feted by everyone from *The Guardian* to *Louder Than War* and had worked with Pete Doherty. They were *Nightshift*’s Introducing act for the month, but we’ve not heard from them since.

Some genuine legends in town this month, including hip hop godhead **Afrika Bambaataa**, who was playing at **The Cellar**; John Lydon with **Public Image Ltd** at the **O2 Academy**, and Queen guitarist and badger champion **Brian May** who played a solo show at **St John the Evangelist**, while looking to the future, **Ghostpoet** was in town at The O2 and **Wolf Alice** were starting along the road to fame with a gig at **The Jericho Tavern**. San Francisco’ weirdo geniuses **Deerhoof** were also at The Cellar, which will doubtless make Lucy Leave excited if they’re reading this.

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DEMOS

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It's June! Or maybe still May if you're reading this early! It's the bloody World Cup! But you knew that already since there is and will be no escape from it from now til the middle of July, even after England get unceremoniously dumped out of it by two pub teams and a bus queue. Until then, prepare to be sick to your very marrow from wall-to-wall exposure to trailers portraying vain, overpaid humanity vacuums as heroic gladiators, and adverts shoehorning football themes into sales pitches for fabric softener. But hey, football, yeah? And Nightshift has never been one to shirk from using such occasions to mess with the demo reviewing format, even if it means you don't get to go straight to the Demo Dumper bit like you always do. Here we go, two groups of four, brought to you by Nightshift: the official parochial music magazine partner of Russia 2018. Winner gets a can of Carling. Loser gets an entire case.

GROUP A

In a potentially compromising situation that could rival Qatar's corrupt World Cup hosting bid, **STOLBY**'s latest recording session was financed by winning Demo of the Month previously. Maybe the referee (that'll be us) and TV commentators (us, again) will be biased in their favour. They start badly though, their new song 'Just One More' starts in pedestrian fashion, pretty much like we expect from early group stage games, all innocuous electronic bubbles and twinkling acoustic guitar, and they only just make it to half time on level terms. Sounds like they get the hairdryer treatment at half time as they up the ante considerably second half, building a bit of moody folktronica atmosphere and singer Xenia Kotyusheva adding a bit of bite to her sweet Harriet Wheeler-like croon. They keep it pretty but bring a bit of tension to their game as they seek a wgoal, eventually winning it with a deceptive, softly floated curler into the top corner.

Their chief competition for group winner comes from **MILVER**, who presented us with a sporadically decent debut back in January. He's thankfully ditched the cod-philosophical ramblings and unfunny skits of that offering with three more succinct slices of simple, lo-fi conversational rap that's as likeably laddish as any lower league journeyman, if lacking the slick skills of its Premier League contemporaries. *Nightshift* will

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

always prefer hearing what's going on further down the pyramid, away from the media circus of bigger stars, so if Milver has more in common with The Streets' reserve team than Kanye or Drake, he's got more blokey charm. And he's got a harp and mentions tackling, which fits into this entire construct. This is already looking tight.

That said there'll always been a whipping boy and **DISLIKABLE PEOPLE** never stand a chance, barely getting out of second gear on their sole track here, 'Asthma'. Football is hardly short of dislikable people, be they John Terry, Pete Winkelman or a sizeable chunk of England's travelling support, but too often they still prevail, while Bradley Wiggins proves that asthma is no block to sporting prowess if you can get the right meds delivered to your door and you have a decent lawyer to hand. That said this lot sound like they'd struggle to make it to the top of a flight of stairs, never mind cycle across the Alps or hold out for 90 minutes against a rampant German side as they bobble along on starry-eyed guitar spangle, some overwrought Pink Floyd histrionics, clackety beats, and a vocalist whose mumbled delivery makes Young Thug sound like Freddy Mercury. It's like sitting through a 0-0 draw between Bury and Newport County on a Tuesday night in November. Right at the death it looks like some kind of action might happen but by then the ref's got the whistle in their mouth and it's all over and we've forgotten what, if anything, happened before we even get back to the car park.

By contrast **THE MOTIVE** are all blood, sweat and tears. Listening to their music is like watching a team made up entirely of eleven sturdy, reliable National League North centre halves who can put in a decent tackle and hoof the ball upfield, but think tika taka is a curry sauce and a nutmeg is something that might go on with a football groupie in a provincial Travelodge. They're all solid, chunky riffage, sometimes a bit funky, occasionally jangly, once in a while a bit stadium-indie sneery, but mostly several shades of insubstantial. Like Switzerland or Paraguay, they're the sort of team who always seem to make it to the finals but leaves little or no impression, score or style wise. They sound a bit like The Black Keys and a bit like Red Hot Chili Peppers at various points. They are the very definition of mid-table obscurity. **MILVER** takes the group on goal difference from **STOLBY**.

GROUP B

Due to a bizarre administrative error and a dodgy Wi-Fi set-up, somehow the tiny, remote Pacific island of American Samoa has qualified for the World Cup finals, despite a tendency to leak 20 goals or thereabouts every game. That's how it feels listening to **BILL FRIZZELL**'s new song, his first demo offering since his likeably ramshackle fundraiser/awareness raiser for testicular cancer back in 2013. This time round the heavily-bearded, ukulele-wielding eccentric presents 'Crossing Warneford Meadow – Three Years in Three Minutes' (actually two minutes, forty seconds), which is exactly that: a video cut-up of the meadow in question taken from the same spot through the seasons with some rudimentary acoustic strumming accompaniment and Bill's occasional narrative interjections. Oh, and some tractor footage, for them what like that kind of thing. It's the sort of thing that might have appeared on a kids TV programme back in the 1980s, before kids got sophisticated, to show the passing of the seasons. It's amiable and well intentioned but it's also six goals down in the first fifteen minutes and FIFA officials are desperately trying to pretend it isn't happening.

Which should make **THE SHRIVES** clear favourites to win this group. After all, they're professional, proficient and polished: attributes you might look for in a goalkeeper, or maybe flatpack furniture, if not an inspirational rock band. They've got a rather more sophisticated accompanying video than Bill could manage too. They play with an almost infectious sense of exuberance and a summery vibe and you can just picture them opening for Catfish & the Bottlemen or being cranked out by Steve Lamacq mid afternoon on 6Music. Hard to dislike but equally difficult to actually remember, like Peterborough United. The sort of team who'll never be champions, never pack out Wembley and yet conversely rarely end up getting relegated. The sort of team you might get behind if they're drawn against Chelsea in the cup before immediately forgetting their continued existence. The musical equivalent of pre-season optimism, and we know how that tends to pan out.

This group is wide open then, with no clear favourite and **MAX BLANSJAAR** further upsets the bookies' predictions by being the Demo World Cup equivalent of Iceland at Euro 2016, albeit without the Viking chants. He does, though have the exotic surname and limited resources at his disposal as well as a go-get'em attitude (last year, aged just 14, Max organised Oxford's only Oxjam gig)

that carries this lo-fi offering over the lines, his voice stuck through a distortion pedal so he sounds like Jeffrey Lewis trying to be Frank Sidebottom, the jangly thrash of the one song here, 'Stage 1', a genial kiddie cousin of Courtney Barnett or Graham Coxon's solo stuff. Against the odds, he blindsights the opposition, scores a few goals, sneaks a win here and an honourable draw there and goes home head held high: a heroic underdog performance that, with a bit more experience and technical prowess might see a higher seeding next time round.

Instead the group winner comes from a more considered, if equally unlikely source, **FRANCES SALTER**, a new young local singer/songwriter whose piano-led songs come from the Regina Spektor academy of quirky midfield approach play, the slight hesitancy of her one song here, 'Endgame', belying a melodic sense of purpose. Its careful construction might not appeal to kick-and-rush thrillseekers, but it's the end result that matters and if neat pop ideas count as goals, Frances finds the back of the net with ease.

THE FINAL

Fans and commentators alike are likely to be seduced by **FRANCES SALTER**'s understatedly passionate piano pop, and the more you listen to her the more the elegance in her music makes itself apparent, but she's up against **MILVER**, an artist whose inconsistency last time round has solidified into something to be reckoned with. And don't forget he's also got a harp, albeit a sampled one. Like Frances he's also got a sense of purpose; his is a heads down, steady rap flow that comes backed up with some cheerily funky backing vocals on 'Bohemian Sickness' for that authentic 90s hip hop vibe. There's also a bit of Latin flair in the Flamenco-flavoured guitar back line and the rapid-fire but conversational rap style of 'Touching Up the Place' makes for a likeable lope. Given their respective playing styles it was never going to be a blood and thunder final, but both teams show plenty of cultured touches and a keen eye for goal. It's a close-run thing but in the end Milver has more music in his armoury to fall back on and takes the title. Both acts get to do a lap of honour and *Nightshift* pours itself a large glass of exotic samba rhythms and slumps on the sofa to watch Morocco v Iran. Music and football are just the best. Maybe next month we'll do the demo reviews as if it was a cat show.

Actually, scrap that: we like all cats, which is something we could never say about demos. Same old same old next time then, pop pickers.

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. Same goes for your stupid, over-sensitive mates.

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Tue 22nd May • 7.00pm

Close The Gates Night 2

Wed 23rd May • 6.30pm

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Sun 27th May • 6.30pm

Cocaine Piss

Fri 1st Jun • 7.00pm

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Sat 2nd Jun • 7.00pm

OMYO + Hydrocele + Ash Adams

Sat 2nd Jun • 7.00pm

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Wed 6th Jun • 7.00pm

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+ The LaFontaines + Yungblud

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Tony Christie

Fri 8th Jun • 7.00pm

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Fri 15th Jun • 6.30pm

Nick Heyward + Pugwash

Fri 22nd Jun • 7.00pm

Zodiac Reunion Party

ft Disques Voge, Sky Larkin, Transformation, Osprey

Mon 25th Jun • 7.00pm

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Sat 30th Jun • 7.00pm

Black Skies Burn

ft Diablo, Last Rites, Hymn To Apollo

Fri 6th Jul • 7.00pm

Super Hans

Fri 3rd Aug • 7.00pm

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Thur 6th Sep • 7.00pm

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Fri 5th Oct • 6.00pm

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Fri 16th Nov • 6.30pm

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