

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month
Issue 289
August
2019

*"We're all massive dog
lovers and try not to melt
them if we can help it."*



Easter Island Statues

Plasticine dogs, puppet pirates and caterpillar cakes with Oxford's big-hearted rockers

Also in this issue:

Introducing **BLOODSHOT**

CORNBURY reviewed

RITUAL UNION - latest line-up news

RIDE - new album reviewed

plus

All your Oxford music news, previews and reviews, and four pages of local gigs for August

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

THE BULLINGDON

AUGUST 2019 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Friday 2nd August

WhitesnakeUK

Doors: 7pm

Friday 2nd August

K-Funkz: Summer House Party

Doors: 11pm

Friday 16th August

The Come Up

Ledzy

Bravo

Silva X Elz

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 10th August

Cave Sounds

Jason Kaakoush

Chah

Nazz B2B J.P.

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 17th August

Rabidfest

Conan

Red Method

Confessions of a Traitor

Vig

Hell's Gazelles

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 17th August

Rabidfest

After Party

Doors: 11pm

Sunday 18th August

Rabidfest

feat. Secret Guest

Desert Storm

Bast

Gutlocker

Doors: 7pm

Sunday 24th August

Goa Matrix: Jack Lane

ZZbing

Boote

Ridgedogg

Doors: 11pm

Friday 30th August

Toology

Doors: 7pm

Friday 30th August

Terraforms

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 31st August

Wayne Hussey

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 31st August

Summer Vibes Can't Done

Part 2

Doors: 11pm

Wednesday 6th September

Childcare

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 7th September

Ox-Skool Breaks #1

Pete Cannon

Sunny & Deck Hussey

Side FX B2B Beeno

Bustin B2B Skampy

Lowercase B2B Paul Bradley

Alk-E-D B2B Deluxe

Doors: 9pm

Wednesday 13th September

Skinny Molly

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 12th September

Mclusky*

Doors: 7pm

Friday 12th September

Thunderstruck

AC/DC Tribute

Doors: 7pm

Friday 13th September

Break Stuff

A Night of Nu-Metal Nostalgia

Doors: 11pm

Thursday 17th September

Ferris & Sylvester

Doors: 7pm

Friday 20th September

The Leisure Society

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 21st September

Musical Medicine

Jimmy Rouge

Doors: 11pm

Wednesday 25th September

Sean Webster Band

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 28th September

K-Funkz

Serial Killaz

Doors: 11pm

Sunday 29th September

The Pale White

Doors: 7pm

Monday 30th September

Sam Outlaw

Doors: 7pm

Tuesday 1st October

Hunkpapa

Doors: 7pm

Wednesday 2nd October

Plastic Mermaids

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 3rd October

Cassels

The Saint Pierre Snake Invasion

Doors: 7pm

Friday 4th October

Apré

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 5th October

Skylarkin Soundsystem

Mungos HiFi

Doors: 11pm

Thursday 10th October

David Ford

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 12th October

Musical Medicine

CC:Disco!

Doors: 11pm

Sunday 13th October

Pip Blom

Doors: 7pm

Friday 18th October

The Wurzels

Doors: 7pm

Friday 18th October

Simple

Midland

Doors: 11pm

Saturday 19th October

Ritual Union

Teleman

The Comet is Coming

+ Much More

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 24th October

The Della Grants

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 24th October

Bassface: 24hr Garage Girls

& Eva Lazarus

Shosh + Lady Ice

Eva Lazarus (PA Set)

Effi Brooks

Doors: 11pm

Friday 25th October

Dreadzone

Doors: 11pm

Wednesday 30th October

Robert Vincent

Doors: 7pm

Thursday 31st October

Jesca Hoop

Doors: 7pm

Saturday 9th November

Simple

Dr Rubenstein

Doors: 11pm

Monday 11th November

Josefin Ohm

Doors: 7pm

NEWS

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DIVE DIVE released their long-awaited fourth studio album in July, but are not planning to reform for any live shows. The one-time local favourites released 'The Waves Behind' on Spotify, Apple Music and iTunes last month; it is their first new release since 2001's 'Potential' album. The album was written and recorded three years ago, while the band were on indefinite hiatus, with singer and guitarist Jamie Stuart moving to the United States and the rest of the band – guitarist Ben Lloyd, bass player Tarrant Anderson and drummer Nigel Powell – becoming Frank Turner's backing band. Talking to *Nightshift*, Tarrant explained: "Jamie came back earlier this year and is back living in Bladon but we've been so busy with Frank that we haven't had a chance to do anything with Dive Dive. We're doing festivals most weekends over the summer with Frank and recently headlined the Avalon Stage at Glastonbury. I wouldn't rule a Dive Dive show out but I don't think it's on the immediate horizon, although the record is getting a really good reaction so far, so who knows."

MASTER OF NONE release a new album this month. 'There Be Monsters' features nine songs, including two previously unreleased tracks alongside recent singles 'This Animal', 'Wolf and Ram', 'You Will Get What You Deserve' and 'North Star'. The album is available at masterofnone01.bandcamp.com

ABINGDON & WITNEY COLLEGE are hosting open days and drop-in sessions for their new music technology, performing arts, production, media and games development courses beginning in September. Both campuses will be open from 10am on Thursday 22nd and Friday 23rd August, as well as every Wednesday until the 14th August, from 1-4pm. To find out more about the courses on offer, visit www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk.

SAE OXFORD are running two-years media degrees in audio production, and one-year diplomas in sound engineering beginning in September. Anyone interested can register for an open day event at www.sae.edu/gbr/oxford-open-event.

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



CASSELS release a new album next month. The Oxford-London duo release 'The Perfect Ending' on the 6th September on Big Scary Monsters. Brothers Jim and Loz Beck also play their biggest hometown headline show to date on Thursday 3rd October when they come to The Bullingdon alongside The St. Pierre Snake Invasion, who they are heading off on a UK tour with to promote the new record.

The follow-up to 2017's 'Epithet', 'The Perfect Ending' finds Cassels dealing with climate catastrophe and the destruction of the natural world. The first single from the album, 'The Leaking Ark', is a righteous exploration of humanity's exploitation of animals.

Talking about the new album last month, Jim said: "The title, 'The Perfect Ending', is my attempt to put a positive spin on the fact climate change is going to kill us all. I thought it would be interesting to try and write about environmental issues in a way that wasn't didactic or preachy, and didn't consist of me singing lines like "Mother Earth is dying, ooh yeah, we need to save the rainforests, man" while mournfully strumming a lute.

"All of the tracks on the second half of the record are an attempt to approach the subject from various oblique and surreal angles. The title track, for example, is about all the plants deciding enough is enough and conspiring to wipe out humanity before we take them with us. For me, humanity being wiped off the face of the Earth is a happy ending, though we decided we couldn't call the album 'The Happy Ending' due to the obvious connotations with seedy massage parlours. If you reflect on our contribution to the planet as a whole, we totally deserve to die. We're the only species intelligent enough to realise we're killing ourselves and the world we inhabit, whilst simultaneously being too greedy to do anything about it".

Tickets for The Bullingdon show are on sale now, priced £7.50+bf, via Seetickets.com.

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.

SHE DREW THE GUN, BO NINGEN AND PSYCHEDELIC PORN CRUMPETS are among the latest acts to be added to this year's **Ritual Union** festival.

The one-day, multi-venue event takes place on **Saturday 19th October** at the O2 Academy, The Bullingdon, The Library and Truck Store.

Other new acts announced are: Another Sky, Do Nothing and Febueder, while the local contingent is bolstered by Candy Says, Max Blansjaar, Julia Meijer, Knobblehead and Lee Riley.

Headline acts already announced are **Teleman**; **The Comet Is Coming**; **Ibibio Sound Machine** and **Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs**, while Young Knives; Twin Peaks; Flamingods; Soft Cavalry; The Murder Capital; Heavy Lungs; Trudy & the Romance; Premium Leisure; Scalping; Porridge Radio; Egyptian Blue; Pet Sematary and The Cooling Pearls are among the other acts already confirmed.

With 2018's event, featuring Nadine Shah, Gaz Coombes, Ghost Poet and Jane Weaver, hailed as one of the highlights of the local musical year, this year's event is likely to sell out. Tickets are on sale from Seetickets.com as well as Truck Store on Cowley Road.



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Easter Island Statues



“**AT THE START OF MAKING** the video, we had no idea of the emotional impact it would have on people,” says Easter Island Statues singer and guitarist Donald Campbell, “but as we progressed further and further with shooting it, we definitely began feeling less and less desire to melt the plasticine Laika with a hair dryer – and her stunt-double in the oven. We’re really pleased how much the video resonated with people and brought a bit of attention to her story. We’re all massive dog lovers and try not to melt them if we can help it.”

DONALD IS TALKING ABOUT the animated video to his band’s 2018 single ‘Laika’ that had viewers, including this cynical old sod, quietly weeping as it told the story of the first dog in space: from her puppyhood on the streets of Moscow, to her death from overheating as Sputnik re-entered earth’s atmosphere.

IT’S A LOW-BUDGET minor masterpiece worthy of Aardman, a superb accompaniment to a song that *Nightshift* described as “the best song The Libertines never wrote,” a heroic slab of rough’n’tumble anthemic indie rock, slightly ragged and untamed around the edges, questing of purpose and a little plaintive, something that has become Easter Island Statues’ stock-in-trade. It earned the band a place in last

year’s *Nightshift*’s end of year Top 10. Its follow-up, ‘Skeleton Quay’, released in February, was even better, and came with another joy of a video, this one featuring a puppet pirate fighting an octopus in Davey Jones’ Locker. This month the band release a full five-song EP, ‘I Wouldn’t Worry About It’, featuring those singles, plus new one ‘Teddy’, which features another space-race themed video: appropriate given the 50th anniversary celebration of the first moon landing..

JOINING DONALD IN Easter Island Statues are bassist James Askwith and drummer Thomas Hitch. While now firm favourites on the Oxford scene, the trio’s roots lie further north. “I met James at Leeds Uni and we started playing music together,” explains Don; “James moved to Oxford and I relocated to Cheltenham: close enough to do the odd gig in Oxford with help from our friend Felix from Cherokii on drums, but it was a very casual thing because of the distance. I moved to Oxford in late 2016 and shortly afterwards we found Tom after posting an ad online. He was our only response!” Having made Oxford their home, Easter Island Statues quickly made friends with other local bands, notably Self Help, Lucy Leave and Cherokii, discovering the city’s supportive music community.

“It feels like there has been a real explosion of seriously talented bands coming through in the last couple of years,” says Don; “that inspires you to work harder on all aspects of your live performances and recordings.

EASTER ISLAND STATUES’ first release was 2017’s ‘Why Don’t You Live In The Garden?’ EP that included the songs ‘Jousting Colours’, which has subsequently racked up 14,000 Youtube plays and was used by Truck Festival as part of their online ad campaign, and ‘Holy Day’, which has been seen by over a million people as part of O’Neil’s Hit the Road wakeboard series. Don and James initially bonded over a love for Neutral Milk Hotel, Pixies and Ennio Morricone’s spaghetti western soundtracks, while reviews have drawn comparisons to acts as diverse as Maximo Park, Lemonheads, The Wedding Present and Stornoway and have revelled in the trio’s ability to create big, bold melodies that seemed to have as much in common with folk music as rock, but coat them in a wall of guitar noise.

“We used a mandolin on a song once,” says James, “and the folk label has followed us ever since. Initially we were resistant to be branded folk, because that was not our intention. More recently we’ve embraced it as an element present in some of our songs, particularly the

melodies, even if the sound is very noisy. ‘Underground’, off our new EP, certainly has a folk vibe to it. Don also writes songs that sound a bit like nursery rhymes sometimes. One in particular sounded a bit too similar to ‘Old McDonald had a Farm’. Not sure what the legal position on plagiarising that would be. We may bring it back one day.” Folk or not, what is indisputable is that Easter Island Statues’ songs are invariably bold and passionate. “Big hearted” is an oft-used description. It makes for music that is anthemic and crying out to be sung along to. “I think it’s partly because we are not very good at playing complicated things,” laughs James. “I don’t think it’s something we actively think about when we’re writing and arranging,” adds Don. “Our songs are usually based around the main vocal melody, so when we get together and hammer-out the parts, we’re mainly focused on making the arrangements as simple and as effective as possible.”

WHILE THAT FIRST EP immediately earned the band fans, ‘Laika’ really saw them capture people’s imaginations, both for the song itself, and for the video. What was it about Laika’s story that grabbed them? Don: “I think it was the helplessness of her situation. Laika was a stray who was lured from the streets and

began to trust her new owners, only for them to eventually send her on her one-way journey. Originally they were planning to put a system in place to bring her safely back to earth but because the Soviet government wanted to time the launch of Sputnik 2, her rocket, to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution, they decided to jettison that part of the spacecraft to speed up build-time; pretty heart-breaking. The official version was that she died after eating poison administered in her food to avoid a painful death on re-entry into the Earth’s atmosphere. However a few years ago they admitted that this was a lie and her death was likely excruciating due to the overwhelming heat. Poor thing.”

AS WITH ‘LAIKA’, THE subject matter of some of Easter Island Statues’ songs, and the videos that accompany them, can be quite melancholy but the music is always effusive and positive sounding; is that intentional? Do the band see it as a good way to bring emotional subjects to listeners in an upbeat fashion? Don: “I don’t think it’s intentional. It’s always tons of fun making music videos, but when we’re shooting them, we’re just thinking about what visuals will best suit the music. We don’t usually think much further beyond that really: any excuse to mess around with plasticine and puppets!”

Would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic people? Don: “I can be a bit of both ends of the spectrum but mostly bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, a bit like being in a room with a black Labrador. James can be quite pragmatic and gets surprised when things actually do turn out as planned. Tom is somewhere in the middle, and keeps us buoyant. Our personalities blend well together, which is really important in a band, and we’re always excited to see what’s around the next corner.” Escapism is something the band claim to be inspired by, which comes out in those videos; what, we wonder, are their favourite escapist things? Don: “Eating. We have been known, in the distant past, to cook giant pasta bakes full of fruits and vegetables, before watching documentaries on the South Pacific, Charles Manson, 1960s live US election coverage or just hours of vintage 90s MTV band interviews. I sometimes escape through cakes. After Uni I went to Madagascar for an internship, managed to lose a third of my body weight over four months and then inhaled a party-sized Colin the Caterpillar over two days. It was meant to serve 40.”

STICKING WITH THE subject of videos, in the age of Spotify playlists, is a good video still

important to the success of a record? Don: “I don’t think it’s as important as it used to be. Curated Spotify playlists seem to be the most effective way of getting your music exposed to new audiences, or well placed syncs. It’s a shame as we really enjoy making them, but a great video isn’t going to break through for you on its own, so it’s always very tricky thinking what is the best way to spend time and money on the songs to give them the best chance of exposure.” Presumably your vids are powered more by imagination than huge budgets. Does that help focus the creative side when you don’t have a lot of money to work with? Don: “I think, as a three-piece, we’re always trying to keep our songs as focused as possible for maximum punch, and it’s how we think about our music videos as well: trying to

“I went to Madagascar for an internship, lost a third of my body weight over four months, then inhaled a party-sized Colin the Caterpillar over two days. It was meant to serve 40.”

decide the best method to achieve the visuals we want with the resources we have. Hobbycraft is an utter godsend. Given a big budget I think we might end up going full Spinal Tap and end up with a miniature Stonehenge moment with a moai.” The video for ‘Teddy’ is, like Laika, space travel themed; is that a particular fascination for you? If you could travel to any place in the universe, where would it be? James: “I’ve always thought that having a little holiday hut on Pluto would be nice. Just for a quiet weekend away.” Tom: “The Orion Nebula would be cool but I’d settle for the Northern Lights here on little ol’ earth.” And alongside the video for ‘Skeleton Quay’ there’s a regular theme of peril or death in hostile environments; is that intentional? Don: “I’ve always been fascinated by tragic historical events and this has definitely been finding its way into our songs and the music videos. In the last few years since moving to Oxford I’ve really been fascinated by Jim Jones and the 1978 Jonestown mass suicides that occurred in Guyana. This interest culminated in our new song ‘Kaituma’. Once his thousand followers migrated down to South America with him from California Jim would record all of his public announcements and Jonestown meetings onto tape. There’s a website called ‘Alternative Considerations of Jonestown & Peoples Temple’ where you can actually listen to all 971 of these tapes which the FBI recovered from Jonestown after the deaths in the jungle community, including the ‘death tape’ recorded

on 18 November 1978. It’s harrowing stuff.” What would be your individual greatest fears? Don: “Sleep paralysis.” James: “The upside-down.” Tom: “Thought control.”

WHILE THE TRIO WILL launch their new EP with a headline show at The Wheatsheaf this month, a sound as big and bold as Easter Island Statues’ cries out to be played on big festival stages. Luckily they’ve been able to perform on plenty of those over the past year or so. Last summer they won a battle of the bands to earn an opening slot on the main stage at Common People in South Park. Don: “I managed to lose my wallet in the tall grass behind the main stage minutes before we were due to play. Actually playing our set was pretty

surreal. It was cool we had our giant white moai being projected on the big screen behind us too! I didn’t really meet too many bands backstage; originally I wanted to meet Stina from Honeyblood and nerd out over early 90s alt-rock but didn’t see her.” James: “Backstage is different from what it’s made out to be. It’s mainly busy people running around in hi-viz jackets with clipboards, drinking tea and coffee, quietly and diligently keeping the whole event running according to plan, but the whole thing would fall apart without them. Playing on that stage was incredible; I like to think how many people in the east Oxford area heard the music in the distance.” Tom: “It was – and still is – one of the best days of my life; I can’t say I spent much time backstage but before we were on we sheltered from the rain and had a beer with the lovely folks from Worry.” The band also played Cornbury last month; given it was their first visit, how did it live up to its reputation? Tom: “The main thing I knew about Cornbury was that David Cameron went there, so I was concerned it might be full of pricks; thankfully it wasn’t and we had a great day filled with stunning sunshine and equally brilliant music. Premium Leisure on the Riverside were imperious and wonderful. Gaz Coombes and The Specials were obviously a massive highlight, and I bumped into Saffiyah Khan in the crowd just before she jumped on stage and sang on ‘10 Commandments’!” As well as the hometown EP launch, Easter Island Statues are heading to Germany this month for a short tour.

James: “My girlfriend is German and has family who own a venue in Berlin. She managed to get us a gig there, and that started the search for other gigs.” Don: “We’re kicking off a bit of a mini-tour promoting the new EP starting on 25th July in London. Then we’re all jumping on the Eurostar and heading over to Germany for a string of dates. We’ve currently got Cologne, Berlin and Twistringen lined up, as well as a few open mics in Bonn and Hamburg. It’s been a dream of mine to play a gig in continental Europe for a long time and I haven’t been to Germany before, so I am very, very excited! Then we’re back to Oxford for the last leg of the tour at The Wheatsheaf for a big blow-out double party, as James’ birthday is the same day, so there will be much cake.”

Have any of you been to Easter Island? How about doing a gig there amid the statues? Don: “If you’re paying the airfare, we’re in. We do have one fan who lives there. Hey Sol!” Do you see this new EP taking things to another level for the band? Don: “Oh yes. There’s going to be a big ticker-tape parade through the middle of Oxford; wood carvings are going to be etched in our honour by the mountain tribes of Caspiar; grass will taste even sweeter and plasticine animals will become even more malleable and delicious in our hands. In all honesty we don’t really know what will happen, but that’s half the fun. We always get ridiculously excited when writing and recording new music – as long as that continues so will we.” The EP’s called ‘I Wouldn’t Worry About It’ – why not and what keeps you awake at night? James: “My cat keeps me awake at night, but I wouldn’t worry about it.”

IF EASTER ISLAND STATUES keep us awake at night it’s only because their songs have such a habit of lodging themselves in your head. Listen to ‘Skeleton Quay’ a couple of times and tell us it’s not an A-grade earworm. Keep writing songs of that quality and even those festival stages will struggle to contain them. Like Laika, they’re a band who deserve to go stratospheric. Before they go though, we have to ask Don, a man who towers above pretty much anyone he stands next to: are you the tallest man in Oxford music? “I think Will from Fancy Dress Party has me by an inch, but I’m trying my best to catch up.”

‘I Wouldn’t Worry About It’ is out now. Easter Island Statues play The Wheatsheaf on Saturday 17th August.

RELEASED

RIDE ‘This Is Not A Safe Place’ (Wichita)

Anyone imagining ‘This Is Not A Safe Place’ might be a comment on the music on Ride’s sixth studio album will be left either disappointed or relieved, depending on their standpoint. The band were never going to chance their arm at drill music, instead recognising that what they do best is what they did first and thereafter.

If 2017’s ‘Weather Diaries’ pretty much wiped memories of the disappointing ‘Tarantula’ from Ride’s timeline, ‘This Is Not...’ sticks faithfully to that period where the band kept one hand on their early noise-blast shoegaze, while starting to explore more spacious places and electronic music.

The recent singles from the album provide high points but also contrasting sides of 21st Century Ride: the former is all grace, elegance and delicacy in its spangfest: classic Ride on every level, as good as their early 90s peak. ‘Repetition’, meanwhile, is darker, dirtier, heavier on the electronics, an insistent pulse that delves into early 80s synth-pop and post-punk. A deviation, but a successful one for a band whose love for The Cure and New Order was never a secret. That darker side of new wave emerges even more fully on ‘Kill Switch’, almost minimal in its construction, bulldozing in its execution. Elsewhere ‘Clouds of St Marie’ is sweet, swoonsome, featherlite shoegaze is Ride at their dreamiest, while ‘Jump Jet’ is again Ride just doing what they’ve always done best – keeping things simple yet enveloping as the song billows into a blizzard of snowflakes and cherry blossom



GRUB ‘Some Kind Of Way To Live’ (Self released)

Some years ago 6Music DJ duo Mark Radcliffe and Stuart Maconie posited that James were “a cheese on toast band,” inferring that no-one ever thought “I have to go and listen to James,” but as soon as they came on the radio, you realised



guitars.

Where the album falters occasionally is when those guitars textures are put one side and the vocals, and particularly lyrics, are given centre stage. ‘Dial Up’ is almost a solo acoustic piece but defies expectations with a strong but tender melody, but ‘Shadows Behind the Sun’ plays to none of the band’s strengths and struggles for substance, and ‘Eternal Recurrence’ sounds like it might have come from a dreampop auto-generator.

‘In This Room’, the album’s closing song, redeems any such failings, a hark back to their early Cocteau Twins influences and adhering closely to their winning start-small, build-big aesthetic. It’s a suitably euphoric end to an album that stays true to Ride’s legacy without sinking into complacency. In many ways it is a safe place, but then Ride have always been content to explore the expanse of the cosmos.

Long may that journey continue.

Dale Kattack

how great they were. The punchline to all this came when the pair suggested as much to Tim Booth only to receive a stoney-faced “actually, I’m gluten intolerant and a vegan.”

But cheese on toast is a decent analogue for Grub: they’re simple and effective, possibly lethal in very high doses but late at night, they’re all you need. And like the grill, you need to stick the volume on really high to get them just right.

This new four track EP continues where their last one, and myriad gigs in the Library’s dark, sweaty confines, left off: molten, gooey garage rock riffage slathered in grunge attitude and 70s rock, free of fancy culinary trappings, revelling in its tasty, roof-of-mouth-scouring simplicity. It’s The Stooges, The MC5, Mudhoney, Nirvana and Iron Butterfly rolled into a plateful of bite-sized mozzarella-infused doughballs and scoffed in one sitting.

A previous *Nightshift* review described Grub’s music as “dumb” (in a good way) but really, you have to be smart to make something this basic sound good, and with all natural ingredients too. So, get it down your t-shirt where it’s impossible to wash out: a greasy, guilt-free feast.

Ian Chesterton



CAPTAIN KUPPA T & THE ZEPPELIN CREW ‘Sloe Jams’ (Self released)

Our last encounter with local a cappella quartet Captain Kupp T & The Zeppelin Crew didn’t end well as we ended up describing them as “highly irritating” (a description which, to their eternal credit, they wore as a badge of honour). So a second album of pun-laden songs, skits and extremely dodgy cover versions, didn’t fill us with much enthusiasm, despite the generous display of homemade jam and cake on the cover.

More than happy to admit most, if not all, fears were unfounded. Where previously they went the full chap-hop, across these eight songs they delve into traditional English folk singing, barbers shop quartet and plenty of updated Vaudevillian humour, now less a twee in-joke, more a genuinely talented quartet of singers.

Opener ‘Give Me Tea’ is a silly, spirited take on trad folk piece ‘Gaudete’ that’s knowing enough to dip into Steeleye Span’s version. The tea theme continues on ‘What Shall We Do With The Drunken Captain’, which gets us to thinking of Aussie harmony crew Tiger Lillies, but they don’t overdo the joke, and original song ‘Crooks & Nannies’ is a very decent tribute to barbers shop quartets and The Andrews Sisters, while featuring some fine human beatboxing into the bargain.

Despite a huge aversion to Queen, even we can enjoy the camp and bawdy ‘Bare Bottom Chaps’ with a bravura lead performance from Captain Horatio Kupp T himself, though the real laugh-out-loud high point of the album is ‘The Elven King’ (another nod to Steeleye Span) where the refrain “A king elf” reveals itself to be something far ruder, recalling *Not the Nine O’Clock News’* genius take-down of *The Two Ronnies*.

There are still moments where we wish they’d knock some of the faux-posh tweeness on the head, but they’re few and far between and probably work better in a live setting, and overwhelming ‘Sloe Jams’ is more great than grating. Never mind metalcore, seems kettlecore is now an actual thing.

Dale Kattack



GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS ‘Taylor Mountain Memorial’ (All Will Be Well)

THE DOLLYMOPS Love Grows Pale (Four Twenny)

Time defuses all offence. Spend your Sunday re-enacting the Battle Of Naseby, nobody blinks; recreate Bloody Sunday and it’s considered bad taste, but for the people who died they were much the same. Similar story with The Dollymops, named after a Victorian term for a part-time sex worker. Seems as though if they were called The Sluts or The Amateur Slatterns, people would rightly call them out as chauvinists, but somehow the quirky Dickensian atmosphere softens the blow.

That’s the band all over, really, skirting lamebrain yob punk and pulling themselves back from the brink with a theatrical flourish and a cheeky vaudeville wink. This new track doesn’t have the spice and storm of their previous new wave kickabouts, but it rattles along in a quieter way, reminding us a little of The Police in their less reggaefied moments,

PORT IN A STORM ‘Beyond the Gate’ (Self released)

‘Do We Have To Do It The Hard Way?’ is the title of a track on this full debut album from Port In A Storm. It also pretty much sums up the task of reviewing it. Having previously furnished us with a couple of demos of vaguely folk-leaning rock, this fifteen-song opus goes the full epic mid-80s soft rock and ploughing through it is to awaken a long dormant musical evil.

From the opening track, ‘Tidal’, we’re in the land of the living rock fossils, with just the occasional glimpse of something better. In that song’s case, some chilled electro-rock that does its best to try and smother the bland, over-earnest piano rock that is the band’s modus operandi. But not enough.

‘When the Glass Is Half Full’ offers early hope that it might not so bad after all – again standard

You could definitely do worse than stumble around in Post-Rock Land with three piece Ghosts In The Photographs. Lyric-less landscapes bursting with hallucinogenic crescendos that relapse into impossibly titanic, formlessness masses in musical colour, painted, sometimes violently, across Sistine caverns that spit on the real thing.

The eight-minute opus that is ‘Taylor Mountain Memorial’ (there are over twenty such named peaks to choose from in the US) embraces all that familiar topography, while remaining at its heart about the passion of transition and ascendancy. From the primal hum of the first movement to the thunderous denouement, with its brutal birthing stretch marks of DC hardcore, the band rise above the lower summits of bands like This Will Destroy You and Never Mind The Name, to a rugged plateau of sky-faring beauty.

Ghosts in the Photographs know we are timeless yet aging, that we bark like dogs, yet soar like eagles. Stir us up enough and we want to explode like fizz in a can of soda, but most of all they know that not all who wonder are lost.

Paul Carrera

with exercise book poetry which shoots for Elvis Costello and lands at early Brett Anderson.

It’s not their finest work, but raises a smile, rummaging through post-punk like it’s a kids’ dressing-up box (and remember, a pirate outfit is fine, but Boko Haram is best avoided).

David Murphy



mid-80s electro-tinged soft rock but at least with a chorus that borders on hysteria and might be Peter Gabriel having a stab at The Supremes’ ‘You Keep Me Hanging On’ in a prog style. Sadly it’s as good as things get, because thereafter the overwrought, over-earnest yacht rock fully takes over: forced rhymes, forced vocals and for-the-sake-of-it guitar solos adding up to a cluttered, clumsy tribute to Foreigner, Yes and Chicago, culminating in the clodfooted ‘Do We Have To...’ and the tortuous, torturous piano ballad ‘After All This Time’, which makes Mike & The Mechanics sound like Bolt Thrower in the ferocious rock and roll stages.

Even those old folk tendencies seem to have been expunged to allow more bombast. They continue to tease us: the staccato snare attack in ‘The Way You Leave’; the gleaming stadium synth break in ‘You Make Me Feel Free’, but that’s all they are: brief peaks at a band Port In A Storm could have been if they weren’t so entrenched in a form of rock most of us imagined was long extinct, mired



MAX BLANSJAAR ‘Life’s Too Easy’ (Beanie Tapes)

Max Blansjaar emerged last year with a huge bang in the shape of debut EP ‘Spit It Out!’. With a family connection to Self Help, the impression of a rich vein of musical talent was hard to avoid and the anticipation as to how his career will pan out has been keen.

‘You’re Always On My Mind’ recreated Blur’s ‘Modern Life is Rubbish’ through a series of languid vocals, scratchy, inventive musical tics and charmingly suppressed African guitar choppiness, overlaid with the kind of engaging fuzz and playful keyboards that one associates with Trash Kit or Sacred Paws. Its sheer popalong joyousness was a delight to behold and Oxford parallels were there too – with Max drawing comparisons to the creative pop sensibilities of Moogiemans and Jack Goldstein.

New Track ‘Life’s Too Easy’ lives up to its name by nestling into Blansjaar’s short but impressive back catalogue with aplomb: a mid-tempo, almost music hall number, its jauntiness could see it slide easily into respectable album track status when a long player becomes a reality, but it perhaps represents a slight sliding back from the quality of the earlier material. There is certainly less of the experimental inquiry that made ‘Spit It Out!’ so engaging. With such a promising start behind him already, the artist has it all before him but when a ‘Best Of’ is released in years to come, this is unlikely to be on it.

Rob Langham



in soft rock cliché.

So there you have it, dear reader: we did it the hard way, so now you don’t have to.

Ian Chesterton

G I G G U I D E

THURSDAY 1st
VICTORY LANE + ONE STATE DRIVE:
O2 Academy – Pop-punk from Birmingham’s Victory Lane, out on tour to promote new album ‘Barebones’.
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre – Oxford’s longest running open night – coming up to their 25th anniversary this year

Friday 2nd – Sunday 4th
SUPERNORMAL:
Braziers Park, Ipsden
Oh Supernormal, how we missed you. Even though you were gone but a single summer, it was a summer that felt empty and bereft of weirdness, invention, hours dreadful and things strange. Yes, celebrate people, for Oxfordshire’s (possibly the UK’s) most musically adventurous festival is returneth and a quiet corner of the county will once again ring out to warped electronica, wyrd folk, mutant rock and things even we struggle to invent names for. Among the more familiar names on this year’s bill are psychedelic folk-rockers **HEN OGLEDD** (*pictured*); New Jersey hip hop experimenters **DALEK**; atmospheric jazz-goth singer **SEALIONWOMAN**, and Italian avant garde jazzateers **ZU**. But Supernormal isn’t and never will be about name acts (although previous festivals have featured the likes of Hookworms, Wolf Eyes, Justin Broadrick, Pigs x7, Evil Blizzard and Comanечи along the way). Instead check out names like **GG ALAN PARTRIDGE**; **GODSPEED YOU! PETER ANDRE**; **PET BRICK**; **SEXTON MING’S PORRIDGE VAN**; **COCAINE PISS**; **HORSE BASTARD**, and **PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD**. Bands? Indescribable adventures in sound? Or actual vans full of porridge? Don’t bet against anything over these three days. As well as the music there are artist residencies, artist-led workshops, three-sided football and stuff you simply have to experience for yourself. It’s something genuinely different on the festival front and we’re lucky to have it in Oxfordshire. And for the first time it sold out well in advance, which shows that people have properly caught on to the event. Don’t go taking a leave of absence again, y’hear.



AUGUST
– continues to showcase singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists every Thursday.
SPARKY’S NEW MOON: The Half Moon – Open mic stalwart Sparky hosts his session on the first and third Thursday of the month.
BIKINI DEATH RACE + SOBER DAVE: The Bell, Bicester – Electroclash and punked-up synth-pop outta Rome from bemasked duo Bikini Deathrace, back in town after their show year last year, with gruff acoustic rock support from former Pistol Kixx man Sober Dave.

FRIDAY 2nd
SUPERNORMAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden – First day of the leftfield and experimental music and arts festival back in the Shire after a year off, this time round featuring sets from Hen Ogledd, Dälek and Sealionwoman, as well as Oxford’s own Basic Dicks – *see main preview*
WHITE DENIM + BOY AZOOGA: O2 Academy – Everything and more in the mix from the Texan rockers – *see main preview*
WHITESNAKE UK: The Bullingdon – UK tribute to the renowned Malaysian metallers.
K-FUNKZ: The Bullingdon – Bassline, drum&bass and hip hop club night.
ITINERANTS + AL JENKINS & CLAIRE LEMASTER: The Port Mahon
GREEN HAZE: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Green Day tribute.

SATURDAY 3rd
SUPERNORMAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden – More mind expanding musical madness at the leftfield fest – *see main preview*
RORY STONE LOVE: O2 Academy – Roots and dub club night with legendary Jamaican Stone Love soundsystem selector Rory.
SPARKY’S SPONTANEOUS SHOWCASE & SPOTLIGHT JAM: The Port Mahon – Live acts and jam session, hosted by open mic stalwart Sparky.
DOG OF TWO HEADS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribute to early Status Quo.

SUNDAY 4th
SUPERNORMAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden – The comedown begins; the mothership is landing – *see main preview*
OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms – Weekly open session.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon – Weekly open folk night.

MONDAY 5th
OPEN MIC: The Castle

TUESDAY 6th
JOSHUA BRACE & THE ECLIPSE + JULIUS AMADE + SHEYMOY ALLISON: The Bullingdon – Soul sessions in the front bar.
HARP OPEN SESSION: The Port Mahon

WEDNESDAY 7th
THURSDAY 8th
CAGEWORK + JUNODEF + DEATH OF THE MAIDEN + FANCY DRESS PARTY: The Library – Another top drawer night courtesy of Divine Schism. London’s spiky post-hardcore and emo crew Cagework return to Oxford after supporting Slonk here in January. The real treat comes from Malmo/ London trio Junodef, whose brooding, darkly atmospheric mix of trip hop, gothic pop, ethereal folk and post-rock mixes up the influences of Portishead, Chelsea Wolfe and Zola Jesus. Majestic stuff. Equally wonderful sounds from dark-pop storytellers Death of the Maiden, plus miserycore merchants Fancy Dress Party.
CROPREDY FESTIVAL: Cropredy – Opening day of Fairport Convention’s long-running annual gathering, today featuring a headline set from Mike Scott’s folk-rock stars The Waterboys, joined by Ukrainian folk-punk crew Gogol Bordello, Devon’s bucolic rockers Tors, mumble rapper Lil’ Jim, and the traditional opening Fairport Acoustic show.
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre

FRIDAY 9th
CROPREDY FESTIVAL: Cropredy – The mighty Frank Turner and his Sleeping Souls headline the second day of Fairport’s convention, with support from folk-rock guitar hero Richard Thompson, Devon fiddle maestro and storyteller Seth Lakeman, Canterbury scene veterans Caravan and more.
THE COME UP: The Bullingdon – Eclectic new club night showcasing up and coming DJs and MCs from across the city, playing drill, trap, Afrobeat and more.
GRUB: The Port Mahon – EP launch show from the local garage-grunge trio, taking inspiration from The Stooges, The MC5, Mudhoney and more.
BOSSAPHONIK: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley – World jazz dance club night hosted by Dan Ofer, tonight featuring a live set from gypsy funk and psychedelia outfit Gipsydelfica.
INNUENDO: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Rock and indie covers.

SATURDAY 10th
CROPREDY FESTIVAL: Cropredy – The third and final day of the folk festival sees Fairport play their traditional epic headline

set, joined by friends and former members over the course of the evening, climaxing with the classic ‘Meet on the Ledge’. Earlier in the day Martin Simpson, Martin Barre, Daphne’s Flight and Tide Lines perform, while Richard Digance does his own traditional music and comedy turn.
CAVE SOUNDS: The Bullingdon – Eclectic dance club night, celebrating its second birthday with Moan Records’ Jason Kaakoush, plus Cheh and JP b2b Nazz.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Tree, Iffley – Lively mix of rock, psych, blues and ska from the local veteran party rockers.
ROUGH CUT RUBY: Woodstock Social Club

SUNDAY 11th
GAFFA TAPE SANDY + SELF HELP: The Library – Bright-eyed, bushy tailed and sharp-elbowed pop-punk from Bury St

Friday 2nd
WHITE DENIM / BOY AZOOGA: O2 Academy
Almost a lesson in musical intemperance, White Denim have spent the past decade making sure there’s barely a genre they haven’t dipped into, however briefly, just to see how it might or might not fit into what they’re doing and where they’re going. Spiritually, if not musically, they’re cousins of Flaming Lips, going where pleases them, by whatever circuitous route, and if the paying public want to hang out, all the better but they’re not too fussed. New album ‘Side Effects’, a sort of odds-and-ends follow-up to last year’s album proper ‘Performance’, finds Texan duo James Petrelli and Steve Terebecki and a revolving cast of bandmates (the album features five different drummers), flitting between math-rock, jazz, funk, boogie, a danceable form of garage rock, prog and psychedelic folk, but in such nimble hands it rarely feels contrived or hard to follow. If you want a band who can sound like Blue Cheer, Randy Newman and The Minutemen all within the space of a few minutes, they’re the band for you – not experimental as such, just unafraid to do their own thing, often brilliantly so. An added bonus tonight sees Cardiff’s Boy Azooga back in town after their showing at Ritual Union last year, their captivating mix of fidgety electro-funk, guitar histrionics and punchy power pop sounding like a downbeat La’s meets an upbeat Elbow.



Edmunds’ Gaffa Tape Sandy at tonight’s Snuggle Dice show, touring recent single ‘Headlights’ on Alcopop! Records after supports to Idles, Peace and Bloody Knees. Great, effusively spirited garage pop from local stars Self Help in support.
THE PROCLAIMERS: The New Theatre – The Brothers Charlie and Craig Reid bring their none-more-Scottish celebration of love, life and Leith, with singalong hits ‘I’m Gonna Be (500 Miles)’, ‘I’m On My Way’ and ‘Letter From America’.
INAIK + JAGUA MILK: The Jericho Tavern – Alt.rock inspired by Fightstar, Arcane Roots and Enter Shikari from Reading outfit InAir.
OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
FRANKLIN’S TOWER + TONY BATEY & SAL MOORE-ASTEROX + PETE LOCK & MARK BOSLEY: The Wheatsheaf (3.30-7pm) – Klub Kakofanney host a free afternoon of live music in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar.

MONDAY 12th
FRENCH FOLK SESSION: The Port Mahon
OPEN MIC: The Castle

TUESDAY 13th
WEDNESDAY 14th
CANCER BATS + INCITE +MSRY: O2 Academy – Bring the noise! All of it! – *see main preview*

THURSDAY 15th
THIS IS THE KIT + ROZI PLAIN: O2 Academy – Return of Kate Stable’s breezy psych-folk dreamers – *see main preview*
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre
SPARKY’S NEW MOON: The Half Moon

FRIDAY 16th
RABIDFEST: The Wheatsheaf – Free opening night of the weekend rock and metal fest, with a headline set from Troyen – *see main preview*
MY CROOKED TEETH + STEADY HABITS + A DIFFERENT THREAD: The Jericho Tavern – An Americana jamboree with local folk/country troubadour Jack Olchawski’s My Crooked Teeth, backed by a full band, the singer’s tender, heartfelt songs recalling The Epstein and Stornoway. He’s joined by Steady Habits, a new project from Loud Mountains’ Sean Duggan, and Staffordshire/North Carolina duo A Different Thread, mixing up American folk, country and bluegrass.
LATIN OPEN MIC SESSION: The Port Mahon
QUAD: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Britpop covers.

SATURDAY 17th
RABIDFEST: The Bullingdon – Doom titans Conan headline today’s leg of the metal extravaganza – *see main preview*
EASTER ISLAND STATUES + WHO’S ALICE + LAUGHING LAMB: The



Wednesday 14th
CANCER BATS / INCITE / MSRY: O2 Academy
Ah, Cancer Bats, how much do we love you? Lots and lots and lots, it must be said. Here’s a band that doesn’t mess about, preferring to get on with economical sub-four-minute blasts of (often surprisingly melodic) metalcore noise rather than fanny about with technical fripperies. The Toronto band’s latest album, ‘The Spark That Moves’, the follow-up to 2015’s experimental ‘Searching For Zero’, has seen them nominated for the Juno Award for the first time – overdue recognition for their hard work and fiery musical mission. Live they’re a highly volatile emotional catharsis, black-hearted blues and southern rock sludge boogie, mixed with venomous punk-tinged metal anthems and all-out hardcore fury, with impressively strident frontman Liam Cormier letting rip in a manner that suggests Beelzebub himself is tearing terrible confessions from him. Here is mayhem and ferocity of a type that’s irresistible, from a band that time has utterly failed to mellow. Great to see local metalcore heroes MSRY picked to open tonight’s show, the trio, who’ve made wrecking ball rock their own around the local circuit over the past couple of years, starting to pick up some serious national acclaim off the back of their ‘Safety First’ EP, the title as ironic as it gets. Arizona’s Incite are also on the bill, the band touring their aptly titled ‘Built To Destroy’ album. A night for reckless behaviour, no apologies and no remorse.

Wheatsheaf – This month’s *Nightshift* cover stars launch their new EP, featuring recent singles ‘Laika’, ‘Skeleton Quay’ and ‘Teddy’ – *see main interview feature*
ELDER STUBBS FESTIVAL: Elder Stubbs Allotments (midday-5pm) – The annual mini fest offers an afternoon of music and family activities in aid of Restore.
SOME GUYS HAVE ALL THE LUCK: The New Theatre – The life and music of Rod Stewart.
FRANKLIN’S TOWER: The White House – Grateful Dead-inspired rock, folk, blues and country gumbo.
SELENA EVANGELINE: Woodstock Social Club – R’n’b, jazz and soul from the Toronto singer, inspired by Stevie Wonder, Chaka Khan and Ella Fitzgerald, touring new album



Thursday 15th

THIS IS THE KIT / ROZI PLAIN: O2 Academy

Centred on Bristol-born and bred, Paris-resident singer and multi-instrumentalist Kate Stables, This Is The Kit are one of those acts beloved of critics and tastemakers but stubbornly beloved of a cult cognoscenti rather than enjoying huge commercial success. More fool the masses, as Stables and chums (and what chums: John Parish and The National’s Aaron Desson have played with and produced the band, while Francois & the Atlas Mountains and Rozi Plain, tonight’s support act, have also joined Stables’ ranks on a regular basis) continue to release charmingly inventive albums that mix up ramshackle rootsiness with vivid imagery, a feeling of otherness and an often gothic soulfulness. 2012’s ‘Wiggles & Restless’ should have at least been shortlisted for the Mercury Prize, and 2017’s ‘Moonshine Freeze’, her first released on Rough Trade, similarly should have been in with a shout but at least expanded Stables’ fanbase considerably. If TITK regularly get lumped in as a folk band, and Kate regularly leads the line on banjo, they’re much, much more, tiptoeing from breezy psychedelia into the sort of oddball songs Robert Wyatt conjures. Rozi Plain too is an artist who plays merry with folk’s outer edges, her music touching on Stereolab and Sun Ra at times, which makes tonight’s show twice the treat.

‘Left Alone’.

SUNDAY 18th

RABIDFEST: The Bullingdon – Rabidfest bows out with a bang as Ingested round off three days of metal and heavy rocking – *see main preview*
GREAT SHAME + WORRY + STRONG ARM + NAILBREAKER: The Library (6.30pm) – a night of hardcore punk from Shred or Die, featuring Sheffield’s Great Shame, local wreckers Worry, London’s Strong Arm and bedroom noisemaker Nailbreaker.
OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon

MONDAY 19th

POTTERY: The Jericho Tavern – Nervy, uptight but melodic post-punk funk-pop inspired by Orange Juice, Josef K and Devo from Montreal’s Pottery, over in the UK to

promote their ‘No.1’ EP following a tour support to Parquet Courts.
SCANDINAVIAN FOLK SESSION: The Port Mahon
OPEN MIC: The Castle

TUESDAY 20th

WEDNESDAY 21st

THURSDAY 22nd

TOWERSEY FESTIVAL: Thame Showground – The annual folk, roots and rock festival returns across five days, with sets across the weekend from The Selecter; Newton Faulkner; Hothouse Flowers; Seth Lakeman; From the Jam; Fisherman’s Friends; The Unthanks; Steve Harley & Cockney Rebel; Oysterband and many more, plus ceilidhs and more. Check festival website for individual day line-ups.
BONE MACHINE + GRAVID: The Wheatsheaf – It’s All About the Music showcase.
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre
REVEREND BLACK’S ACOUSTIC CABARET: The Half Moon – Acoustic blues, country, folk and classic rock night with sets from Alf Laila, Bone Machine and Richard Brotherton.

FRIDAY 23rd

PEACE + CC HONEYMOON: O2 Academy – Worcestershire’s pop-friendly indie-funk and psych crew return to town after headlining the Thursday night of last year’s Truck Festival, Harry Koisser’s and band touring last year’s ‘Kindness is the New Rock and Roll’, finding the meeting point between Britpop swagger, boyband sweetness and Foals-y indie noise.
TEEJAY + DING DONG: O2 Academy – Dancehall club night with Jamaican artists Teejay and Ding Dong.
CENTRELINE + WEBS & MARIONETTES + GRAND PALACE SCAM: The Wheatsheaf – It’s All About the Music local bands showcase.
WITCHING WAVES + CHARMPIT + GARDEN CENTRE: Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre – Another quality bill of DIY pop from Divine Schism, tonight bringing London’s fuzzed-up pop/punk trio Witching Waves back to town, the band touring new album ‘Persistence’.
TOWERSEY FESTIVAL: Thame Showground
THE BIG FEASTIVAL: Alex James’ Farm – Trufflehunters, cheese fetishists and Ye Grande Order of Za’atar Acolytes descend upon Twatsville-under-Cotswold for the annual celebration of culinary poncery and musical mediocrity. Who’s playing? Hmm, Jack Savoretti, Dodgy, Jess Glynne, The Zutonzzzzz. Sorry, dozed off for a moment there. Where were we? Oh, and the word festival is derived from the word feast, so the puntastic name ain’t even all that clever. Now if you’ll excuse us, we’re off to Gregg’s for a vegan sausage roll and a bottle of Vimto.

SATURDAY 24th

GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS + DEATH OF THE MAIDEN + IDEAL MARRIAGE: The Wheatsheaf – Cinematic post-rock and shoegaze from GITP, tonight launching new single ‘Taylor Mountain Monument’ – a slow burn eight-minute epic in the vein of Explosions in the Sky and A Silver Mt. Zion. Superb support from drama-laden baroque posters Death of the Maiden, channelling nightmares and tragic stories of love and the sea into sublime sounds.
GOA MATRIX: The Bullingdon – New club

Friday 16th – Sunday 18th

RABIDFEST:

The Bullingdon / The Wheatsheaf

Rock and metal fans aren’t well catered for on the festival scene locally, so it’s great to see Rabidfest making a full summer weekend of it, with two full days and an evening of the heavy stuff across two city venues.
Friday’s opening session is a free night up at The Wheatsheaf where reformed NWOBHM crew **TROYEN** are reliving their early-80s good times with a blues-infused hard rock than previously saw them tour with Girlschool and Diamond Head. They’re joined by Nottingham’s old-school metallers **FAHRAN**, previous Metal to the Masses winners **IMMINENT ANNIHILATION** and local metal faves **THE CRUSHING**. A full day on noise on Saturday at The Bullingdon sees doom and sludge behemoths **CONAN** top the bill with a suitably crushing onslaught of downtuned, tectonic riffage. They’re joined by tech/prog/deathcore crew **RED METHOD**; London’s hardcore merchants **CONFESSIONS OF A TRAITOR**; local groove-metallers **VIG**; Stevenage’s metalcore crew **OUTRIGHT RESISTANCE** and local heavyweights **MY DIABLO** and **DAMAGED REICH**, among others. No mellowing on Sunday with Manchester’s death metal overlords **INGESTED (pictured)** providing a slamming finale to the weekend, alongside Oxford’s own heavyweight kings **DESERT STORM**, plus Woking’s super-heavyweight sludge/groove/deathcore crew **GUTLOCKER**, mixing up Pantera and Lamb of God, and theatrical ‘circus rockers’ **PAPA SHANGO** among the supporting cast. Plenty more besides, adding up to a mountain of metal and one heavy weekend. It’s a festival to galvanise the local rock and metal scene and hopefully it will be audible, if not visible, from space.



night from Fluid, playing techno, progressive and psy-trance and more, with residents joined by Prog Box’s Jack Lane.
TOWERSEY FESTIVAL: Thame Showground
OSPREY & CO: The Half Moon
THE BIG FEASTIVAL: Alex James’ Farm – You mean there’s another day of this? What larks!

SUNDAY 25th

LITTLE STEVEN & THE DISCIPLES OF SOUL: O2 Academy – The E Street Band man, anti-apartheid campaigner and Soprano gangster brings his r’n’b gang to town – *see main preview*
CAT APOSTROPHE + JEFF + SPANK HAIR + WORLD FOODS: The Library – “Radical soft pop” from Cat Apostrophe at tonight’s Shred or Die show, the quintet touring their new ‘Lifelong Amateurism’ album, mixing classic 80s indie jangle in the vein of Heavenly with political lyricism. Support from anti-folk/garage-rock duo Jeff and tumbledown emo-leaning noisemakers Spank Hair.
NO HORSES + DES BARKUS + HEX COLLECTIVE + ARTHUR OSOFSKY + NEON TEEPEE: The Wheatsheaf (3pm) – It’s All About the Music’s Sunday Social.
TOWERSEY FESTIVAL: Thame Showground
OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
THE BIG FEASTIVAL: Alex James’ Farm – Things are beginning to sour and wilt, and we don’t just mean the cheese and spinach.
BLUES JAM: Fat Lil’s, Witney (3pm) – Monthly open blues jam.

MONDAY 26th

OVER THE HILL FESTIVAL: Cogges Farm, Witney (midday – 10.30pm) – Glovebox host a full day of folk-rock and Americana, with a headline set from heartland soul and rock band Danny & the Champions of the World, alongside sets from southern rockers William the Conqueror, who’ve supported Van Morrison and Ethan Johns; Naomi Bedford & Paul Simmonds with the Ramshackle Band; Trevor Moss & Hannah Lou; The Black Feathers; Paul McClure; Ags Connolly, and The Niall Kelly Band.
TOWERSEY FESTIVAL: Thame Showground
OPEN MIC: The Castle

TUESDAY 27th

OPEN MIC: The Port Mahon – Hosted by Chris Monger.

WEDNESDAY 28th

MARY LATTIMORE + NUMMO TWIN + ALLY CRAIG: Fusion Arts – Solo concert from LA’s Mary Lattimore at tonight’s Divine Schism show, the composer and harpist touring her new album ‘New Rain Duets’,

recorded with Superchunk’s Mac McGaughan, having previously worked with Kurt Vile and Thurston Moore. Support from Manchester’s experimental pop/folkster Nummo Twin and local skewed-pop poet Ally Craig, channelling Shellac, Slint and Ivor Cutler.
GALICIAN FOLK SESSION: The Port Mahon – Traditional music from northern Spain.

THURSDAY 29th

CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre

FRIDAY 30th

PALMIST + BE STILL + FLINTLOCK RIFLES + REDSHIFT: O2 Academy – Lightweight post-hardcore and pop-punk from the London band, touring debut EP ‘The Walls Between You & I’.
TOOLOLOGY: The Bullingdon – Tribute to Tool.
TERRAFORMS: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass club night.
THE JERICHOES + DAZE: The Wheatsheaf – It’s All About the Music showcase.
DIRTY EARTH BAND: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Classic covers from the enduring local party band.

SATURDAY 31st

WAYNE HUSSEY: The Bullingdon – The Mission frontman takes a gentler path, playing his solo compositions alongside Mission faves like ‘Severina’, ‘Wasteland’ and ‘Butterfly on a Wheel’.
GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with GLUEMAN + TOUCHY COMA + MY CROOKED TEETH: The Wheatsheaf – Another inviting mixed bag of sounds at this month’s GTI, with local stalwarts Glueman providing atmospheric indie rock. They’re joined by Parisian outfit Touchy Coma, mixing up post-punk, garage rock and indie jangle, while My Crooked Teeth offer intimate but big hearted folk-pop in the vein of Stornoway and The Epstein.
SUMMER VIBES CAN’T DONE: The Bullingdon – R’n’b, reggae and dancehall club night.

NATIVE HARROW: The Port Mahon – folk rock from New York State singer/guitarist Devin Tuel, touring her new album ‘Happier Now’.
BRITPOP BOYS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Britpop covers.
BLUE STREAK: Woodstock Social Club – 50s and 60s rock’n’roll from the Bicester outfit.



Sunday 25th

LITTLE STEVEN & THE DISCIPLES OF SOUL: O2 Academy

Guitarist, songwriter, producer, activist, actor... legend. The man born Steven Lento, better known as Stevie Van Zandt, or Little Steven, or to many, Silvio Dante, has done it all and deserves that final accolade. Having grown up on the Jersey Shore scene where he met lifelong friend Bruce Springsteen, Steven joined Springsteens’ E Street Band and played lead through the 1970s as well as co-producing some of The Boss’s finest albums, earning himself an induction into the Rock’n’Roll Hall of Fame along the way. He also took his trademark rhythm’n’blues sound into Southside Johnny & the Ashbury Jukes and his Disciples of Soul band before returning to the E Street Band, where he now takes the rhythm guitar role. But he’s too good to be in the background. A born leader, he founded Artists Against Apartheid in the 80s with Arthur Baker, releasing the global hit ‘Sun City’ alongside some of the biggest names in rock music at the time. More recently a different kind of fame came in the form of *The Sopranos* and his menacingly cool-headed foil to Tony. And here he is tonight, in the relatively intimate surroundings of the O2 Academy, still rocking with all the verve and vigour he did five decades ago. There’s a new album out – ‘Summer of Sorcery’ – but up on stage is where Little Steven belongs. Legend? It’s a title well earned.



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THE MURDER CAPITAL / EGYPTIAN BLUE / SELF HELP

The Jericho Tavern

It’s the hottest day of the year (so far) and The Jericho Tavern is sold out but no-one’s in any danger of wilting. Self Help are straight out of the blocks at full throttle with punk powerhouse ‘Trobe’, Silke Blansjaar’s thunderous drum assault sprinkled with exuberant pop sweetness, drunken self loathing balanced by a joy de vivre that makes a gig a party, band and crowd having as much fun as each other. They take things down a few notches occasionally, get all grubby on ‘The Razz’ but come up smiling at the end with belting Ramones-simple finale ‘Get On With It’. Hot stuff, but even in the middle of a heat wave, delivered with no sweat.

Egyptian Blue’s singer looks like a young

David Byrne, moves with the pensive jerkiness of Ian Curtis and sings like Jake Burns from Stiff Little Fingers. If that wasn’t recommendation enough his band play with the yobbish militancy of Shame but with the uptight rhythmic frenzy of Gang of Four. That’s quite a set of parts to fit together, but they’re equal to the sum of them.

The intensity, and temperature, is ramped up a few more degrees for The Murder Capital. Here’s a band who could start riots or spark forest fires. The first twenty minutes of their set is absolutely incendiary: a torrential rush of molten guitars and vagrant preacher belligerence that’s almost spiritual. The

Dublin quintet were forced to cancel their planned show here in May when James McGovern lost his voice and he jokes he’s feeling peaky tonight, just before he and his band dive headlong into a musical black hole where The Cure’s ‘Hanging Garden’ clangs atmospherically against Joy Division’s ‘Shadowplay’, the darkness becoming suffocating and making McGovern’s Bob Dylan t-shirt look comically incongruous.

It’s hard to keep such intensity up for forty five minutes and there are moments where The Murder Capital loosen the reins a little, allow a bit of almost Pink Floyd-like spaceyness in, but they’re not letting anyone off the hook and kick back with a vengeance closer ‘Don’t Cling to Life’, feral poetry over a tumbledown riot of gothic punk. Watch out world, The Murder Capital are coming for your children.

Dale Kattack

ALGIERS / SHOTGUN SIX

The Bullingdon

Atlanta is that most ‘American’ of large US cities; marooned in the midst of the classical South, it represents a sea of contradictions – the florid gentility of *Gone with the Wind*; arguable status as the Capital of Black America; a frontline in the Civil War; the home of Coca Cola and CNN, and a paranoid metropolis of social division and disquiet. Algiers portray these opposites; their music is urgent and impulsive and the mix of narratives is unique and unclassifiable.

That they have graced us with their presence at the Bully provides excitement on the night that a much larger audience are gathering to see Belle and Sebastian a few doors down – myself apart, you can tell this is the hipper audience by the amount of folks who head outside for a cigarette. After Shotgun Six provide a competent set of sludgebound rock that pays more than a little respect to The Doors, the arrival of Franklin James Fisher at the microphone is a thrilling event, his stupendous

vocals resonating out over a complex mix of technical wizardry, but it’s a skilfulness that does nothing to detract from the band’s soul and heart. 2017’s masterly long player ‘The Underside of Power’ dominates the set, bassist Ryan Mahan body popping alarmingly as the album’s title track recalibrates Motown for the Trump era, Fisher by turns acting as keyboard expert and vocalist, mesmerising in his delivery. Earlier, ‘Cry of the Martyrs’ is just that: an insistent pulsing earworm that will stay with the audience for days after the gig. Throughout, fire and brimstone samples pepper the set, the musical contortionism continuing to astonish. The advertised new material also hits the spot; ‘You Can’t be Found’ recalls another genre smashing band, Young Fathers, while the band are joined on stage for a couple of numbers by pal ‘Gary Indiana’, quite probably not the old *Village Voice* journo, but menacing and all-in in a Harvey Keitel in *Bad Lieutenant* kind of way. Algiers are quite simply magnificent: a broad palate of Detroit-style soul, backwoods Gothic, guitar extremism and political commentary.

Rob Langham

JEFFREY LEWIS & LOS BOLTS

The Wheatsheaf

Last time cult-hero Jeffrey Lewis was in town he taught us about cannibal monkeys and sang about coping without his girlfriend while she was “outta town, visiting her mother.” It was upbeat, quirky punk-pop at its best.

Eighteen months later, things are different. Jeffrey Lewis has always asked vital questions of art and humanity, wrapped in his playful lyrics, but in this era crowded by urgent ideas, his challenge is to find a way to let those ideas breathe.

Humour still punctuates Lewis’ set of course; he’s a master of wit and surrealism both in song and his comic book “movies”. He even opens tonight’s set with a perky song pleading for a statute of limitations on acquaintances who do one favour for a struggling band and expect eternal guest list rights in return. Sound familiar?

Later we tap our feet to the musically upbeat and lyrically crushing ‘Systematic Death’, originally by Crass. Mem’s tone of deadened rage in duet with Jeffrey is brilliant as they sing of the “Poor fucking worker, poor little serf/ Working like a mule for half of what he’s worth.”

And then we get ‘Water Leaking’, with Jeffrey playing a gentler style of guitar, using, at times, loops and pedals to create an atmospheric, slow-build psychedelic sound. You have to wonder, was that opener the playful springboard it had seemed, or a subtle introduction to something more profound?

Stripping back to just keyboard, bass and percussion, Lewis & Los Bolts give us the standout of the set: ‘Back to Manhattan’, a slow, rhythmic journey through the before and after of a real and imagined breakup, with a delivery that is devastating. Soon after, we’re tripping through the dense lyrical forest of ‘Williamsburg Will Oldham Horror’, following Jeffrey’s stream of consciousness with frenzied anxiety as, at 42, he asks the same question he had at 27: “how long should an artist struggle before it isn’t worth the hassle?”

Without us noticing, tonight’s gig is questioning the effort it takes to be different, to know yourself, and to keep fighting conformity with so few victories. But because Jeffrey Lewis has been so prolific for 20 years, he’s able to deliver this deliberate set cloaked in the subtlety of a fun East-Coast archive pick-a-mix.

Thankfully, the set ends on a high with a mantra-like punk blowout that twists the old ‘what would Jesus do?’ by updating the icon to Pussy Riot. It’s empowering and reassuring, but Jeffrey isn’t about to let us off the hook that easy. His encore of stripped back nostalgia in ‘The Pigeon’ and a dark spiral into the soul with his story of the gold that fell from the hole in the sun spins us back into contemplation. It’s not easy confronting the questions Jeffrey asks, but he knows we must. And to keep us focused while we ponder, remember: “you ask yourself and I’ll ask me, WWPRD?”

Clare Dodd

BLACK HATS

The Library

It’s almost a decade since Black Hats’ ‘Just Fall’ featured in *Nightshift*’s end of year Top 10, a bolshy slab of U2-style stadium rock filtered through the sort of militant Noughties indie rock peddled by The Automatic and Yourcodenameis:milo.

The band never split, but sort of disappeared from view; gigs were very few and very far between, singer/guitarist Nick Breakspear putting in the occasional solo set in pub corners. Now, though, the trio are back with a new EP, ‘Bad News Telephone’, the title track of which kicks off tonight’s show, a funky, staccato slice of new wave that has two of us simultaneously mentioning XTC. From here things get mildly belligerent, ‘Smoke on the Dancefloor’ a reminder of when Paul Weller was an angry young man rather than an avuncular mentor.

The band continue to mix interesting things into their foundation rock, ‘Just a Time’ pulling in dub, ska and punk to make for a song that could have emerged from the early-80s politico-fusion scene, while ‘All We Ever Wanted’ goes darker, almost into Cure territory.

At their core, though, Black Hats are yobbishly anthemic: lighter aloft in one hand, Molotov cocktail ready in the other, ‘Magnets’ and set closer ‘Just Fall’ simultaneously stuck in another decade and fresh and fully relevant right now. The new record might be titled ‘Bad New Telephone’, but Black Hats’ return to action can only be good news.

Ian Chesterton



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CORNBURY FESTIVAL

Great Tew Country Park

We’ve left Cornbury Festival scarred before, but Friday leaves us comfortably ska’d, with a triple dose of uptown top skanking and the impression that for all its sedate reputation, there’s a little revolutionary spirit in the event and its patrons.

The day does start gently as befits the setting and the glorious (later to become mildly oppressive) sunshine, with **KATY HURT**, an amiable if standard country singer-songwriter in the vein of Emmylou Harris, although **EASTER ISLAND STATUES** on the Riverside stage up the ante considerably with a rollicking, rough’n’tumble set that wraps big-hearted folk songs in indie fuzz and fires them into outer space with ‘Laika’ or to Davey Jones’s Locker with set highlight ‘Skeleton Quay’.

It’s a good weekend for local acts at Cornbury this year. A lot of **GAZ COOMBES** best songs these days feel too intimate to survive in a festival’s wide open spaces, but backed with a fulsome band, including three backing singers, which gives the show an almost soul revue feel at times, he wins out with some style. ‘Buffalo’ and ‘The Girl Who Fell to Earth’ are sweet and soothing but perhaps best listened to at home but new single ‘Salamander’ is a cracker, naggingly insistent yet elegant, as good a song as he’s written.

Back on the Riverside, fellow locals **PANDAPOPALYPSE** are purpose built for summer, their songs infected with an almost childlike glee – ‘Be the Best’ and ‘Glitter & Gems’ cheerily raucous and as infectious as chickenpox but without the irritation.

It’s not all good times and prime quality musical treats of course. *Nightshift*’s scribbled notes for **NAHKU & MEDICINE FOR THE PEOPLE** extends to “this is the worst thing EVER” for his worthy, worldly mix of Year 9 hip hop, Maroon 5-level funk and soul, pointless guitar solos and John Barnes-level rap interludes. There’s also a scrawled “please kill us now” that looks like it was written while we were getting up to go to the bar. The one at the other side of the festival site. The walk to the other side of the festival site results in being offered free cans of zero % Bavarian beer, which immediately usurps Nahku & Medicine For the People as the worst thing ever. Sanity prevails (to a degree) with

ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN, now on their third Cornbury visit. If Ian McCulloch and Will Sergeant are barely on speaking terms these days, they don’t need to be as McCulloch does enough talking for three, much of it barely making any sense at times (deliberately it seems) but when the band let their music do the talking it remains some of the finest music ever made: post punk’s darkness through the filter of Scott Walker’s orchestral grandeur and a psychedelic approach to lyrical imagery. From ‘Rescue’ to ‘Villiers Terrace’, from ‘The Cutter’ to ‘Killing Moon’, they remain peerless, and ‘Over the Wall’, a midnight black stonewall classic, almost casts a shroud over the piercing sun above the stage.

Before The Specials we get an hour of classic ska from **THE TWO TONE ALL SKA’S**, which gets anyone not already excited into the mood for the main event. The band also turn up later in the campsite bar, which means they’re The Specials warm-up act but also The Specials are their warm-up act. Everyone is too busy dancing to really think too much about that sort of thing, though.

For their part **THE SPECIALS** are superb. If only a rump of the original line-up remains, with Terry Hall and Lynval Golding back in the fold, the heart and soul is still there. Hall remains possibly the coolest man to walk onto a stage, and the band rip through the hits like they still mean it: from ‘Rat Race’ and ‘Too Much Too Young’ to a superb ‘Stereotype’ and a closing ‘Ghost Town’, for those of us who never had the chance to see the band first time round it’s one of those dream-come-true moments. But the absolute highlight of the set is when Saffiyah Khan joins the band for ‘Ten Commandments’, their dub-heavy riposte to Prince Buster’s sexist song of the same name. She dives into the front few rows for most of the song, to a rapturous reception (a young woman who faced down the EDL armed only with a smile and a Specials t-shirt was never going to be worried about throwing herself into an ebulliently good-natured Cornbury crowd), emerging minutes later to the biggest cheer of the weekend. It’s one of those genuinely magical moments and against 15 years of serious competition, this might be the finest headline set the festival has witnessed. And having drunk our age in pints on a Friday night, we attempt to navigate or way to the campsite



without wrapping ourselves round any oncoming lampposts. We’re fine but we worry for the state of the bloke who serenades the campsite at 3am with a horrendously tuneless version of Amy Winehouse’s ‘Valerie’, punctuated by the screams of “*SHUT THE FUCK UP!*” from one woman, doubtless wishing she could be asleep in bed far, far away from here. As far as call and response singing goes, it leaves a little to be desired but we’ve seen worse, often onstage. Shoulda stayed on the zero % Bavarian beer, mate.

Saturday morning and yesterday’s overhead mix of sunshine and hot air balloons has been replaced by gun metal grey clouds, which **THE OTHER DRAMAS** try gamely to blow away with a combination of fluffy garage pop, loose harmonies and sheer effervescence. ‘The Future is a Holiday’ sounds like a song tailor-made to bring the summer but their best moment comes with ‘Mermaid Song’, which sounds like the meeting point of The Monkees’ ‘I’m Not Your Stepping Stone’ and Blondie’s ‘Rip Her To Shreds’, singer and guitarist Maria Ilett looking not unlike a mermaid in a

gloriously aquamarine sequinned dress. Set closer ‘I’ll Show You Something’ is about “people telling you you can’t do something and you go and do it anyway,” which sums up the duo’s up-and-at-em approach to pop perfectly. More sequins from the superb **KOLARS**, first on the Songbird stage and later, in the more suitably intimate confines of the Rapture tent, where their mix of rockabilly, grunge and roadhouse blues stomp once again screams “*FUN!*” Guitarist Rob Kolar – grandson of *Jaws* actor Robert Shaw – is gruff and animated, while drummer Lauren Brown, stood atop her bass drum, tap-dancing the rhythm while pummelling her floor toms, is perpetual motion personified, together the pair looking and sounding like The Cramps living the Vegas dream in a Mid-West dive bar. It’s started to rain, but no-one seems to care much and all that kinetic energy on stage evaporates most of it before it can do any damage.

In between those acts we get the return of **THE TREVOR HORN BAND**, widely regarded as one of Cornbury’s classic sets for their show here four years back. If we don’t get Seal and Stewart Copeland



this time, we do get a set of equal quality, from the Frankie Goes to Hollywood blockbusters – sung by electric blue-haired Ryan Molloy, who replaced Holly Johnson in the band’s 2004 reunion – through the honky tonk of 10cc’s ‘Rubber Bullets’ and Grace Jones’ ‘Slave to the Rhythm’ and onward to a brace of Buggles classics – ‘Video Killed the Radio Star’ and ‘Plastic Age’, both darkly prophetic in different ways – along with some genuinely funny banter between Horn and guitarist Lol Creme, plus the odd Boris Johnson anecdote. We worried we’d built them up too much to people who didn’t see them last time, but this is consummate entertainment from a simply phenomenal band.

Perhaps we almost need **THE SHIRES** after that – their bland-beyond-belief excuse for country rock allowing us a little breathing space and perhaps going some way to making today’s headliners **KEANE** seem interesting by comparison (it’s all relative – they’re as damp as the earlier drizzle), but we do get a thumping blues set from pocket battleship singer **ELKIE BROOKS** that includes an almost

oompah-style take on her biggest hit ‘Pearl’s a Singer’, as well as a respectable cover of The Doors’ ‘Roadhouse Blues’, delivered with her great cracked, lived-in voice.

Sunday sees the sun back and **DOLLY MAVIES** set on the Riverside is a gently warming introduction to the afternoon, even while her songs sound like they’re being sung from the middle of a becalmed ocean at midnight. We skip the end of her set to catch the intriguingly named **FUN LOVIN CRIME WRITERS**. The band is made up of actual crime writers, including Mark Billingham, Val McDermid and Chris Brookmyre, and they’re entertaining enough but it can only be their celebrity status that’s earned them a main stage slot as they stomp through a standard pub rock party band set that includes Talking Heads, David Bowie and The Sweet; they have some decent banter but their cover of ‘Long Black Veil’ might actually be considered criminal. They’re also several notches up the musical evolution ladder from **ALFIE BOE** who maybe has the pedigree of starring in *Les Misérables* and *Finding Neverland*



but whose lightweight funky opera here sounds like something from a Reeves and Mortimer sketch and serves only to have the Go Compare jingle ringing round our heads for the rest of the afternoon. Luckily **MON LAFERTE**’s torch songs are epic enough to shift them. The Chilean singer sounds like a Latin Shirley Bassey at times, belting out could-be Bond themes; elsewhere the jazzier numbers bring some exotic flair to the Songbird stage. She certainly wins the award for most powerful set of pipes of the weekend.

Amid the excitement of seeing **THE BEACH BOYS** there’s plenty of trepidation. After all, it’s pretty much Mike Love and mates these days, right? Well maybe, but tonight’s show is still an absolute joy – from ‘Surfin’ Safari’ and ‘Catchin’ a Wave’ at the start of the hit-packed set, to its ‘Fun, Fun, Fun’ climax. When Love and chums follow the pristine, ‘God Only Knows’ with a cover of ‘Then He Kissed Me’ it’s like some kind of perfect pop song overload, though if we’re talking about cheeky cover versions, a rambunctious run through The Ramones’

‘Rockaway Beach’ is hard to beat. Encouragingly, Love’s voice is still strong and unlike Brian Wilson, he seems happy to be up there and still living the Californian dream. Everyone in the entire arena seems to be singing ‘Sloop John B’ and we’ll even forgive the attempts to plug some newer solo stuff and the odd filler sax solo as ‘Barbara Ann’ provides icing on an already elaborately decorated pop cake.

All of which should make **STEELEYE SPAN**’s closing set up on the Songbird something of a comedown. Not a bit of it: for a bunch of old folkies they can seriously rock out; on at least two occasions we wonder if they’re about to launch into an Iron Maiden cover. ‘The Elf Knight’ finds them at their most bucolic and contemplative, while a stomping ‘All Around My Hat’ predictably gets even the most festival-weary in the crowd up and jigging, and braying loudly along, for some time after the band have left the stage. A suitably rousing finale for what is indisputably the best Cornbury for some years.

Words: Dale Kattack, Sam Shepherd, Jane Norris

photos: Sam Shepherd



SUMMER IN THE CITY

Various venues

After a couple of years organising festivals in London, local label Big Scary Monsters turn their attention back to their hometown for the first Summer in the City, a one-day festival held in a handful of venues along Cowley Road.

Kicking the day off on the Divine Schism stage are **JUNK WHALE**, who play a brilliant brand of big-hearted grunge pop to a sizeable crowd for the first band of the day. More pack in for indie rockers **SELF HELP**, turning Fusion Arts, which is already kind of a greenhouse, into an infernal tropical sweat lodge.

Over at the Port Mahon, promoters Vacuous Pop come out of retirement for the day, and host a **GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS** set that’s so

loud I’m almost certain they wreck the PA in the process.

Back at Fusion Arts it’s one of the day’s biggest highlights: downer rockers **FANCY DRESS PARTY**, whose set of gorgeous, lilting sad sack anthems sounds absolutely enormous, and feels incredibly cathartic, even if everyone’s fighting to stay conscious in the unbearable heat.

A quick pit stop at the Truck Store lets us catch a couple of songs of **PET SEMETARY**’s solo set and Gaby Elise Monaghan’s siren song of a voice is tempting more than a few people in off the street. Post-hardcore/shoegaze act **EGRETS** are next, playing their first gig in over a year, though if they’re rusty it doesn’t show.

The clashes are pretty brutal

today, but there’s no way we could miss **LUCY LEAVE**. The band mix their frenetic jazzy indie hits with a couple of new tracks they’ve been keeping hidden up their sleeves, leaving us salivating for that upcoming second album.

WORRY are the best band of the day, hands down. The crowd packs in for a masterful, irresistible set full of riff-heavy hardcore punk, which brings a bona-fide mosh pit to the Port Mahon for what must be the first time in a decade. The band are getting better with every gig.

Unfortunately Drore have had to pull out, but that does provide the opportunity to catch **ORCHARDS**, whose power pop offers a welcome spot of bright hooks and noisy fun after Worry’s punishing set.

On the Snuggle Dice stage,

FLIRTING’s indie anthems straddle a sense of intimacy and vastness brilliantly, making the tiny confines of The Library basement feel absolutely enormous, and while it’s a shame to miss Gender Roles’ fun power punk and Tangled Hair’s intricate math rock, **WOAHNOWS** headlining the Library basement is too good of an offer to miss. The band play their latest album ‘Young and Cool’’s litany of bright indie bangers in full, rounding off the day in style, give or take a bit of nostalgic dancing in Room 101.

It’s great to have BSM breaking in a new festival, but more than that, it’s gratifying that so many top local bands fill today’s line-up with quality, and make the bill incredibly competitive in the process. Here’s hoping this year’s Summer in the City is the first of many.

Richard Bell

JULIA MEIJER / AFTER THE THOUGHT

The Wheatsheaf

It might be roasting outside, but here in the reassuring gloom of the Wheatsheaf, the atmosphere that emanates from the stage tonight is most definitely set to chilly.

After The Thought don’t kick things off; that’s just not in the play book of Matt Chapman Jones, he prefers to slowly creep into your consciousness, providing a gentle, almost polite start to the evening. A master of looping guitar motifs that have been suitable drenched in reverb and delay, his approach straddles the line between post-rock and ambient electronica with an assurance that he doesn’t look like he actually possesses. Watching him build these compositions feels a little voyeuristic at times; essentially it’s a little like peeping in through the blinds at a bedroom performer. Close your eyes, and all of a sudden it makes sense. There are moments when After The Thought is positivity magical: when the notes begin to cascade into each other sending new and interesting sonic waves and possibilities shooting into the air, it feels like you’re floating in free space. If there’s one complaint about tonight’s set, it’s that it’s too short.

Recent *Nightshift* cover star Julia Meijer is here tonight for the launch of new glorious debut album ‘Always Awake’. In a live setting, we’d expected

the songs to perhaps take on a slightly more feral edge, but with a band that includes local luminaries Seb Reynolds and Greig Stewart, it’s not entirely surprising that they are performed with flawless aplomb. Opening up with ‘Ocean’, a song that dates back to 2015, Meijer wastes no time in drenching the audience in a hushed folk chill. Except that folk doesn’t quite cover what she does; there are aspects of ambient and pop thrown in for good measure. It’s a heady mix and one that is instantly captivating. In a live setting, Meijer’s voice is an absolute joy, at times sounding not unlike Dolores O’Riordan, flitting between joyous exposition and palpable sorrow with a disarming regularity. This is not to say that this a set filled with introspection; there are moments when the pop sensibility takes over entirely. ‘Sanibel’ broods with a creeping intensity before rushing off into a hook that digs in deep. ‘Train Ticket’, meanwhile, seems to channel a woozy version of ‘Billy Jean’, standing out by adding a tight, snaking funk attack to a set that could otherwise be described as entirely ethereal and spacious. By the end of the set, it’s clear that Julia Meijer possesses a talent that deserves far wider attention, hopefully the world will awaken to her talents soon.

Sam Shepherd

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ALASKALASKA
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19.08.19

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03.10.19

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22.10.19

JAWS
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Oxford
18.11.19

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04.09.19

RICHARD HAWLEY
O2 Academy
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06.10.19

DREADZONE
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Oxford
25.10.19

FONTAINES D.C.
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SOLD OUT

THE LEISURE SOCIETY
The Bullingdon
Oxford
20.09.19

EASY LIFE
O2 Academy
Oxford
08.10.19

JESCA HOOP
The Bullingdon
Oxford
31.10.19

PENELOPE ISLES
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
27.11.19

POZI
Port Mahon
Oxford
27.09.19

JOHN
The Wheatsheaf
Oxford
09.10.19

JOSEFIN OHRN & THE LIBERATION
The Bullingdon
Oxford
11.11.19

RHYS LEWIS
O2 Academy2
Oxford
28.11.19

THE PALE WHITE
The Bullingdon
Oxford
29.09.19

LEIF ERIKSON
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
15.10.19

SPECTOR
The Bullingdon
Oxford
12.11.19

JOHNNY LLOYD
The Bullingdon
Oxford
04.12.19

THE NIGHT CAFE
O2 Academy2
Oxford
30.09.19

THYLA
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
16.10.19

YONAKA
O2 Academy2
Oxford
12.11.19

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SHONEN KNIFE

The Bullingdon

Shonen Knife walk on stage, hold up the commemorative towels they're selling at the merch stall as if waving victory flags, get

everyone in the room to do the devil horns and then launch into an hour of blitzkrieg pop. Two songs in we've discarded our notepad and

concentrate on grinning like loons at the display of absolute joy before us. If any band has ever had so much fun playing rock and roll, we've yet to see them; the only time any of the trio stops smiling is when they're singing. And when they're singing, they're singing "songs about our favourite food stuff and cute animals". Shonen Knife are fun; they are silly; they are absolutely magnificent.

For a band who've been together in various forms for almost 40 years, Shonen Knife's brazen, infectious glee is a thing of wonder. From 'Ice Cream Cookies' to 'Capybara', the Osaka legends kick out a buoyant, fuzzgun attack, replete with synchronised guitars moves that's three parts Ramones to one part Ronettes and one part 80s-era Ozzy Osbourne, everything shaken up and allowed to fizz deliriously around the room, while a packed crowd clap along to all the bits they're told to, whoop with delight in between songs, and smile. Constantly.

While sisters Naoko and Atsuko Yamano are the heart and soul of the band, current drummer Risa Kawano is as much a star of the show as either of them, each taking lead vocal duties or introducing songs in endearingly broken English as the set flies by, most of it taken from recent album 'Sweet Candy Power'. Not that Shonen Knife's sound has changed much since 1981; why change something perfect? Shonen Knife are the baby sea otters of the pop world.

They close with 'All You Can Eat', which features the finest kazoo intro ever, and then they're off, to spread sweet, silly joy to another part of the world. Tonight is one of those shows where you feel so happy you could cry. If life was as simple and fun as a Shonen Knife song, what a happy world this would be.

Dale Kattack

CLOUD NOTHINGS

The Bullingdon

Every so often a new genre of music bubbles up in reaction to its time and place but then becomes a mainstay of the musical canon for decades to come. Punk may have been born out of the frustration felt by the disenfranchised youth 1970s Britain, but the core ideals have been just as resonant to every generation that followed. While punk has grown, twisted, and redefined itself a dozen or more times, it's still here and punk is still punk.

Cleveland four-piece Cloud Nothings are from the Sub Pop family of noisy punk/post-punk acts like No Age and plenty of others before them. They burst forth with a barrage of energy, blistering drums over cacophonous guitars and throat-ripping vocals, but they still manage to hold on to the catchy immediacy of the poppiest of their contemporaries and forebears.

The list of reference points for Cloud Nothings' core sound could stretch from Hüsker Dü all the way to Pinegrove, but there

is one facet that makes Cloud Nothings truly stand-out: among the four-chord, melody-led verse-chorus-verse songs are massive stretches of avant-garde noise exploration. Halfway through the set we are treated to 'Dissolution', a track which starts with ferocious intensity before it dissolves into ten minutes of controlled feedback and uncontrolled percussion. The experience is hypnotic, powerful and yet not at all at odds with the rest of the set.

You might expect a quote-unquote punk band to eschew anything over four-minutes long, but the extended-passages of experimentation amid Cloud Nothings' songs allow you to reflect on the bittersweet feeling of Dylan Baldi's lyrics. It's not a safe place for emotional connection but tense respite on the emotional journey of the modern socio-political landscape being told through – as it has been many times before – the lens of distorted guitars and anger.

Matt Chapman Jones

TEARS FOR FEARS

Blenheim Palace

Tears for Fears have a history with Blenheim Palace. Roland Orzabal explains that they once did a live broadcast from here to Japan after playing four nights at Hammersmith Odeon. This was presumably a double dollop of Britishness for the Japanese, though the duo managed to translate their more international influences of Arthur Janov and existentialism into chart success. In fact, in tonight's show – part of the Nocturne Live concert series – the duo prove that their status in British pop music's heritage is befitting of the beautiful surroundings. Their most well-known hits – 'Everybody Wants to Rule the World'; 'Mad World'; 'Change' and 'Shout' – are tonight welcomed by a respectful but enthusiastic audience, with the heavy cold-afflicted Curt Smith's voice still distinctively clear.

It's not simply a stick-the-greatest-hits-on-and-play-long performance. Their cover of Radiohead's 'Creep' – appropriate given the locale, but actually currently a mainstay of their live show – is menacing in a way their other songs aren't, not reaching

a crescendo or really ever giving in to its fury. A few songs have different formats to their original counterparts: 'Head Over Heels' is the medley version with 'Broken' from 'Songs from the Big Chair', and 'Secret World', from the charmingly titled post-reformation album 'Everybody Loves a Happy Ending' (Roland and Curt having parted ways after 'The Seeds of Love'), is somewhat bizarrely punctuated by snippets of Wings' 'Let 'Em In' (more recently known from the Postcode Lottery advert). 'Woman in Chains' has an abstract funk intro, with the Oleta Adams slot filled by Carina Round, who complements Roland's vocals in a different but no lesser way than the deeper-voiced Oleta did.

The sprawling 'Badman's Song' might have fitted in on the famously troubled epic jazz/blues jumble that was 'The Seeds of Love', but it feels self-indulgent tonight; they can be forgiven though, given the strength of their back catalogue, and the fact that they're still here, together and smiling.

Kirsten Etheridge

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Despite the Hunting Act 2004, organised hunts around the country are still chasing and killing wild animals such as foxes and hares.

The police have said that it's not a priority to enforce the law and have left the hunts to continue their blood sport with little fear of prosecution. When hunts are caught red-handed, they claim it was an 'accident' that an animal was chased and torn apart by their hounds.

The Hunting Act needs to be strengthened and enforced. However it is now under threat from the hunting fraternity who want to revoke it. Knowing that they don't have the support of parliament, they are seeking to weaken it by creating even more loopholes. Hunts must be held accountable for their cruel and reckless actions.

Until the law is tightened and properly enforced, hunt saboteurs are needed out in the fields to directly intervene to protect hunted animals.

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TIM TURAN’S SESSION NOTES

Part Seven

The Vinyl Frontier (Part 4 Lacquers & Pressings)

This month I’m looking at the cutting and pressing process. After all the hard work of recording, mixing and mastering we get to the “real deal” stage of actually cutting a groove into something. That something is called a lacquer. It’s also known as an acetate but this is a misnomer given that no acetate is involved anymore. The lacquer is an aluminium disc coated in black nitrocellulose lacquer. The coating is very soft and can be damaged easily. They come in three different sizes: 10” for 7” singles, 12” for 10” records and 14” for a 12” album. The reason for the lacquer’s larger size is that there is about an inch of handling area around the edge.

The process usually begins with a check on the audio source to determine levels and EQ and then the cut can begin. The lathe will cut a ‘run-in’ groove and then the audio playback will begin. The groove is cut in one continuous path all the way to the end of the program material and then the run-out groove which ends in a ‘locked loop’. This is to stop the stylus wandering onto the label area which will cause stylus damage. When an album consists of individual songs a special silent transmission groove is cut between the tracks. This gives you the familiar gaps between the tracks. The very impressive technical name for this is the VTM or Visual Track Marker.

At the end of your cut a new lacquer disc is required for side B. You don’t turn the lacquer over as you would a finished record. At the end of this process the engineer will use a metal scribe to write information in between the run-out grooves. This will usually be the catalogue number for the label and the side designation for A or B. Other “secret” messages can also be written. One famous vinyl mastering engineer named George Peckham used to inscribe “A Porky Prime Cut” between the run-out groove of nearly every record he cut. There is one other technique for vinyl mastering which is known as DMM (Direct Metal Mastering). The groove is cut to a copper plated disc instead of a lacquer. This method has dwindled in popularity despite its more accurate grooves because people found the resulting sound too harsh and edgy. It is still available if you want it but the sound from the lacquer is still the preferred option.

The lacquer(s) are sent to the manufacturers where an intriguing process begins. First the lacquers are checked for the slightest speck of dust or dirt. This is absolutely essential. It is then sprayed with silver nitrate and placed in an ‘electroforming bath’. The electrolyte gradually forms a layer of nickel on the surface of the lacquer. When it is ready the nickel layer is peeled away from the lacquer and you have a “negative”, i.e. you have mountains instead of grooves. This is called a Father. The (negative-Father) nickel is then electroplated again to produce a Mother (grooves again). After final inspection it is yet again electroplated and when peeled off of the Mother (sorry about this terminology) it is called a stamper (mountains again). And you can probably guess what that is used for.

Pressings can now begin. The vinyl material is heated to about 160°C which doesn’t melt it completely. A patty of vinyl (also known as a biscuit) is placed onto the mould and the press exerts about 150 tons of pressure as the record is pressed. The labels are also pressed on at the same time. The record is trimmed and cooled with cold water. Vinyl records come in a variety of weights. The most popular at the moment is 180 grams. Earlier records from the 70s and 80s were typically 120-140 grams. 180 gram vinyl is considered audiophile grade. I don’t know why seeing as the groove depth is the same pretty much on all formats. I mastered a 7” single a good few years back for an Oxford band called Moonkat. They produced a 220 gram record. It was virtually unbendable.

Next month I’ll look at “speciality” options to conclude the vinyl story.



Dr SHOTOVER: Children of the Clown

[Gravelly transatlantic voiceover]... All your worst nightmares. Rolled into one terrifying movie. [Ponderous chord]... When girlish future PM Theresa skipped through those cornfields, little did the innocent vicar’s daughter know what horrors lurked.... in the realm of He Who Tweets Behind The Rows. An ancestral evil, fermenting in the rural heartland of biblically-named scythe-wielding rednecks who marry their cousins. A land where double-denimed inbreds hold up ‘God Hates Fags’ placards by the roadside. Where religion and racism hold hands. [Omen-style chanting on soundtrack]... And now the straw-haired orange clown preacher HAS A SON. [Chanting increases]... Not Malachi. Not Mordecai. Not Jacob. Not Jeremiah Hunt. The Chosen One is named... [Chanting hits climactic high, then fades as Dr Shotover wakes up in the East Indies Club bar]... Wha...? Huh...? Ah, there you are, feller. Pull up a hay bale and get a round in, why don’t you? What did you say your name was again? JOBBSON? BOORISH JOBBSON? Ridiculous.

Next month: Children of the Clown II – The Final F***-Up



‘Actually, I think I might vote Lib Dem this time’

INTRODUCING....

Nightshift’s monthly guide to the best local music bubbling under

BLOODSHOT

Who are they?

Death/thrash metallers Bloodshot are: Harry Irving (vocals); Macauley Luker (guitar/vocals); Liam Kerrane (guitar/vocals); Will Hathaway (bass) and Ed Collins (drums). The band was formed by Ed and Liam, who shared a mutual interest in Lamb of God. Harry and a previously bassist joined the band and they played a few gigs performing metal covers. Macauley joined in 2016 and a year later they released debut EP, ‘Purgatory’. Will joined in 2017, and since then the quintet have supported acts such as A Trust Unclean, Osiah, King 810, Bloodshot Dawn, Visions of Disfigurement and Chainsaw Castration. They play at this month’s Rabidfest.

What do they sound like?

Mixing up thrash, death-metal and deathcore, Bloodshot are on the super-heavy side of the metal scale but equally big on groove, mixing the full-pelt behemoth rock of Lamb of God with Gojira’s technicality and the raw, rasping aggression of death and even grindcore. Or, in their own words: “a fast, groovy, heavy and, at times, technical musical journey.”

What inspires them?

“People’s ability to play fast, heavy riffs as well as doing vocals simultaneously. We’re also inspired by being on stage and feeling powerful. Playing violent and aggressive music adds a whole different view and outlook on life.”

Career highlight so far:

“Supporting King 810 at the O2 Academy. Also recording at Monochrome Productions and releasing our two singles, ‘Split’ and ‘Dead Silent’.

And the lowlight:

“The natural tension that comes with being in a band means there have been times when we’ve been unable to find a middle ground. Drums breaking on stage and forgetting songs, and suffering a power-cut during the finals of Metal 2 the Masses final at The Wheatshaf: a low point for the other bands playing as well.”



Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

“Keyed Up: there’s always friendly rivalry between us and they’re some of the funniest and nicest guys we’ve had the pleasure of meeting along the way. They bring a new sound to Oxford that we’ve never heard from a local band before.”

If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:

“‘Wrath’ by Lamb of God. Each of us have a favourite off that album and their style influenced a lot of our earlier music with the groove element.”

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

“Rabidfest on the 18th August at The Bullingdon. Expect moshpits, headbanging and death.”

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

“Favourite thing is the promoters. We must give Nick Adsett, Sam Tyler and Greg Brown a huge shout out for all their incredible work on the shows that they have managed to put on. Least favourite thing is that there aren’t many other bands with a similar style to us, so sometimes the line-up varies quite a lot in genre, and it can sometimes be confusing for an audience.”

You might like them if you like:

Lamb of God; Gojira; Pantera; Decapitated; Slayer; Exodus; Carcass.

Hear them here:

Spotify; Amazon Music; iTunes; Deezer; YouTube.

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

We hate losing good things as far as Oxford music is concerned, and in August 1999 we were mourning the loss of **Channel 6**’s dedicated local music show, **Sound Stage**. The show, which had featured live recordings of Oxford acts alongside discussions about topics relevant to the local and national live scene, had lasted barely two months before the TV channel, based on Woodstock Road, decided to pull the plug, station director Thomas Harding declaring “it wasn’t the show I want,” stating he wanted more big band music, jazz and folk. The station itself didn’t last much longer.

The future of live music at what was then still called **The Dolly** was also in the balance back then, with the pub having just undergone a major refurbishment. Musician **Spike Holifield** was the venue’s promoter back then. As it turned out, the place had another nearly two decades of gigs left in it as The Cellar before it closed back in March. In better news, a trio of Oxford bands – **Canola**, **Scribble** and **The Workhouse** – had all been snapped up by uber-cool indie label **Fierce Panda**, all set to release singles in the coming weeks and months.

It being August and everyone bugging off to the beach or a riverside pub garden, live music was in short supply, but **Gorky’s Zygotic Mynci** were at **The Point**, supported by **Hester Thrale** (later to become **Psychid**); also playing the venue were local metalcore tyrants **JOR**, alongside **Ivy’s Itch**, while **Mansun** and Inspiral Carpets singer **Tom Hingley** were at **The Zodiac**.

10 YEARS AGO

“Love music, hate stupidity,” ran the tagline of *Nightshift*’s August 2009 cover, featuring a great action shot of local rapper **Mr Shadow**, talking about his move into grime, his non-stop DIY work ethic and new single, ‘Are You Stupid?’. “I’ve got a 2:1 law degree, but I’d rather be a poor musician,” he declared, though over 10,000 CD sales later (and many more now), mostly through busking, suggests he’s not doing so badly for himself. Last we saw of the man he was in front of a Parliamentary committee discussing threats to live music.

The main news this month was, sadly, the death of much-loved local producer and musician **Richard Haines** from cancer at the age of just 45. Rich had run **Dungeon Studios** for 30 years, working with pretty much every local band of note, as well as playing in various bands, from **Freezing in Cannes** to **Soma**. “Rich would have been too modest to admit it, in fact he would have laughed at the very idea, but he was a genuine Oxford music legend,” we said of him, and he will be long remembered as a pivotal figure in local music history.

In more positive news, local blues-rock heroes **Steamroller** were reforming for their first gig since splitting in 1978, the intervening years seeing various members survive a stroke, cancer and alcoholism to return to keep the spirit of Cream and Hendrix alive, something they continue to this day. Highlight of a typically quiet August gig calendar was the visit of incredible experimental act **Nisennenmondai** to **The Wheatshaf**, still one of the most spectacular displays of musical virtuosity we’ve been privileged to see.

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

5 YEARS AGO

Oxford’s music triumphs are many and varied and not always in the form of bands. Back in August 2014 **Count Skylarkin** was celebrating winning a prize for Best Normal Shed at the annual Shed of the Year Wards for his **Disco Shed**. The travelling shed-based soundsystem had been taking the party to Reading and Leeds Festivals, T In The Park, Bestival and Latitude as well as Truck and Cornbury. “Best normal shed seems like a bit of a misnomer,” said showrunner Aidan Larkin, while pondering where in the shed to place his award.

While rising indie stars **Balloon Ascents** (later to change their name to **NeverInd** before splitting up and begetting us **Catgod** among others) were on the cover of this month’s *Nightshift*, cavorting with balloons and umbrellas in party mood, **Stornoway**’s Brian Briggs was discussing his band’s forthcoming third album, recorded with producer Gil Norton, who’d previously worked with Pixies, Foo Fighters and Echo & the Bunnymen.

Gig highlights of the month included a sold-out show from **NOFX** at the **O2 Academy**, while **Cindytalk**, **Breathless**, **Gnod**, **Shitwife**, **Part Chimp**, **Flamingods** and **Joanna Gruesome** were all at **Supernormal**. **London Grammar**, **Metronomy** and **Burt Bacharach** headlined **Wilderness**, while over at **The Big Festival** **Fatboy Slim**, **Laura Mvula** and **Jamie Cullum** went head to head with a lot of cheese, a Kenwood Chef demonstration and Alex James’ ego for top billing.

THE WHEATSHEAF

Friday 16th August – **RABIDFEST** 7:45pm

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Saturday 17th August 7:45pm

EASTER ISLAND STATUES

WHO'S ALICE

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DEATH OF THE MAIDEN

IDEAL MARRIAGE

Saturday 31st August – **HAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES** 8pm

GLUEMAN

TOUCHY COMA

MY CROOKED TEETH

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TRACKS

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TOP TRACKS

THE SUBTHEORY

If you've read *Nightshift's* reviews pages long enough, not only will you have learned some new swear words and realised that everything you ever do or say is ultimately pointless and that everything dies in the end, you'll maybe have gathered that among the things we really, really love are cake, kittens, red wine and synth-pop. In no particular order, though kittens playing synth-pop after gorging on cake and red wine would be the acest thing in the history of the universe, right? Andy Hill is best known round these parts as beatmaker and electronics chap in chief of hip hop outfit Death of Hi-Fi, currently on hiatus, and here goes the full synth-pop in his solo guise, this track having been used on a synthwave charity compilation for Cancer Research. It's as cold and sterile as the outer reaches of space, as emotionally detached as an android at a house party and as dreamily spaced out as a gang of spliffed-up otters lying on a riverbank contemplating the clouds while waiting for their fish feast pizza to be delivered. Machinery hums, chitters, chatters and whirrs, vocals hover robotically yet plaintively in the middle distance while industrial guitars churn somewhere almost out of sight or sound. The whole thing sounds like it's been beamed in from some obscure late-70s Italian minimal wave compendium. Of course we bloody love it. This is us we're talking about here.

BROKEN EMPIRE

Talking of music from the 70s, here's some heavy rocking of the old school from Broken Empire: long of hair, heavy of riff, unbowed by neither time nor fickle fashion. And yet, unlike this month's Toilet Track denizens, they manage to still sound like they're alive and fighting. Or perhaps those shifting sands of time have been kinder to this sort of unreconstructed metal than it has to certain other rock forms. Spawned of the loins of Judas Priest and Iron Maiden, and raised on the sour milk of thrash and perhaps the rusk of Guns'n'Roses, Broken Empire rev up their metal steed, gun their engines as they depart the town of Nowhere and head out on the open road for Who Knows Where, the road long and straight, the riffage true and solid. It's music that smells of engine oil and leather; it's sat in your local bar right now, beer in hand, one foot up on your favourite table and a "what are you gunna do about it" look on its face. You're gunna welcome it in, is what you're gunna do. You simply cannot argue with rock music like this: it is impervious to your feelings.

Track of the Month wins a free remix from Soundworks studio in Oxford, courtesy of Umair Chaudhry. Visit www.umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift

DREAM IN A TEACUP

There's precious little opera in pop music. Sometime Bowie collaborator Klaus Nomi was brilliantly scary, but beyond him you're looking at the sample from 'Madame Butterfly' by Malcolm McLaren and not much beyond. But here come Dream in a Teacup, some of whom readers might remember as part of ace young prog rockers The Aureate Act a few years back. Singer/keyboard player Dominic Baum was possessed of a beautifully angelic vibrato, which suited his band's elaborate arrangements. They disbanded when everyone went off to university but seems Dom dropped out and teamed back up with guitarist Nat Jones under the name Dream in a Teacup and so here we are: opera pop. On this all-too-brief track, 'Termina', he swoops and soars and flutters his tonsils impressively over a simple yet strident piano track. We guess Jon Anderson might be a vague touchstone given that proggy past, or maybe Purescence's gloriously gifted James Mudriczki, but this makes little concession to what you normally expect from an operatically inclined rock singer. One two-minute song isn't really enough to get the full picture, we feel. Give us more. And that's a phrase we normally reserve for cake, kittens and red wine.

SHOTOVER

Seems to be a month for former local faves returning in new guises. Shotover is the new project formed by ex-Balloon Ascents/ Neverlnd singer Thomas Roberts and bandmates Jonny Vickers and Henry Soothill. The name comes from the place they "used to crash our bikes" as kids, though *Nightshift's* resident acid casualty and East Indies Club scion Dr Shotover will probably want a word, and a few free brandies off them, once he's slept off his latest glue and Advocat session. Perhaps Thomas and chums can soothe his savage breast with this airy mix of dream-pop and chilled electronic, all multilayered choirboy vocals, lightly funk'd rhythms, discreet stadium guitar wanderings and soothing synthetic whooshes, which tends to make them sound like Simon and Garfunkel might have if they'd grown up 30 years later and spent their summers mellowing in Ibiza bars rather than New York coffee houses. It's epic yet mellow, just occasionally dallying with late-70s Pink Floyd, but while it's all delicately and intricately arranged, you wish it would drop that polite frontage occasionally and get down and dirty. All the best things in life have their ugly side which makes them whole: kittens have teeth and claws; cake is a giant calorie bomb and red wine hangovers are the Devil's finest invention since war and UB40. Fighting and drunk and claws out – let's be havin' it, Shotover.

RICH RAINFORD

Rich Rainford's last offering saw him unceremoniously dumped, which provoked an outpouring of online rage, not from Rich himself, who reacted with a dignified shrug to the review, but from a noisy throng of swivel-eyed loons. Bonfires and dental reconstruction were threatened: all in a day's work for *Nightshift's* gang of hardened warriors. Actually, we're lovers not fighters, and mostly we love cake, red wine and kittens, so it's with a little trepidation we listen to 'Dominoes', Rich's latest song. And for the first few seconds we're worried history might repeat itself, a slightly awkward semi ballad that has Overwrought stamped through it like a stick of seaside rock. But then Rich hits the chorus and suddenly it seems the lad has a tune in him. It's lightweight, Radio 2-friendly stadium piano pop, but it's got one of those hooks that niggles and nags its way into your internal jukebox, ready to hibernate until its chance comes to rise up for no reason whatsoever and have you singing along while beating yourself senseless that you can't remember where you first heard it. Hopefully that'll be the only beaten senseless we experience in the near future. Altogether now: "Do we all fall like dominoes in the wind?" Good work Rich; while all around you lost their heads, you kept your dignity and wrote a decent pop song. Victory is yours.

CHARLIE STEEL

"My style is somewhat unique and different to most commercial 'music' that's about in 2019," claims Charlie Steel, overstating his uniqueness slightly while unaware that you can't be "somewhat unique". It's an absolute, old chap. Anyway, that aside, this is different to most current music in that most current music tends to have a semblance of musicality about it, rather than sounding like it was honked out in a half-arsed, spliffed-out fashion on a bedroom recording set-up while everyone else was out raving. Charlie sort of raps/sings/talks in a hushed monotone, delivering hard-hitting lines like "Just about as honest as a modern politician," while every song here comes with a signature cheap keyboard motif, which, on 'Up All Night', makes it sound like he's about to launch into the theme tune to ancient kids TV show *Rainbow*. 'Poverty Porn' is doubtless heartfelt but it's also on the stagnant side of pedestrian and writing slice of life social commentary while sounding vaguely Londonish doesn't automatically make you Ian Dury or Kate Nash. Nice press shot, though, with Charlie looking uncannily like Mark E Smith's kid brother gurning his noggin off on E.

MORRELL

Naming a hip hop collective (or solo act depending if you believe the press release or Facebook page) after a centuries-old Oxford brewery is either genius or an act of foolhardy incongruity. Come on, what if they accidentally end up getting booked to play Cropredy Festival or something? Imagine

Send tracks 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.

the rivers of spilt or spat out real ale flooding the festival field as patrons clutch their chests in horror at exposure to the modern world. Not that Morrell would terrify any but the most sheltered of Shire folk, despite claims to possess "deep, hard-hitting, real lyrics that don't shy away from what's experienced by all people." And what precisely is experienced by all people? Breathing, perhaps. Drinking water and eating food, passing it out the other end... pretty much everything else is slightly more selective, be it falling in love, owning a pet or living at the sharp end of knife crime. Like Charlie Steel before them, Morrell exist on the more laidback hip hop spectrum, raps closer to simple spoken word but in little danger of challenging Kate Tempest for any kind of throne. The one track here, 'Where You Been', is passable, unimposing and inoffensive as befits a tale of wandering around wondering what it's all about but forgetting where you actually went, but great hip hop shouldn't ever be unimposing and inoffensive. It doesn't even sound particularly stoned (which might explain that last bit), just forgetful. Next time try and remember where you went, and also to write a tune.

TOILET TRACKS

RIVER HOUNDS

While we have an unconditional love for cats, we're also rather fond of doggies here at *Nightshift*; in fact, in the wake of all those threats to our physical wellbeing, we contemplated getting ourselves a small pack of Rottweillers before remembering we're too bone idle to deal with giant over-friendly creatures with an excess of energy. No chance of that with River Hounds, whose 'Runaway' track here is less frisky Labrador puppy, more overweight, flatulent Pug. People of a certain disposition might tell you this is how rock music used to be made and perhaps still should be. Before fucking off to enjoy a hearty feast of liver and onions, tripe and powdered egg, perhaps washed down with lashings of Watney's Red Barrel. Which might explain why the whole thing sounds so horrendously constipated. It's like an overboiled stew made up of discarded body parts of Rush, Pearl Jam, Stereophonics and The Who. It's accomplished, well produced (hey, it was recorded at Abbey Road – you could take a dump in the toilets there and it'd probably sound like a symphony) and technically proficient. And it is dead inside. Or at least smells like it is. Perhaps that toilet visit might have produced something more fragrant. Another thing that puts us off owning a dog is having to clean up their crap. Not least because as this offering proves, we spent so much of our lives scooping up the musical excrement certain bands have a habit of leaving on the pavement. Humans don't deserve dogs, with their loyalty, devotion and sense of unbridled joy. Conversely, no-one deserves to have River Hounds inflicted on them.

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Thur 25th Jul

Elvana:
Elvis Fronted Nirvana
+ Cherokii

Thur 1st Aug

Victory Lane
+ One State Drive + The White Tips
+ Semper Vera

Fri 2nd Aug

White Denim
+ Boy Azooga

Sat 3rd Aug • 11pm

Rory Stone Love

Wed 14th Aug

Cancer Bats
+ Incite + Crazy Arm + MSRY

Thur 15th Aug

This Is The Kit
+ Rozi Plain

Fri 23rd Aug • 6.30pm

Peace
+ CC HoneyMoon

Fri 23rd Aug • 10.30pm

Dancehall artists
Teejay and Ding
Dong Live

Sun 25th Aug

Little Steven &
The Disciples Of Soul

Fri 30th Aug

Palmist
+ Be Still + Flintlock Rifles + Redshift

Fri 6th Sep • 6.30pm

Ultimate Coldplay
+ Port in a Storm + Rhys Warriner

Sat 7th Sep • 6.30pm

No Hot Ashes

Fri 20th Sep • 6.30pm

Boyzlife
+ Katie Kittermaster

Fri 20th Sep • 6.30pm

Foreign Beggars
+ Rhymeskeemz + DeSide

Tue 24th Sep

New Hope Club

Thur 26th Sep

Submotion
Orchestra
+ So So Sun + Tilly Valentine

Sat 28th Sep • 6.30pm

Evil Scarecrow
+ The Grand Mal
+ Damaged Reich
+ Imminent Annihilation

Mon 30th Sep

The Night Café
+ Dreamers + On Video

Thur 3rd Oct

Pierce Brothers

Fri 4th Oct • 6.30pm

CoCo and
The Butterfields
+ Harry Pane

Sun 6th Oct

Richard Hawley

Tue 8th Oct

Easy Life

Fri 11th Oct 6.30pm

The London African
Gospel Choir performs
Paul Simon's Graceland

Fri 11th Oct • 6.30pm

King Prawn
+ Popes of Chillitown

Sat 12th Oct • 6.30pm

Antarctic Monkeys

Sat 12th Oct • 6.30pm • SOLD OUT

The Divine Comedy

Mon 14th Oct

Kate Tempest

Wed 16th Oct • 6.30pm

PRESS TO MECO
+ Chapter and Verse

Thur 17th Oct • SOLD OUT

Ninja Sex Party

Fri 18th Oct • 6.30pm

Amber Run
+ Stereo Honey

Fri 18th Oct • 6.30pm

Ferocious Dog

Sat 19th Oct • 12pm

Ritual Union

Tue 22nd Oct

Barns Courtney

Tue 22nd Oct

Striking Matches
+ Tenille Townes

Wed 23rd Oct 6.30pm

The Fallen State

Thur 24th Oct

Headie One

Fri 25th Oct • 6.30pm

Jake Clemons
+ Ben McKelvey

Sat 26th Oct • 6.30pm

Guns 2 Roses
+ MOTLEY CRUED

Mon 28th Oct

Inglorious

Sat 2nd Nov • 6pm

Hip Hop Hooray

Sat 2nd Nov • 6.30pm

The Dualers
+ Kioko + Count Skylarkin
+ Tony Nanton

Sat 2nd Nov • 11pm

Mad Cobra

Sun 3rd Nov

Bear's Den

Mon 4th Nov

Feeder

Tue 5th Nov

Reel Big Fish
+ [spunge] + Lightyear

Thur 7th Nov

Little Comets

Fri 8th Nov • 9pm

The Roaring 2.0s

Sat 9th Nov • 6.30pm

Snarky Puppy

Mon 11th Nov

Elder Island

Tue 12th Nov

Yonaka

Thur 14th Nov

The Smyths...
A celebration
of the debut L.P

Fri 15th Nov • 6.30pm

The Treatment
+ Airrace + Lake Acacia

Sat 16th Nov • 6.30pm

Dub Pistols

Sat 16th Nov • 11pm

King Shine Vs Empire

Sun 17th Nov

Black Water County

Mon 18th Nov

Scouting for Girls

Tue 19th Nov

Primal Scream

Thur 21st Nov

A
+ '68

Fri 22nd Nov • 6.30pm

Half Man
Half Biscuit

Fri 22nd Nov • 11pm

The Craig Charles
Funk & Soul Club

Sat 23rd Nov • 6.30pm

Biffy McClyro (Tribute)

Tue 26th Nov • SOLD OUT

Fontaines D.C.

Wed 27th Nov • 6.30pm

Electric Six

Thur 28th Nov

Happy Mondays
- Greatest Hits Tour
+ Jon Dasilva

Thur 28th Nov

Rhys Lewis

Fri 29th Nov • 6.30pm

Mad Dog Mcrea

Sat 30th Nov • 6.30pm

Definitely Mightbe
(Oasis tribute)

Sun 1st Dec

The Chats

Fri 6th Dec • 6.30pm

Pearl Jam UK

Sat 7th Dec • 6.30pm

Absolute Bowie
- Legacy Tour

Sat 14th Dec • 6.30pm

Little Simz

Fri 13th Mar 2020

The SUPERSONIC 70s
XMAS SHOW

Fri 11th Sep 2020 • 6.30pm

The Dualers

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