

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every
month
Issue 283
February
2019**

photo: Ian Wallman

"For a band that plays original music there is no future in Devon. Oxford is all about original music and supporting the local music scene."



Kanadia

Escaping to the city, making epic music and supporting The Wurzels with Oxford's stadium-bound stars.

Also in this issue:

Foals return!

So do **Swervedriver**!

Introducing **Lina Simon**

plus, all your Oxford music news, previews and reviews, and five pages of gigs for February

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

THE BULLINGDON

FEBRUARY 2019 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Friday 1st February Conjurer Desert Storm Drore Doors: 7pm	Sunday 17th February Sounds of the Sirens Doors: 7pm	Sunday 2nd March The Orielles Doors: 7pm	Thursday 4th April The Brew + Hell's Gazelles Doors: 7pm
Saturday 2nd February Simple: DJ Seinfeld Doors: 10pm	Monday 18th February Art Brut Cassels Doors: 7pm	Monday 4th March Seafret Doors: 7pm	Saturday 16th April Musical Medicine Rhythm Sister Doors: 10pm
Thursday 7th February Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes Doors: 7pm	Tuesday 19th February Another Sky Doors: 7pm	Saturday 9th March Musical Medicine Nick the Record Tech Support Doors: 10pm	Sunday 7th April The Rock Project Oxford Doors: 7pm
Friday 8th February The Teskey Brothers Geo Doors: 7pm	Friday 22nd February The Black Bullets Doors: 7pm	Wednesday 14th March Josh Smith - US Doors: 7pm	Wednesday 10th April Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Doors: 7pm
Saturday 9th February Basic Ejeca & Eliot Adamson Doors: 10pm	Saturday 23rd February <i>Volume invites Bar:Rage</i> Hazard Funsta, Power, Didz, Alman Doors: 10pm	Friday 15th March The Orb <i>30th Anniversary Tour</i> Doors: 7pm	Thursday 11th April Blue Rose Code Doors: 7pm
Sunday 10th February England v France - 6 Nations <i>On The Big Screen!</i> Doors: 2pm	Sunday 24th February Beans on Toast Doors: 7pm	Saturday 16th March Basic Big Miz Doors: 10pm	Thursday 11th April Love Music Hate Racism Jim Jones & The Righteous Mind The Deadbeat Apostles Doors: 7pm
Monday 11th February Laura Veirs Doors: 7pm	Monday 25th February Psychedelic Porn Crumpets Doors: 7pm	Tuesday 19th March Sports Team Doors: 7pm	Thursday 11th April The Noble Jacks Doors: 7pm
Tuesday 12th February Hunkpapa Doors: 7pm	Wednesday 27th February Kris Barras Doors: 7pm	Wednesday 27th March Erja Lyytinen Doors: 7pm	Friday 19th April Prism: Spectrum Doors: 10pm
Wednesday 13th February Ben Poole Doors: 7pm	Thursday 28th February Dots Funk Odyssey Doors: 7pm	Thursday 28th March Sugarthief Doors: 7pm	Tuesday 22nd April Josefin Öhrn + The Liberation Doors: 7pm
Thursday 14th February Willie J Healey Doors: 7pm	Friday 1st March She Drew the Gun Doors: 7pm	Saturday 30th March Rawdio S.P.Y MC Lowqui, Blunt, Captain Morgan Deep Field, Sandman, Algar Doors: 10pm	Thursday 24th April Corduroy Doors: 7pm
Saturday 16th February Musical Medicine Mr. Bongo Doors: 10pm	Saturday 2nd March Simple Anastasia Kristensen Object Blue Doors: 10pm	Tuesday 2nd April Dream State Doors: 7pm	Tuesday 30th April Simple: May Day DJ Rum Doors: 10pm



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NEWS

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TRUCK FESTIVAL will announce its line-up on Monday 4th February. This year's event takes place over the weekend of the 26th-28th July at Hill Farm in Steventon. Follow Truck on Twitter at @Truckfestival for news as it breaks. We've seen who's headlining and we're proper excited.

Meanwhile **Cornbury Festival** will announce their Friday and Saturday night headline acts on the 4th February. This year's event takes place over the weekend of the 5th-7th July at Great Tew Country Park. The Beach Boys have already been announced as Sunday headliners. Tickets and news at cornburyfestival.com.

WITNEY MUSIC FESTIVAL returns later this year. Now in its 13th year, the festival will feature over 60 acts playing across 14 venues and pubs in the town over the period from the 24th May to the 9th June, followed by the two-

day outdoor concert on the Leys over the weekend of the 14th and 15th June. Over 15,000 people attended last year's weekend show, headlined by The Farm and Noasis. The festival also features its traditional battle of the bands and an Ox Factor competition. Visit the Witney Music Festival Facebook page to get involved.

THE MUSIC BOX in Wallingford has closed down – for the second time. The independent record store shut its doors for the last time after Christmas, though owner Richard Strange is hopeful the store could reopen in Didcot in the future. The shop, in Market Square, one of the few remaining record shops in the county, shut down in 2008, but returned as a pop-up store in 2015, eventually returning to its original home in 2016. Lack of custom is blamed for its closure. Meanwhile the future of Fopp in Gloucester Green is in doubt after the collapse of parent company HMV in December. Fingers crossed for all the staff there and for the future of music retail in Oxford.

J MASCIS' show at the O2 Academy on the 16th January has been rearranged to Tuesday 14th May due to personal issues. All



FOALS ARE SET TO RELEASE TWO NEW ALBUMS IN 2019.

The band announced the releases with a short teaser video on Twitter on the 9th January, featuring a clip of music and the titles of the albums: 'Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost' Parts 1 and 2. The first album will be released on the 8th March with part 2 in the autumn.

The band subsequently launched a cryptic treasure hunt ahead of a new single, 'Exits', posting map co-ordinates in various locations around Europe and the UK where envelopes containing lyrics to the song were placed. The single was premiered on Annie Mac's Radio 1 show On Monday 21st January. 'Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost, Part 1' is Foals' fifth studio album, the follow-up to 'What Went Down' in 2015, and the band's first since the departure of bassist Walter Gervas last year.

tickets remain valid or refunds are available from point of purchase. Meanwhile **Vryll Society's** gig at The Bullingdon at the end of January was cancelled after singer Michael Ellis quit the band due to "musical differences". While the rest of the band plan to continue together, no new date has been announced.

A VERY WARM NIGHTSHIFT WELCOME to local mastering maestro **Tim Turan** from Turan Audio, who starts his new monthly column dealing with the various aspects of producing and releasing

music this month, aimed at local musicians, from mastering records and download issues to streaming issues, vinyl issues, metadata and CDs. "I get asked so many questions in the studio and online by bands and artists that I thought a column in *Nightshift* would be a good way to answer them," said Tim; "I was thinking about all the different things that bands need to think about when it comes to mastering records. It is a total minefield of hidden info out there and it's about artists and bands getting the optimum from their releases."

TRUCK STORE CELEBRATES ITS EIGHTH BIRTHDAY this month with a day of live music and DJs. The independent music shop on Cowley Road hosts live sets from Max Blansjaar and The August List from 5pm on **Saturday 9th February**, followed by an in-store DJ set from Low Island.

Truck Store has been at the heart of the Oxford music scene since it opened in 2011, regularly hosting live sets from local and touring bands and not just surviving but thriving in the face of myriad challenges facing the retail sector and music retail in particular. Store manager Carl Smithson told *Nightshift*: "it's a challenging time for retail in general so we've had to stay on our toes to survive but that's one advantage we do have over big chains: we can adapt and change when we need to and that's certainly something we're always trying to do. Central to everything, alongside our customer service ethos, is our passion for new music and support of the album, something which is so important in an era of endless playlists. We've always strived to make the store a welcoming environment for discovering new artists, re-discovering classic albums and being a home away from home for music lovers. The personal touch is something a computer-generated algorithm can never replicate and we're proud to serve at the heart of Oxford's music scene."

As ever, support local independent music. Visit truckmusicstore.co.uk for more event details and full vinyl and CD stock list.



NEWS



SAE OXFORD is looking for local bands and solo artists to perform at their Live Lounge sessions. The college, situated in Littlemore, which offers degree courses in music, video and gaming technology as well as the music industry is repeating the sessions it began last year, and

means acts can take a video of their performance away with them. Musicians work with students on every aspect of the performance. Dani Boventre, a campus support technician at SAE Oxford, said: "The live lounge sessions take place on campus in our fantastic studios. The artists get a high quality performance to share on their social media pages, which is perfect for promotion and for securing gigs. Our students get the opportunity to collaborate across disciplines, and hone their skills in a real working environment." For more details email Bethany Kirkbride at b.kirkbride@sae.edu.

BEAUTIFUL FREAKS continues to showcase Oxford music on its weekly radio show. Beautiful Freaks is an indie music radio show at Oxide Radio, the University of Oxford's student radio station, playing new indie and alternative music with a focus on local music. The show is broadcast live every week during term time on Sundays from 8-9pm and you can listen back on demand at beautifulfreaks.co.uk/radio. Recent shows have featured interviews with Candy Says as well as music critic Everett True. February 3rd's show features a playlist chosen by Oxford-based label Big Scary Monsters.

AS EVER, don't forget to tune into **BBC Oxford Introducing** every Saturday night between 8-9pm on 95.2fm. The dedicated local

music show plays the best Oxford releases and demos as well as featuring interviews and sessions with local acts. The show is available to stream or download as a podcast at bbc.co.uk/oxford.

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

The photos of The August List and Beak in January's *Nightshift* should have been credited to **GlassHertz Photography**. Apologies to Jason for the mistake. The lesson to be learned being: don't try putting a magazine together after enjoying too much festive cheer.

SWERVEDRIVER'S ADAM FRANKLIN has been talking to *Nightshift* about the band's new album, 'Future Ruins', their sixth and the follow-up to 2015's comeback record 'I Wasn't Born to Lose You'.

Released on the 25th January on Rock Action Records, 'Future Ruins' finds Swervedriver enjoying global cult status, having become an inspiration on subsequent generations of alt.rock and shoegaze bands having formed in Oxford in 1989 from the ruins of former local faves Shake Appeal. "We were in Los Angeles in Sep 2017 at the end of a US tour and were offered some time in a studio that had Swervedriver and Supergrass posters on the walls," recalls Adam of the album's recording sessions. "Mick Quinn from Supergrass had been playing bass with us so we obviously had to go in there to record. We did further recording down in Brighton where Jim (Hartridge, guitarist) resides and mixed it in London but we always bring it back home to Oxford in the end to be mastered at Turan Audio. It doesn't matter how many fancy dan places it's been recorded at, if it doesn't pass muster in Cowley Centre it's not going anywhere! On the last album I did the vocals at Mark Gardener's house.

"We had two weeks in this studio in LA and decided to just get down on tape every idea we had knocking around, so it was very different from the previous album where we went into the studio with ten songs and the ten songs only. This time we came away with thirty songs in various states of disrepair and culling it down



to ten from thirty was almost like compiling a best of mixtape. The whole thing felt kind of instinctive – the recording was spontaneous and the lyrics kind of stream-of-consciousness and we didn't spend too much time pontificating on what to do, we just went and did it." While Adam continues to live in Oxford, where he grew up and formed his first bands, including Splatter Babies with future Talulah Gosh singer Amelia Fletcher, Swervedriver's highest standing has often been in the United States where they have toured more regularly than in the UK, in part due to drummer Mikey Jones living Stateside. "Mikey's in New York these days and that certainly impacts on our ability to have a regular Thursday night get-together, but these days we just have a couple of rehearsals as a fresher before going off on tour. The band is always spread out

one way or another; Mick's been in Australia for a while so we've had Ben Ellis from Iggy Pop's band sitting in, which is pretty exciting as we've always been huge fans of Iggy! Basically though it's three Wheatley boys and a guy from Milwaukee making up the four-piece. "I think we've been perceived differently in the States for whatever reasons and we've done a lot more playing over there than here, not only because it's physically bigger but we just get better offers. There's that thing where you meet people who have driven to see you play and they tell you they just took a ten hour road trip, which is almost inconceivable here because that would be from Oxford to Aberdeen or something but our music seems to appeal on those road trips." With the new album out this month and already picking up

positive reviews, Adam also reflected on Swervedriver's 30 year career and how they've become an inspiration for new generations of musicians.

"It's great to still be out there making records, especially since it was never considered a career option and in the mid-80s in Oxford we were in thrall to 60s garage rock which seemed to come from a bygone era, and yet now here we are 30 years down the line! And yeah, you hear about artists over the years expressing their love for us, like Ryan Adams. I think because we were signed to Creation Records and from Oxford and friends with bands like Ride and Slowdive, there is a certain genre in there that has served us all well I think because there are kids forming bands today all around the world influenced by the likes of us the same way we were influenced by all the Pebbles and Nuggets stuff. I have to say it's nice to count Bob Mould as a fan and friend because Hüsker Dü were a big influence on us and we mailed him our very first demo tape – recorded down the Cowley Road with Tim Turan – because he was starting a label at the time. He didn't end up doing the label but he came to our very first ever show in the US in New York and was right down the front too."

Adam also hopes there'll be a hometown show for the band in the not too distant future. "I hope so! There were discussions about playing Ritual Union last year which we weren't able to do in the end but would love to do this year if it happens and can all be arranged. I think there may be a UK tour in the spring."

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Kanadia

photo: Ian Walman



“I BELIEVE WE ACTUALLY beat Adidas to the name. One day we hope to be sponsored by them. Until then they will remain our biggest competition on Google. The story of the name isn’t a very interesting one. It was our old drummer’s mispronunciation of Canada that led us to the name. We were stuck for a song title so we stole it. I wish I could say that we are named after the trainer, but that would be a lie.”

SO SAYS MELISSA Marshall, keyboard player with local rockers Kanadia of the origin of the band’s unusual moniker. We’re a tad disappointed in its slightly prosaic origins, even if it does mean the quartet might one day benefit from the patronage of a global sportswear brand, whose trainers share their name. We’d kind of hoped Kanadia was an area of mountainous wilderness, perhaps somewhere in the Pacific North West region. Somewhere that would better reflect the band’s epic musical grandeur.

Because Kanadia are a band with songs as big as the open sky, choruses as towering as sea cliffs. They’re a band who play it big. “That’s not intentional,” chimes in James Bettis, he of the cloud-touching guitar lines and regal growl

that leads Kanadia’s musical line. “But the ideas only ever feel right when they have those dynamics. Now it seems to have become a core part of our sound; however it is something we would like to move away from in the future from time to time. There are a few moments on the album where we drop the mood a bit.”

FORMED IN 2015 KANADIA are now part of Oxford’s varied and impressive landscape, doubtless part of the windswept uplands in geographical terms, with a stadium-bound sound that takes inspiration from Radiohead, Muse and U2, but equally finds room for the intricacy and delicacy of Jeff Buckley and even the groove of INXS on occasion. The bands roots, though, are in Devon, where Melissa and James originally met and formed their first band together. “We met through mutual friends back home in Ilfracombe when we were still in school,” recalls James; “I was already in a band before I knew Melissa and I was adding a lot of keyboard elements to the songs we were making, but we didn’t have a keyboard player at the time. Once Melissa joined, the sound instantly expanded and from there we played in a four piece for about three years

around North Devon, which doesn’t have the most thriving original music scene. “The first band we were in together was really where we honed our sound, experimented with recording. We played a few cool gigs here and there, but because we were young there were a lot of strange ones by contrast to what we do now. We were on the same bill as The Wurzels a few times. We tended to spend more time frustrated that we couldn’t quite capture the sound we were after on our old multi track than performing.” “We bonded over similar tastes such as Muse and Radiohead,” continues Melissa, “though I wasn’t as informed on them as James was. Over the years our music tastes have expanded and we’re always on the look out for new artists. Recently we discovered an upcoming artist called Tamino, who we saw live at The Omera in London; he blew us away. We are still big fans of alternative rock, but as we have matured we definitely take a lot of interest in other genres. As a general rule of thumb it’s all pretty moody, whether it’s from an electronic background or guitar based.

FRUSTRATED BY A LACK OF opportunities in Devon, James and Melissa moved to Oxford, enticed

by Oxford’s thriving music scene, where they met drummer Tim Lucas and bass player Jack Ashworth via online ads. In Oxfordshire they found a whole new world of music awaiting them. “The two places are worlds apart,” says James. “For a band that plays original music there is no future in North Devon as you are miles away from any cities. We still played some great memorable gigs down there and gained some brilliant friends and fans, but it has some big limitations. Oxford is all about original music and supporting the local music scene, which came as very refreshing. It took us a while to realise we had to seize the opportunity and move to a city. Growing up in such a small town the mentality can be quite different to here. It was quite a scary thing at the time.” How easy did the pair find it to settle in in Oxford? “It was a very daunting time at the beginning,” remembers Melissa; “other members of the band didn’t follow us up here to Oxford, so James and I were starting all over again. We didn’t have any friends or any idea what Oxford was like. The only thing we knew about it was that Radiohead, Supergrass and Foals were from here. That’s all we needed to know.”

WHATEVER THEIR trepidation, Kanadia quickly found the local scene welcoming and met people eager to champion them in their new hometown city. James: “Oxford has been incredibly welcoming to us. We remember our second gig at The Wheatseaf back in 2016. We were so excited when Joal Shearing, who was mixing us, started rounding up all the local promoters he knew telling them to come down and listen. From there we played the Oxford Punt for *Nightshift* and Ian Mitchell from Little Red and All Will Be Well Records was one of the first people locally who reached out to us and showed us support, so we really owe him for that. We couldn’t thank those people enough who supported us in the early days.”

AFTER TWO YEARS OF gigging, writing and recording, Kanadia release their eponymous debut album this month. It’s a gorgeously epic sprawl of twinkling pop melodies, elegant synth lines and towering choruses, all dotted with the delicacy that makes the band really shine on songs like ‘Ocean Blue’ and opener ‘Into the Flames’, the song that earned them their first place in *Nightshift*’s end of year Top 25 back in 2016. They sit alongside newer tracks like the magnificent ‘Meet the End’ – their heaviest piece to date – and the melancholic closer ‘Anything For a Good Time’, which would stand its ground against any of Thom Yorke’s more solemn solo work.

‘Kanadia’ is a supremely accomplished debut, made alongside local recording legend Richard Neuberg. James: “Thank you! We recorded the album with Richard over at Strawhouse Studios. We became really good friends with him during the process, and had a lot of fun making the album. We had it mixed down in London by our friend Tom Leach at SNAP Studios. Then mastered locally by Tim Turan – who else! It’s been a pleasure to work with everybody involved.” “‘Meet the End’ really is a beast!” exclaims Melissa; “it’s one of my favourites too. The rest of band have different opinions on their favourite tracks. Jack and Tim are both a fan of ‘Poison’, whereas James’s opinion changes every week.” Piano based ‘Anything For a Good Time’ takes a step back from that big guitar-based sound; it ends the record on a bit of a downer; was that intentional and are you naturally optimistic or pessimistic people? James: “We actually loved the idea of ending on a bit of a downer. After the scale of the rest of the record we thought it would be effective to catch your breath and calm down. Lots of our favourite albums have done the same thing; it leaves you feeling

reflective. I would say that makes us pessimists.” The song has a real Thom Yorke intensity to it. James: “Radiohead and Thom Yorke’s solo work has been some of the most important and striking music to me since I was about 12. I would guess that traces of that influence would naturally appear in the music we create. In my mind I could never come close to Thom’s intensity, but it means a lot to me that you make that connection.” How much of your own heart and soul goes into your lyrics? Are they personal or stories? “I wouldn’t say that I’m much of a story teller, but the songs still have a big meaning to me. A lot of emotion goes into the lyrics on the album. I use music as a means of channeling

“We played strange gigs back in Devon. We were on the same bill as The Wurzels a few times.”

negative emotions like anger and depression. The general lyrical themes of this record are hopelessness, fear and frustration that came out of feeling stuck in life and in Devon.”

ALONG WITH THE LIKES OF Leader and Zurich, Kanadia’s music has seen the emergence locally of a move towards a big, stadium-sized sound that’s rarely been a trait in Oxford; are there any other local acts they feel a kinship with? James: “It’s not something we have really been aware of to be honest. Whilst there are a few bands going down the big, stadium route, it still doesn’t seem to be the most popular or fashionable sound in Oxford or even the UK at the moment. We really enjoy and admire what some local artists are up to currently, but its quite often a very different sound to ours.”

When you have a big sound like that, which would so obviously appeal to a mainstream audience, is it easier or harder in this day and age to get yourself heard on a DIY level? Has there been any action on the record label front yet, and is it something you’d prefer to happen, or is the indie route more for you?

James: “It’s really difficult to say; I think most upcoming artists would agree it can have its challenges. This current age has definitely given artists more freedom than the past creatively. Platforms like Spotify enable listeners to discover what they like for themselves and be less influenced by mainstream media. Considering 20 years ago deals were made from demos on cassette tapes, it can feel much harder to grab the attention of labels and that labels expect more from an artist in advance. There are

many new ways to get your music out there, but we still feel that labels play a big role. The right deal is something we would be interested in, and we have a had a few bites, but until then we will just try our best DIY style.” As well as the most commonly quoted influences on Kanadia, especially Radiohead and Muse, the more you listen to the band, the more you detect the influence of acts like My Morning Jacket and TV On the Radio – acts adept at bringing understated grandeur to their music, incorporating electronic elements into guitar music, and a desire to continually evolve. Melissa: “I’m really glad you said that. My Morning Jacket are a big inspiration to us. We’ve been to watch them live a few times and we love the evolution of their sound throughout

the years. You can learn a lot from those kinds of bands and they seem to have a lot of fun doing it. “We are fans of big grimey electronic low end. We first heard TV On The Radio fusing it with rock. It adds a depth that guitars can’t replicate. We took it one step further last year and purchased a Moog sub 37, which is perfect for our sound. Its insanely low and angry.”

UNSURPRISINGLY FOR A band seemingly built for the biggest stages and arenas, Kanadia have gone down well at local festivals, including Truck and Common People recently. Do they feel they’re better suited to those stages than pub venues? Melissa: “We’re really hoping to play Truck again this year, and have been sending out to all the various UK festivals, so fingers crossed. We love playing both pubs and festivals, as long as there is an audience and it’s sounding good we enjoy ourselves. Certain tracks can definitely come into their own in a big festival setting. ‘Meet The End’ at Common People was probably our favourite moment to date.” Perhaps more surprising, for Kanadia themselves, is the fact they’ve started picking up fans as far away as The States, Mexico and across Europe – places they’ve yet to visit. “Back in 2017 we were picked up by the Spotify editorial team and selected for some of their biggest rock playlists. It’s really exciting for us, because it’s very easy to lose faith sometimes with all the ignored emails. Being noticed by Spotify was a huge deal for us and it’s happened several times since and it has enabled us to reach wider audiences. Mexico in particular has had a huge response

to our music. We have been receiving lots of complimentary messages in Spanish asking us to play this year, which have all been replied to using Google translate. We would love to get out and play to some of these new audiences.”

IT DOESN’T TAKE MUCH of a leap of imagination to picture Kanadia becoming the sort of global megastars their songs seem pre-prepared for. How, we wonder would they cope with it – with an unlimited budget what would their Wembley Stadium spectacle look like? Melissa: “We would have to go all out: flying pigs and everything! If we ever had that sort of opportunity and budget I don’t think we would even know where to begin. It would probably get pretty stupid. One thing we would make sure of would be an incredible line up and lots of lights!” For now, back in the real world, the band are set to launch the album with a headline show at the O2 Academy on Saturday 2nd March. For those who have yet to see the band, why should they come along and what sort of show can they expect? James: “I suppose we are trying to achieve our own mini, scaled-down Wembley show. We are driving ourselves mad currently pulling it all together. We are trying to ramp up the visual side of things for this show: big lighting, a new backdrop, plus limited copies of vinyl. We also have a guest guitarist involved to make it sound even bigger than usual! That is something you might not see again. It will be the only time we perform the album in its entirety. So it should be quite a special event. We have worked really hard on this project for over two years now and this gig will be all of that work finally paying off and coming together.”

WITHOUT A DOUBT IT’LL be an spectacle as befits a band of Kanadia’s epic nature. But before let them go and do some more planning, if James and Melissa could only pick one out of Radiohead, Muse or U2 to listen to again, who would it be? “Radiohead! Because they have continued to evolve as a band, which never gets boring. Even into their 50s they still sound as current as ever. They have made some incredible albums and took some big risks throughout their career. On top of that we love how honest they are as a band. They don’t dress up their experiences of the music industry. If they had a horrible time recording ‘Kid A’ and a rubbish record deal, they are open about it.”

Kanadia play the O2 Academy on Saturday 2nd March. Tickets via the venue website and box office. Follow the band at Facebook.com/ KanadiaBand.

RELEASED



CIPHERS ‘Feed Their Fiction’

(Self released)
Having excelled in the Halloween fancy dress stakes at Oxjam last year it’s no surprise to hear Ciphers get their goth on on their debut EP, the

HAZE ‘Piochitas’

(Self released)
Despite being Bristol based these days, there’s a part of Haze that will always be Oxfordian, the band having made their name early on in these pages and around Oxford’s venues and festivals. Since relocating they’ve supported Shame and Pip Blom among others and this new single shows them at their most caustic, angular best, a song about Trotsky’s time spent in Mexico with Frida Kahlo (obviously – who writes songs about boy meets girl anymore?) that sounds like very early Adam & the Ants tangled up in an awkward jam session with 80s oddballs Stump, but possessed of Fat White Family’s sneery sense of disgust at the world.



band – featuring Kid Kin’s Pete Lloyd alongside two former members of The Beckoning Fair Ones – offering frost-hearted midnight shoegaze shimmer and smoky jazz/blues across three songs that reward repeated listening, not ready to give up their charms too soon.

Opener ‘Howl’, for example, feels slight initially, a brooding, twinkling slice of drama queen goth-pop, but revealing itself more fully third time round, and with the volume cranked significantly higher, some seriously heavy duty bass kicking in as the song emerges from its own flames.

‘Innocents’ is the best of the three, Pete, and Kieran Spriggs’ guitars going the full shoegaze blizzard, swarming around Mila Todd and Lindsey’s interlocking vocals to create something not unlike Skin from Skunk Anansie fronting Slowdive.

There’s an almost folky feel to ‘Awake’, but it too rises to something epic across its seven-minute duration and if Ciphers might do well to really unleash their inner witch, let their musical flames take hold, they’ve got the power and potential to become a force to reckon with.

Dale Kattack



BEWARE THIS BOY ‘Old Bones’

(Self released)
However jaunty Beware This Boy might try to sound there’ll always be something doleful about them. Mostly that’s down to Simon Meakin’s rough-hewn voice, sort of a cross between Billy Bragg and John Shuttleworth, whose rueful ruminations on ‘Old Bones’ are in stark contrast to Sue Mallett’s dancing fiddle which almost get the song up and gamboling across the fields. Simon almost sounds keen to join in, singing “As long as there’s a beat in these old bones, I’ll always be dreaming of home” with something akin to defiance even while sounding like Eeyore after someone suggested a surprise birthday party.

Meakin, and the band, are at their best when they make no pretence to jollity, keeping it steadfastly melancholy on ‘Story Now Told’, which finds even the fiddle with a weight upon its shoulders but is a more natural vehicle for Simon’s weary lament. It’s folk music very much of the old school: perfect for Cropredy Festival or Sunday night sessions in pubs and clubs across the Cherwell valley.

Ian Chesterton



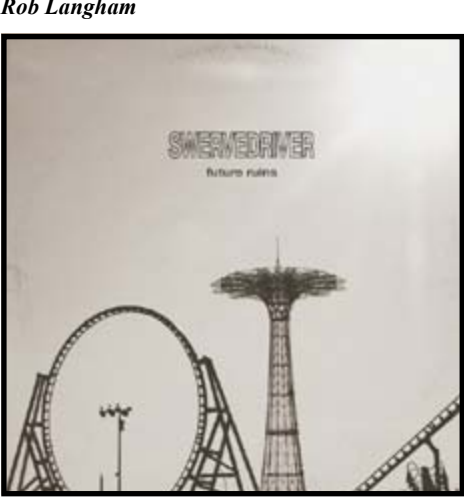
SWERVEDRIVER ‘Future Ruins’

(Rock Action)
Most bands resist being pigeonholed but the major issue that confronted us when Swervedriver emerged three decades ago now was whether the band were exponents of shoegaze or grunge. That their time in the spotlight straddled both eras did little to help – on the one hand, there were chiming guitars, effects pedals and cathedrals of sound; on the other, the vocals owed more to Oxford, Mississippi than Oxford, GB, support slots to the likes of Soundgarden signalling them as the major example of plaid shirt riffage in an Old World context.

New album ‘Future Ruins’ sees the band continue to span the divide, at times expertly. ‘Spiked Flower’ and ‘Theascending’ are examples of Swervedriver’s tendency to rock out: the enunciation is deep and lusty, the chords are robust and there is even a faint nod to Bush or Reef.

But for the most part, it’s the influence of the Thames Valley scene of which the group were an integral part that permeates this album. The title track recalls Bark Psychosis or Slowdive in its elegiac nature, low key bell-like synths providing atmosphere; ‘Drone Lover’ and ‘Golden Remedy’ smack of ‘Isn’t Anything’ My Bloody Valentine’, the former’s tumult of sound perhaps the album’s highlight; ‘The Lonely Crowd Fades in the Air’ is a melody to rival Ride at their most arresting.

Perhaps the most innovative moment is ‘Everybody’s Going Somewhere and No-one’s Going Anywhere’, frontman Adam Franklin providing a spoken word growl amid which he expresses a desire to go and grow tomatoes in Sicily, possibly an understandable tribute to the joys of doing what one wants in life which, presumably, wasn’t an option for the band throughout the seventeen years that elapsed between their fourth and fifth albums: the latter, ‘I Wasn’t Born to Lose You’, saw the light of day in 2015. This second decade of the century has been kind so far in bringing back former heroes such as Ride and Slowdive into prominence and we should wish Swervedriver well as they attempt to emulate them. With appearances upcoming at Brixton Academy and the South by Southwest festival, they seem poised.



JULIA MEIJER ‘Train Ticket’

(Self released)
If you’ve only heard Julia Meijer’s previous singles – whether the earlier contemplative folk of

MY CROOKED TEETH ‘Live at the Handle Bar’

(Self released)
Stripped-back and solo suits former Toliesel frontman Jack Olchawski, since he’s got the strength of voice to bring his songs to life and let them fly – and importantly songs with the melodic strength to take flight. Best of the lot is opener ‘Something Real’, which, as with previous material, shares plenty of DNA with fellow local country/folk stars The Epstein, Jack’s voice, rich, earnest, slightly yearning, close to Ollie Wills as he captures a bit of lonesome cowboy blues alongside some neat steel guitar twang, while never going the full outlaw country hog.

That voice, with its slightest of quavers, and its ability to catch the hook in a song, works equally well on ‘Better Off’ and ‘The Hardest Task’, again well aligned with the steel guitar, and while on the surface his strum’n’ing approach exists happily

PAUL EMERY ‘Modern World / Distortions’

(Self released)
A prolific purveyor of mostly electronic music both under his own name and as Metal Horses, local synth botherer Paul Emery’s latest album sees him depart further from his Depeche Mode-inspired sound, its cover shot of Susan Sontag intended to capture the album’s sense of introspection. And introspective it is. To the point of outright navel-gazing at times, sadly. What Emery does best is capture a moody atmosphere and use synth and guitar textures well: the piano lines of ‘Lotus’ and the almost eastern drones of album closer ‘Modern Wonder’ show what he can do best, finding a sweet spot between ominous and ambient. The microtonal synth drones of ‘Man in the Wilderness too’, although the album’s highlight is ‘Junk’, which takes a stylistic detour into something far more jarring, lifting the music out of its torpor.

Because that’s where it too often sinks, content to drift or wander aimlessly in the muddy waters of electronic mood music. ‘Blur To Make It Clear’ sounds like old machinery clearing its throat and trying to shake off mechanical arthritis without

‘Ocean’ or the more recent warm indie sound of ‘Fall Into Place’ – her new release ‘Train Ticket’ might come as a minor shock. The song opens with jittery percussion and a short, jagged guitar riff. From the Swedish-born singer’s staccato lines, it is clear that beneath ‘Train Ticket’ there is great unrest: “Even though I’m sitting down everything is spinning round”.

The old train ticket of the title marks the book the protagonist is reading, left there by someone else. It symbolises possibilities – taking a trip, escaping life – as well as the past, which is forever closed off. The song zooms in on a moment at which strange emotions can combine to make reality seem unreal, and it’s well done.

The single features a long, vaguely danceable outro with guitar and synths reminiscent of Talking Heads somewhere in the distance. It’s a sound which isn’t typical of the other tracks off Meijer’s upcoming album, ‘Always Awake’, and I recommend checking out that album if only for its variety. Like a train which is running late, we’re eagerly anticipating this one.

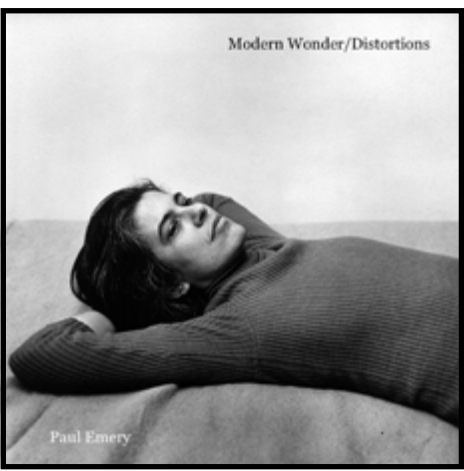
Caspar Jacobs



in its own intimate comfort zone, it’s easily a level above the sort of mumbled bleating of the sub-Dylan/Cohen/Drake/Smith brigade who can make any open mic session such a painful experience.

Carole Anne Ford

much success, the vocals little more than a gruff groan, while ‘Swell’s’ is barely more than random guitar noodling. ‘Where Is Euphoria’ is little more than an incidental interlude, devoid of substance and reflection becomes self indulgence too quickly. As is so often the case with bedroom-bound projects like this, the best bits might have made a decent EP, but a full album is stretching those limited ideas too thin and what might have been haunting ends up sounding stilted.



CATGOD ‘Forget To Fall’

(Self released)
Following up a song as lovely as ‘Heartbeat in My Hand’ was never going to be easy and ‘Forget To Fall’ can’t match it, unfortunately. Which isn’t to say this isn’t a fine five minutes of melody, but while it retains the airy, soft-focus fragility of its predecessor, ‘Forget...’ suffers from a dearth of Cat Marriot’s limpid vocals and a drop dead gorgeous hook. It wafts on the lightest of piano, strings and the gentle tumble of drums and Robin Christensen’s solemnly lovelorn voice is pure as a shiny pebble, at least up to the point he forces it just slightly, almost operatically, but Catgod benefit immeasurably from the interaction between the brother and sister leads. More cats is *Nightshift*’s go-to answer to most things in life it must be said, but yeah, more Cat please.

Dale Kattack

EASTER ISLAND STATUES

‘Skeleton Quay’

(Self released)
Where would we be without Wikipedia, eh? “Songs by Easter Island Statues are mostly about feelings, the ocean and feelings about the ocean...”

Somewhat unsurprisingly new single ‘Skeleton Quay’ finds the band setting sail around the Cape of No Hope, battling the tentacles of the fearsome Octopus of Self-Doubt, and capsizing on the Reef of No Return. Seafaring through the world of emotions can be a tricky old business and everyone needs a port in a storm. That’s where ‘Skeleton Quay’ comes in; it’s somewhere to moor up when the turbulence of dealing with life gets a bit too much, or you’ve become swamped with emotion having watched the video for the band’s previous single, ‘Laika’.

If all this sounds a bit too melancholy fear not, because Easter Island Statues don’t really do downbeat. They launch themselves into the storm and shiver the timbers with a straight-up rattling indie anthem. Pitched somewhere between The Strokes’ ‘Last Nite’, the white hot explosion of early Jam and the perfect pop *nous* of Hüsker Dü, ‘Skeleton Quay’ is a different beast to ‘Laika’ entirely. There’s no tears to be found here, rather a defiant and positive slice of bone trembling indie rock. Consider our timbers utterly shivered. In the best sort of way.

Sam Shepherd

G1G GUIDE

FRIDAY 1st
CONJURER + DESERT STORM + DRORE:
The Bullingdon – Sort of *The Book of Revelation* – *The Musical*, but with more noise, bloodshed and numbers of beasts – *see main preview*
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with UK:ID + BEAVER FUEL + WATERFAHL + KNOBBLEHEAD: The Wheatsheaf – Glastonbury’s rap-rave-electro-punk crew UK:ID return to Klub Kakofanney for some more party bangers; they’re joined by indie-punks Beaver Fuel, folk-blues duo Waterfahl and folky psych-rockers Knobblehead.

Friday 1st
CONJURER / DESERT STORM / DRORE:
The Bullingdon
Intense. Brutal. Bleak. Desolate. Uncompromising. These are words we like to see attached to bands. You get all of them with Conjurer, usually used to describe a single song. Maybe not ‘song’, more ‘monstrous wall of musical carnage’. Yeah, that’ll do. Almost certainly the best thing to come out of Rugby since Spacemen 3, and in their own way, possessed of a similar feel for an unrelenting groove, Conjurer have been laying waste to the idea of UK metal being in the doldrums with recent album ‘The Mire’, garnering a 5K review in *Kerrang!* And 9/10 in *Metal Hammer* alongside a glut of rave blog reviews, and not surprisingly given their ability to mix and match a malign mélange of dirty, downtuned sludge, portentous doom and expansive, atmospheric post-metal. They picked up rave reviews for their set at ArcTangent and head of to Roadburn later this year and they will likely lay waste to many cities between now and then, starting here at Buried in Smoke’s show which sees the monsters from the midlands joined by a double dose of local noise hell – stoner/groove titans Desert Storm, riding higher and higher on the back of rave reviews for their ‘Sentinels’ album, and toxic sludge beasts Droke, who are sort of the pop music equivalent of The Grendel, a rabid wolf pack, an erupting volcano and that thing that lurks in the dark. Three large portions of brutish brilliance please barman, and don’t spare the volume.



FEBRUARY
TERRAFORMS: The Cellar – Drum&bass at the longstanding club night.
BOSSAPHONIK: East Oxford Community Centre – The global jazz-dance club night takes an excursion to EOCC, tonight hosting a live set from New Orleans brass funk ensemble Upslide Down, while host Dan Ofer plays Latin dancefloor, global grooves, Afrobeat, nu jazz and more.

SATURDAY 2nd
GANGSTAGRASS + KATY HURT: O2 Academy – Livewire fusion of bluegrass and hip hop from Brooklyn producer Rench and his band, banjos and rappers going head to head in a musical world where Allison Kraus, Bill Monroe and Ralph Stanley & the Clinch Mountain Boys meets Jay-Z, Tupac and Outkast.
SWITCH featuring DARKZY + P MONEY + SKIBADEE: O2 Academy – The long running house and electronic dance club night hosts a two-room party with sets from Darkzy, P Money, Skibadee and Annix in the main room, plus Pearson, Frenchy and JOCA upstairs.
AIR WAVES + LINA SIMON + LAND GIRLS: The Wheatsheaf – Emotive, stripped-back rock from Brooklyn’s Nicole Schneit, mixing garage pop, electro-pop and indie-folk on third album ‘Warrior’, a tribute to her mother’s battle with cancer. Support comes from former Edmund Fitzgerald guitarist Lina Simon, now exploring darker, electronic musical landscapes.
SIMPLE featuring DJ SEINFELD: The Bullingdon – House and electro club night with a headline set from Seinfeld – aka Armand Jakobsson – plus residents Em Williamson and James Weston.

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL DUO - RAY BENSON + KATY SHORE: The Jericho Tavern – Man mountain Ray Benson (standing a modest 6’7” in his bare feet) brings a stripped-back version of his enduring western swing band to town, the sole constant member of a band that has seen over 100 musicians come and go through almost 50 years, 25 albums, nine Grammys and several million miles on the road. Having continued to follow the musical path of pioneer Bob Wills, and having collaborated with the legendary Willie Nelson along the way, Benson teams up with fiddle player Katy Shore for tonight’s Empty Room show, playing songs from new album ‘New Routes’.
JOHN SMITH: Old Fire Station – The bluesy balladeer and folk guitar virtuoso continues to fuse traditional British and American folk traditions on most recent album ‘Hummingbird’, an emotive update on the sounds of John Martyn and Richard Thompson.
THE OXFORD BEATLES: The Sheldonian Theatre – The ambitious local Beatles tribute band follow up their five-night ‘Sgt Pepper’ residency with their biggest show to date, playing both ‘Pepper’ and ‘Revolver’ in their entirety,

plus an elaborate light show from Peter Wynne-Wilson, who has worked with Pink Floyd.
FREERANGE: The Cellar – New and underground UK garage, grime and bassline at the cutting edge club night.
CODA: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Led Zep tribute.
DARIA KULESH + PETE WATKINS: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Wychwood Folk Club hosts acclaimed star on the rise Daria Kulesh, playing songs from her award winning albums, ‘Eternal Child’ and ‘Long Lost House’, joined tonight by multi-instrumentalists Vicki Swan and Jonny Dyer.

SUNDAY 3rd
SUNDAY SESSION with FLIGHTS OF HELIOS + SKA BA DOO BA: Florence Park Community Centre (2-5pm) – Family-friendly daytime gig session, with kids activities and alcohol-free bar alongside live music from spaced-out griefcore stars Flights of Helios, marrying glitch Radiohead-style electro-pop with epic drone-folk-rock anthems. Old school ska from Ska Ba doo Ba.
BEARD OF DESTINY + FRANKLIN’S TOWER + JULES PENZO + THE JESTERS: Donnington Community Centre (6pm) – Free unplugged live session, including sets from bluesman Beard of Destiny and Grateful Dead tribute act Franklin’s Tower.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms – Weekly open session.
FOLK SESSIONS: The Half Moon – Weekly folk session.
PETE FRYER BAND: The Tree, Ifley (4-6.30pm) – Classic blues and rock covers from the enduring local guitar veteran.

MONDAY 4th
PHIL BEER’S PATRON’S EVENING: Nettlebed Folk Club – The Show of Hands man hosts a special evening for patrons of the long-running folk club, with sets from Edgelarks’ Hannah Martin; NMG and FATEA Awards winner Kelly Oliver, Geoff Lakeman from the folk royalty Lakeman clan and Show of Hands singer and multi-instrumentalist Miranda Sykes.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Castle – Weekly open mic night.

TUESDAY 5th
WEDNESDAY 6th
BLOODSTOCK METAL TO THE MASSES: The Wheatsheaf – First round heat of the battle of the bands competition to win a slot at this summer’s Bloodstock, tonight sets from The Reaper, Bloodshot and King Bolete.

THURSDAY 7th
FRANK CARTER & THE RATTLESNAKES: The Bullingdon – Anger as poetry from the former Gallows man – *see main preview*
CAOIMHIN Ó RAGHALLAIGH: St.

Barnabas, Jericho – Dublin’s Ó Raghallaigh explores the outer reaches of Irish folk music on his ten-string fiddle, his innovative style having seen him work with Laurie Anderson, Victor Moon and Amiina along the way as well as perform at Sydney Opera House and The Royal Albert Hall.
SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – The long-running jazz club hosts former Soft Machine guitarist John Etheridge.
WOLF GIRL + THE COOLING PEARLS + GOOD CANARY: The Jericho Tavern – Riot-grrl-inspired noise pop from south London’s Wolf Girl at tonight’s All Tamara’s Parties show, with support from romantically gothic baroque pop ensemble The Cooling Pearls and Regina Spektor and Tori Amos-inspired singer and multi-

Thursday 7th
FRANK CARTER & THE RATTLESNAKES: The Bullingdon
If Frank Carter has dialed down the fury a notch or two since his days fronting Gallows, it’s probably for the best – for him and those who get anywhere near in his way. In his hardcore prime the wiry, heavily-tattooed 5’7” redhead was a human hand grenade, prone to go off on a regular basis, usually in the middle of a crowd. Concussion and bloodshed were regular facets of Gallows gigs. Over three albums with The Rattlesnakes – including newbie ‘End of Suffering’ – Carter has used his nominally toned down sound to expose his poetic, philosophical and, yes, romantic side more fully. And anyway, toned down is a relative term when you’re talking about a man who can bawl “You’re a useless fucking cunt / You are nothing to me,” with supreme venom, as he did on ‘I Hate You’, the cheeky centrepiece of 2016 ‘Blossom’. He’s still an angry man – the songs on the new album inspired by riots in Paris, but also more tenderly by the life and death of Amy Winehouse. Old chum Tom Morello makes an appearance and the album was produced by Cam Blackwood, who’s worked with George Ezra and Jack Savoretti, giving it a stadium-sized feel. Up close and personal is where Carter functions best though, and while he’s rather less likely to shed his or anyone else’s blood these days, he’s a true force of nature as far as rock and roll frontmen go.



instrumentalist Good Canary.
SPARKY’S NEW MOON: The Half Moon – Sparky hosts his open mic night on the first and third Thursday of the month.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
LIMEHOUSE LIZZY: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribute to Phil Lynott and the boys.

FRIDAY 8th
...AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD: O2 Academy – The Texan troublemakers celebrate 20 years of ‘Madonna’ – *see main preview*
OXFORD SOUL TRAIN: O2 Academy – Classic funk, soul and disco night.
THE TESKEY BROTHERS + GEO: The Bullingdon – Smoky, groove-led blues and soul from Melbourne brothers Sam and Josh Teskey and band, over in Europe to tour debut album ‘Half Mile’, which earned them a deal with Decca after an initial indie release, the band subsequently earning festival slots if California, Japan and Australia.
THE ELO EXPERIENCE: The New Theatre – Big stage tribute to Jeff Lynne and the gang.
SONS OF LIBERTY + ECHO4FOUR + THE WICKED JACKALS: The Cellar – Southern fried rock in the vein of Lynyrd Skynyrd, Molly Hatchet and The Allman Brothers from Bristol’s Sons of Liberty UK at tonight’s OxRox show. Sabbath-inspired support from Echo4four, and Wicked Jackals, formerly Guns of Anarchy, with their mix of AC/DC, Aerosmith, Airbourne and Gun’n’Roses.
2 TONE ALL-SKA’S: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Two Tone and classic Jamaican ska covers.

SATURDAY 9th
TRUCK STORE BIRTHDAY BASH: Truck Store (5pm) – The local indie record store celebrates its eighth birthday with live sets from The August List and Max Blansjaar, plus Low Islands on the decks.
CASH: O2 Academy – Tribute to The Man In Black.
BLOODSTOCK METAL TO THE MASSES: The Wheatsheaf – First round heat of the battle of the bands competition to win a slot at this summer’s Bloodstock, tonight with sets from Escape December, The Crushing and Broken.
BASIC featuring EJECA + ELIOT ADAMSON: The Bullingdon – House and techno club night with Belfast’s Ejeca and prolific producer Eliot Adamson.
MOVE: The Cellar – Drum&bass, garage, house and hip hop club night.
DAMN GOOD REASON: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Blues and rock covers.
THE A-WATTS: Bicester Ex-Serviceman’s Club – Classic 50s and 60s rock’n’roll covers.

SUNDAY 10th
HARCOURT UNPLUGGED: The Harcourt Arms – Free acoustic show with 105AD and Alf Laila.
FOLK SESSIONS: The Half Moon
WATERFAHL: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon – Acoustic folk-pop and blues from the local duo.

MONDAY 11th
LAURA VEIRS: The Bullingdon – The Oregon songsmith returns to action with her first



Friday 8th
...AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD: O2 Academy
It’s nigh on 19 years since *Nightshift* first encountered ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail of Dead, playing to just 30 punters, at The Point, just before second album ‘Madonna’ briefly turned them into the hottest band on the planet. We remember it so well because it was the night we were almost decapitated by a flying cymbal, hurled frisbee-like from the stage by a band on a mission to save rock and roll from the clutches of nu-metal at the turn of the Millennium. Back then their gigs routinely turned into riots and they were banned from pretty much every venue in their home state of Texas and their first planned foray into Europe was postponed after they were beaten up by a crowd in San Antonio and had to use their equipment as weapons. Their early, potent brew of Sonic Youth, The Velvet Underground and a little bit of Cramps was worth waiting for though. Over the years the band and their music mellowed just a notch or two and if they never got the commercial success predicted (becoming known as ... And You Will Know Us By the Trail of Debt in music biz circles) they remain a foundation stone for modern alt.rock, synonymous with black-clad rock and roll swagger and aural destruction, and this tour sees them playing ‘Madonna’ in its entirety, plus songs from across their 20-year career. It’ll be a blast, but if you see the drummer unscrewing his cymbals, take cover.

solo album in six years – *see main preview*
JIMOTHY LACOSTE: O2 Academy – Deadpan humour, lo-fi beats and bedroom hip hop from Camden’s viral breakout star, making his name with the self-made video for ‘Getting Busy’ before going on to play Field Day.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Castle
BREABACH: Nettlebed Folk Club – Scottish-flavoured folk dance from the 2016 Scottish Traditional Music Awards Best Folk Act and Album of the Year winners, playing songs, tunes and step dances from their recent ‘Astar’ on bagpipes, fiddle, flute and guitar.

TUESDAY 12th
HUNKPAPA: The Bullingdon – Anthemic folk-rock and indie from the Northern Irish band.
INTRUSION: The Cellar – Monthly goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night, with residents Doktor Joy and Bookhouse keeping it dark on the decks.



Monday 11th

LAURA VEIRS:

The Bullingdon

Having previously sold out bigger venues than this on visits to Oxford, you might imagine playing the Bullingdon is a step down for Laura Veirs, but it all seems to be part of her step back from the relentless pressure to reach higher and higher in the music game since her last album, 2013's 'Warp & Weft', since which she's been relatively quiet, aside from a collaboration with kd lang and Neko Case, concentrating on raising two young kids and hosting a successful podcast about balancing life as a musician and mother. Certainly her new solo album 'The Lookout', her tenth in a near-twenty-year career, shows no signs of slacking musically or lyrically, a characteristically warm and gentle-natured folk-pop concept album about the fragility of precious things, produced by husband Tucker Martine and told through the symbolism of mothers, sailors, even a lightning rod. Behind it all though is the spectre of Trump's presidency – most directly referenced on album highlight 'When It Grows Darkest', which throws Veirs' often distanced narration into starker relief. That style has become an influence on the likes of Julia Holter, just as Veirs herself has drawn on the likes of Bowie and Ryan Adams over the years. Anyway, back to the original point – The Bully is as good a place as ever to catch Veirs' intimate, personable show, an artist willing and able to take a step away from the limelight to experience life, without stepping backwards musically.

WEDNESDAY 13th

BEN POOLE: The Bullingdon – A return to town for the rising UK blues-rock guitarist, drawing comparisons to Joe Satriani and Joe Bonamassa, winning fans in Bernie Torme and the late Gary Moore along the way.

THURSDAY 14th

PHIL SELWAY + JON OUIN + ASHER DUST: Old Fire Station – A rare hometown solo show for the Radiohead drummer and songwriter – *see main preview*

WILLIE J HEALEY: The Bullingdon – January's *Nightshift* cover star plays the hometown stretch of his current UK tour, playing songs from his recent '666 Kill' EP, leaning towards a more contemplative Elliot Smith style, plus songs from acclaimed debut album 'People & Their Dogs'.

ALEXANDER O'NEAL: O2 Academy – The veteran soul and r'n'b singer returns to town for the first time since 2014, reliving 80s and 90s hits like 'If You Were Here Tonight', 'Never Knew Love Like This' and 'Criticise'.

SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – The

jazz club hosts local guitarist Roger Beaujolais. **REVEREND BLACK'S St. VALENTINE'S DAY MASS: The Half Moon** – Acoustic blues, country, folk and classic rock with Scott Gordon, Jim Driscoll and Richard Brotherton. **CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

FRIDAY 15th

BLUE OCTOBER: O2 Academy – Texas' veteran rockers eschew their sleazy trademark barroom riffs in favour of a more polished synths'n'electronic beats style for new album 'I Hope You're Happy', their ninth and the first produced by bandleader Justin Furstenfeld, offering a more hopeful outlook on life. **DOE + MILK CRIMES + JUNK WHALE: The Wheatsheaf** – Snuggle Dice host their second show, bringing Anglo-Scottish indie crew Doe to town for the first time, the band, who have recently supported Speedy Ortiz on tour, are promoting new album 'Grow Into It', inspired by Superchunk, Pavement and Weezer among others.

SOUL SESSIONS: The Cellar – Classic funk, soul and disco club night. **AUTUMN SAINTS + DRUGSTORE HEROES + JONNY RACE: The Jericho Tavern** – Atmospheric Americana and roots rocking from The Autumn Saints, plus delicately impassioned Radiohead-inspired pop from Jonny Race.

THE LONG INSIDERS + BAD MONKEY: Fat Lil's, Witney – Gretch twang, rockabilly and midnight-black surf rock from local rockers The Long Insiders, channelling The Cramps, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis. **ROCK FOR HEROES: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – Classic rock covers in aid of veterans charity Help For Heroes, with tributes to Queen, Status Quo, Bowie, Elton John, Spandau Ballet and more.

SATURDAY 16th

OXFORD SAMARITANS & NIGHTLINE BENEFIT: Oxford Town Hall – Live music and comedy spectacular in aid of the local charities, with Phil Selways, himself a Samaritans volunteer, and Laura Moody performing alongside comedy legend Armando Iannucci, Adam Buxton, and comedy duo Croft & Pearce. **BUCKCHERRY + HOOBASTANK: O2 Academy** – Hairy, sleazy heavy rock very much of the old school from Californian veterans Buckcherry, playing their first Oxford show for almost a decade as they tour new album 'Warpaint', the band's 80s-indebted sound, with its Aerosmith riffs and unreconstructed dedication to the genre's clichés, having seen them support Motley Crue and Kiss since they reformed in 2005. Support comes from fellow Californians Hoobastank, whose heavy rocking at least acknowledges grunge and nu-metal as they look to Faith No More as chief inspiration.

OMAR: O2 Academy – The godfather of neo-soul comes to town with a full band, the singer, actor and sometime theatre soundtrack composer having endured as a creative force since his first big hit, 'There's Nothing Like This' in 1991, having worked with Stevie Wonder, Erykah Badu and Carleen Anderson among others.

SEAN MCGOWAN: The Jericho Tavern – Return to town for the Southampton troubadour after his show at The Cellar last year and support

to Billy Bragg at the O2 in 2017, the singer's folk/rap taking influence from Mike Skinner, Kate Tempest and Bragg himself. **MUSICAL MEDICINE featuring MR BONGO: The Bullingdon** – A tropical treat for dance fans at this month's Musical Medicine as Venezuelan ex-pats Mr Bongo bring their eclectic mix of South American rhythms, jazz, reggae, soul and psychedelia to the party, the London/Brighton-based selectors playing vinyl obscurities from across the globe. **NIGHT FLOWERS + BEEZEWAX + BE GOOD: Fusion Arts** – ethereal dreampop from Anglo-American popstrels Night Flowers at tonight's Divine Schism show, the band following up a tour support to Pains of Being Pure at Heart with a headline tour to promote new album 'Wild Notion', tasking inspiration from The Cure and The Sundays along the way.

JESS GILLAM: St. John the Evangelist – The sax virtuoso plays the music of John Harle,

Thursday 14th

PHIL SELWAY / JON OUIN / ASHER DUST: Old Fire Station

While drummers' solo records rarely rank in the all-time great album lists, Phil Selway's 'Weatherhouse' was equal to almost anything his more celebrated Radiohead colleagues have produced outside the band, showing Phil to be possessed of a voice that can match Thom Yorke's for emotional tenderness, while musically he took Mark Hollis' intricacy and attention to detail and used it to weave weary, wide-eyed, epic, yet intimate electronic pop. Since 'Weatherhouse' Phil has written the soundtrack to the 2017 film Let Me Go and been commissioned to write the music a Rambert Dance company performance by American choreographer Merce Cunningham, at each turn bringing his gently atmospheric approach to music to bear. While Yorke and Jonny Greenwood have produced challenging albums and soundtracks, Phil has made more accessible, often beautiful pop music that befits his reputation as one of the nicest people in music. Tonight's show is a great, intimate chance to see just how deep and wide the Radiohead talent pool is. It's also a rare chance to see former Stornoway multi-instrumentalist Jon Ouin in action, a virtuoso musician with few musical boundaries, plus one of Oxford's finest and most eclectic singers and sound explorers Asher Dust, whose lifetime steeped in dub, reggae, soul, drum&bass, hip hop and electronic and has made him an instantly recognisable yet always difficult to predict singer and musician, tonight backed by a band that includes long-time collaborator Tiger Mendoza.



Michael Nyman and John Williams. **THE PETE FRYER BAND: Cricketers Arms, Cowley** **SHEPHERD'S PIE: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Rock covers.

SUNDAY 17th

SOUND OF THE SIRENS: The Bullingdon – Traditional folk meets acoustic pop with Exeter duo Sound of the Sirens, back in town after playing last year's Oxford Folk Weekend, currently touring debut album 'For All Our Sins', the duo inspired by Laura Marling, The Staves, Florence & the Machine and Ben Howard and having made their name on *TFI Friday* playing in between U2 and Take That. **FACTORY LIGHTS + MARK ATHERTON & FRIENDS + TONY BATEY & SAL MOORE + TRACY ISLAND: The Wheatsheaf (2.30-7pm)** – Klub Kakofanney host a free afternoon of live music in the Sheaf's downstairs bar. **OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms** **FOLK SESSIONS: The Half Moon** **LIVE JAZZ: Abingdon Arms, Beckley** – Free live jazz from sax, keys and bass trio.

MONDAY 18th

RUTS DC + THE PROFESSIONALS: O2 Academy – Punky reggae party with the original West London punk legends – *see main preview* **ART BRUT + CASSELS: The Bullingdon** – Eddie Argos continues to cast an abrasively comic eye on pop culture – *see main preview* **ALLUSINLOVE: The Jericho Tavern** – Flamboyant and slightly bonkers psychedelic stoner rock and post-grunge riffola from Leeds recently renamed Allusinlove – previously Allusondrugs, which probably got them in trouble with sensible people and their mums and dads, the quartet still kicking out a slightly trippy form of classic 70s heavy rock on new single 'All Good People'. **STEVE KNIGHTLEY: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Intimate show at Nettlebed's legendary folk club for Show of Hands frontman Knightley. **OPEN MIC SESSION: The Castle**

TUESDAY 19th

ANOTHER SKY: The Bullingdon – Emotionally taut, intricate and militant gothic indie from London quartet Another Sky, channelling Radiohead's spooked vibe on new single 'Chillers'. **BIG JOANIE + SECRET POWER + DEATH OF THE MAIDEN: The Library** – Activist DIY punk from the London trio – *see main preview* **ERGOD + OXFORD IMPROVISERS: Old Fire Station** – Oxford Improvisers host Ergod, alto saxophonist Tapiva Svovse and violinist and mandolin player Richard Scott, performing improvised variations n their debut collaboration album 'Macrotonality'.

WEDNESDAY 20th

GREY TAPES + LIMPET SPACE RACE + TIECE: Tap Social – Joint show from Inner Peace Records, Tandem Festival and Upcycled Sounds with Newcastle-based beatmaker and producer Grey Tapes, mixing up hip hop, trip hop, jazz, electronica and dream pop. There's inventive future-folk from Limpet Space Race and soulful hip hop, trip hop and r'n'b from rising star Tiece.

BLOODSTOCK METAL TO THE MASSES: The Wheatsheaf – First round heat of the battle of the bands competition to win a slot at this summer's Bloodstock, tonight sets from Incardadine Coven, Hymn to Apollo and Reventure. **SK SHLOMO: The Jericho Tavern** – Singer, songwriter, champion looper and human beatboxer Simon Shlomo Kahn, takes a break from composing film scores and ad jingles to bring his mix of electro-pop, hip hop and pop to the live stage, inspired by Jamie xx, FK Twigs and Caribou, his myriad talents have seen him working with Bjork, Ed Sheeran, Damon Albarn and Lily Allen among others, as well as being artist in residence at the South Bank Arts Centre and appearing on *Later...*

THURSDAY 21st

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR: Truck Store (6.30pm) – Ruarri Joseph's new band play an instore set to launch new album 'Bleeding on the Soundtrack'. **SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf** – World jazz and improv saxophonist Julian Costello comes to the long-running jazz club. **CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre** **SPARKY'S NEW MOON: The Half Moon**

FRIDAY 22nd

CYPHER16 + LEST WE FORGET: O2 Academy – Stadium-proportioned heavy rock from London's well-travelled Cypher16, whose anthemic sound and trips to China, India and elsewhere have seen them sharing stages with Anthrax, Slayer, Lamb of God and Behemoth among others, as well as touring with Amaranthe. Local metalcore crew Lest We Forget support. **THE BLACK BULLETS: The Bullingdon** – Basingstoke's biker rock crew Black Bullets return to town for more sleazy riff-based fun. **PERCEPTION + THE PARMIST: The Wheatsheaf** – Tech-metal and metalcore from Southampton heavyweights Perception. **DAISY RODGERS MUSIC with JUNIPER NIGHTS + EASTER ISLAND STATUES + QUARTERMELON: The Jericho Tavern** – DRM hosts another evening of local indie, with local indie rockers Juniper Nights mixing influences of Radiohead, Alt.j and Elbow into their alternately sombre and grungy rock. They're joined by big-hearted rockers Easter Island Statues, launching their new single, 'Skeleton Quay', and eclectic, funky guitar pop crew Quartermelon.

RUSTY SHACKLE: Fat Lil's, Witney – Lively roots'n'roll from south Wales folk-rockers Rusty Shackle, touring new single 'Sam Hall' and back in Oxfordshire after playing Towersey Festival and Bunkfest in recent times.

SATURDAY 23rd

STONE BROKEN + THOSE DAMN CROWS + DEAD MAN'S WHISKEY: O2 Academy – Walsall's chunky, melodic hard rockers Stone Broken head out on tour, alongside Bridgend's Earache-signed heavyweights Those Damn Crows, plus raucous hard rocking in the vein of Guns'n'Roses, Alter Bridge and Black Stone Cherry from London's Dead Man's Whiskey **SCOTT BRADLEY'S POSTMODERN JUKEBOX: O2 Academy** – Iconic hits given an ironic makeover by pianist and arranger Scott



Monday 18th

ART BRUT / CASSELS:

The Bullingdon

How does the art rock provocateur and professional pisstaker maintain their rock and roll relevancy into their 40s? In the case of Eddie Argos, leader and joker-in-chief of Art Brut, mainly by not thinking about it too much but just carrying on wherever he last left off. Which in the case of Art Brut is previous album 'Brilliant! Tragic!', which they've followed up with the even more exclamation mark-laden 'Wham! Bang! Pow! Let's Rock Out!', on, appropriately enough, Alcopop! Records. From their first single, 'Formed a Band', which celebrated the freedom of punk while seemingly leading the vanguard of a new art-rock movement alongside Franz Ferdinand and Bloc Party, Art Brut, and Argos in particular, have kept everything simple, snarky and sing-along: happy to indulge in digs at themselves, the music industry and fellow bands, while simultaneously reveling in music's power to talk to and empower outsiders. Older, if not entirely wiser, Argos now deals with his own mental health issues (as on 'Hospital'), lost loves and the ridiculousness of the rock star persona. There's still room to reference other acts – from Amy Winehouse to Veronica Falls – but these days he's less the lovechild of Lydon and Drury, more the cheeky kids brother of Jarvis Cocker. Major league stars in their adopted Germany, Art Brut remain a cult concern in the UK but their reputation for bright-eyed, noisy-bastard fun live remains undiminished, and as an extra treat tonight they're joined by exiled Oxfordshire siblings Cassels, taking their own personal potshots at life through the prism of punked-up rock and roll.

Bradlee and his big band, remodelling songs by everyone from Radiohead and The Cure to Lorde, Meghan Trainor and Miley Cyrus into vintage 20s jazz standards, Irish folk ballads, classic cabaret numbers and 50s doo-wop.

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with MEANS OF PRODUCTION + CYNTHIA'S PERISCOPE + LINA SIMON: The Wheatsheaf – Irresistible electro-themed night at this month's Gappy Tooth Industries, with synthophiles' wet dream Means of Production welding monochrome 70s and early 80s electro to acid house, where Cabaret Voltaire, OMD and Depeche Mode get dark and jiggy with A Guy Called Gerald. They're joined by Manchester's confessional, weirdo art-synth practitioners Cynthia's Periscope and this month's Introducing artist and recent Track of the Month winner Lina Simon, the former Edmund Fitzgerald guitarist

getting ghostly and sometimes brutal with John Carpenter soundscapes, Kraftwerk precision and Mazzy Star atmospherics.

MUDSLIDE MORRIS: The Harcourt Arms – Blues and boogie in the vein of Seasick Steve and Rory Gallagher.

SOLAR PSYCHEDELIA: The Jericho Tavern – A night of heavy duty psychedelia with sets from gothic space rock adventurer Jeramesa, plus shoegaze trio Daydreamer? and melancholic psych from Gravid, an offshoot of The Elephant Trip.

LUKE DANIELS & NANCY KERR: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Multiple folk awards winner Nancy Kerr comes to Didcot, joined by local lad Luke Daniels, whose CV includes time spent in Jethro Tull and De Dannan.

SUNDAY 24th

BEANS ON TOAST: The Bullingdon – Hoarse, ramshackle protest folk and meditations on love, life and drugs from Essex’s Jay McAllister back in town, the cult favourite having collaborated

Monday 18th

RUTS DC: O2 Academy

In a genre widely suspicious of musical accomplishment, The Ruts were punks who could really play. And not just punk. The London quartet, who formed in 1977, were as adept at heavy-duty reggae as they were playing high voltage punk. They were synonymous with the Rock Against Racism movement and close friends with Misty in Roots whose People Unite label released their ‘In a Rut’ single and the two acts fed off each other stylistically as well as politically. Tracks like ‘Jah War’ and ‘SUS’ captured the simmering tensions of late-70s inner city communities, dealing with the National Front and police stop and search powers, while enduring punk anthem ‘Babylon’s Burning’ was a direct inspiration for The Specials’ ‘Ghost Town’. Of course The Ruts’ activism attracted all the wrong kinds of attention and regular attacks on the band and their fans by racist skinheads accentuated singer Malcolm Owen’s depression and heroin addiction, which cost him his life in 1980 and presaged the band’s split in 83. They reformed in 2007 to play a benefit gig for guitarist Paul Fox, who was suffering from lung cancer, with lifelong fan Henry Rollins on vocals. Sadly Fox died shortly after but Dave Ruffy and John Jennings rebuilt the band and they’ve toured ever since, their pioneering fusion style perhaps better appreciated now more than ever, their messages of protest and unity as relevant as they were when they formed. Punky reggae party? The phrase was pretty much made for Ruts DC.



with Frank Turner, Mumford and Sons, Billy Bragg, Laura Marling and Emmy the Great along the way to releasing a new album on the 1st December every year (his birthday) as well as playing Glastonbury Festival every year since 2007.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms

FOLK SESSIONS: The Half Moon

THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Tree, Iffley (4-6.30) – Free afternoon session from the local swamp blues, funk, ska crew.

BLUES JAM: Fat Lil’s, Witney (3pm) – Monthly open blues session.

MONDAY 25th

PSYCHEDELIC PORN CRUMPETS: The Bullingdon – Riff-heavy, hirsute and tripped-out Led Zep-meets-Tame Impala psychedelia from Perth’s Psychedelic Porn Crumpets, over in Europe to tour their albums ‘High Visceral’ Parts 1 and 2, the band having supported musical soulmates King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard, Royal Blood and Black Mountain.

SEA GIRLS: O2 Academy – Chipper’n’chirpy indie guitar pop from Lincolnshire’s Sea Girls, in the vein of Magic Gang and Fickle Friends and back in town as part of a headline tour following support to The Academic and currently picking up a raft of ones-to-watch tips across radio and blogs.

YAMATO DRUMMERS OF JAPAN: The New Theatre – Spectacular display of Taiko drumming from the world-renowned ensemble, performing their new ‘Jhonetsu’ piece.

DESPICABLE ZEE + BELL LUNGS + RAIMENTS: Fusion Arts – Zahra Tehrani launches her new EP under her Despicable Zee guise, mixing hip hop beats, loops, drones, middle eastern motifs and electronic sounds to fuse the influences of M.I.A, Gazelle Twin and Cosey Fanni Tutti. She’s joined at tonight’s Divine Schism show by Glaswegian experimenter Bell Lungs, mixing up vocal acrobatics, drones and electronics, plus Berlin avant garde act Raiments.

McGOLDRICK, McCUSKER & DOYLE: Nettlebed Folk Club – Another chance to catch three of the contemporary folk scene’s leading lights together in an intimate setting, with the Transatlantic Sessions back trio at Nettlebed’s renowned weekly club – Michael McGoldrick plays flute, whistles and uilleann pipes, with John McCusker on fiddle and John Doyle on vocals and guitar for a run through of their combined catalogues and traditional numbers.

OPEN MIC SESSION: The Castle

TUESDAY 26th

WEDNESDAY 27th

KRIS BARRAS: The Bullingdon – Southern-flavoured electric blues-rock from Devon guitarist Barras and his band, out on tour to promote his debut album, inspired by Gary Moore, Joe Bonamassa and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

THURSDAY 28th

THE DOLLYMOPS + PINUPS + DAISY: The Jericho Tavern – Rising local indie/post-punk stars The Dollymops launch their



Tuesday 19th

BIG JOANIE / SECRET POWER / DEATH OF THE MAIDEN: The Library

As with so many on the politically-driven DIY scene, Big Joanie are more than a band. They’re a trio of musical and community activists who between them have helped run the Decolonise Fest, showcasing punk bands of colour; the anti-racist Stop Rainbow Racism movement and the Girls Rock London project, coaching young female musicians in the capital. Musically the trio have grown up in London’s DIY scene, constantly gigging as well as releasing their own singles and cassettes along the way. They’ve supported Dntown Boys, The Ex and Shopping and a chance meeting with Thurston Moore at one of their gigs led to them signing to his The Daydream Library Series, who released their debut album. ‘Sistahs’, produced by Margo Brown, who’s worked with Fat White Family and Goat Girl among others, is a mix of basement-friendly garage punk and synth-pop anthems like recent single ‘Fall Asleep’, politics mixing with more personal stories of anxiety as they draw on the influence of riot grrl, 70s punk, grunge, 60s girl groups and 80s cult heroes like The Shop Assistants. They even do a mean cover of TLC’s ‘No Scrubs’. The Library as well as Divine Schism, who host tonight’s show, are the band’s perfect home. Great support from fellow London DIY scenesters Secret Power, mixing up punk, synth-pop and r’n’b, and local nightmare-fuelled gothic baroque popsters Death of the Maiden.

third EP, ‘Church Fete Ultraviolence’, the band mixing the twisted 80s sounds of Big Flame and Bogshed with Orange Juice and The Wedding Present’s poetic indie rock and a hefty dose of snarling political ire. Melodic, dark hearted post-hardcore and emo from Daisy in support.

DOT’S FUNKY ODYSSEY: The Bullingdon – Live funk and soul from the veteran student band.

REVEREND BLACK’S ACOUSTIC CABARET: The Half Moon – Acoustic blues, country, folk and classic rock with The Jesters, Danny Everest and Richard Brotherton.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

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

...AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD
O2 Academy 2
Oxford
19.02.19

LAURA VEIRS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
11.02.19

WILLIE J HEALEY
The Bullingdon
Oxford
14.02.19

SEAN MCGOWAN
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
16.02.19

SOUND OF THE SIRENS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
17.02.19

ART BRUT
The Bullingdon
Oxford
18.02.19

ALLUSINLOVE
Jericho Tavern
Oxford
18.02.19

ANOTHER SKY
The Bullingdon
Oxford
19.02.19

PSYCHEDELIC PORN CRUMPETS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
25.02.19

SHE DREW THE GUN
The Bullingdon
Oxford
01.03.19

THE ORIELLES
The Bullingdon
Oxford
03.03.19

SOEUR
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
14.03.19

SPORTS TEAM
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
26.03.19

FUN LOVIN’ CRIMINALS
O2 Academy
Oxford
28.03.19

LOW ISLAND
South Street Arts
Reading
29.03.19

DREAM STATE
The Bullingdon
Oxford
02.04.19

YAK
The Bullingdon
Oxford
02.03.19

KING NO ONE
O2 Academy2
Oxford
10.04.19

PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
10.04.19

BLUE ROSE CODE
The Bullingdon
Oxford
11.04.19

NILUFER YANYA
O2 Academy2
Oxford
13.04.19

PENELOPE ISLES
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
16.04.19

JOSEFIN OHRN + THE LIBERATION
The Bullingdon
Oxford
23.04.19

SLEAFORD MODS
Sub 89
Reading
26.04.19

SLEAFORD MODS
O2 Academy
Oxford
27.04.19

C DUNCAN
The Bullingdon
Oxford
07.05.19

BLAENAVON
O2 Academy2
Oxford
11.05.19

SOAK
O2 Academy2
Oxford
15.05.19

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SELF HELP / LACUNA COMMON / THE LIDS / EASTER ISLAND STATUES

The Bullingdon

Odd how bands can take a similar set of influences and make them work – or not – so differently. Easter Island Statues have all the expected working parts for an indie rock band – from The Smiths to The Libertines – but instead of staid fuzz and bluster they weave them into big, bold folk songs that come with ragged edges that enhances rather than detract from their infectious zeal. 'Laika' is a huge, barnstorming anthem that you can't help but be carried away by and tonight's set sounds as much like Stornoway on a punk trip as anything. Rich, bold and rough hewn – that's Easter Island Statues

in a nutshell. Plenty of people would consider those the key ingredients for sexy. Leicester's Lids come from a similar place but their end product possesses less character, their kinetic energy and epic U2-style guitars undone by dispassionate Arctic Monkeys vocals. Still, the set is made all the more enjoyable by the Bully's new computerized mixing desk going on a bender and giving us the full Wembley Stadium light show. Lacuna Common are similarly sullen to The Lids and could easily slip into that post-Arctic Monkeys/Libertines landfill, but they're

far spikier than first impressions suggest, propulsive, layered guitars reminiscent of The Wedding Present's more motorik post-punk-inspired moments, the yobbish snarl in the vocals capturing something of former local heroes The Dead Jerichos' grit-pop. They earn extra bonus points for looking like they're fronted by Blur's Graham Coxon and Duran Duran's Nick Rhodes. But tonight is Self Help's party, at the end of year that saw them top *Nightshift*'s annual Top 25 and become pretty much everyone's favourite new Oxford band. Typically they kick off at full throttle and rarely let up, serenely

smiley bassist Lizzie Couves the powerhouse calm at the heart of the band, flanked by dervish guitarist Sean Cummings and singer Danny Jeffries whose hair alone has more energy than most bands. Self Help have all the dirt and pent-up aggression of Mudhoney but amid the grime and skuzzy riffs there are melodies that owe more to Squeeze or The Buzzcocks. If track of the year 'Get On With It' is immutably ebullient funtime pop it's 'The Razz' that steals the crown tonight, a sleazy, self-loathing offspring of 'Caught By the Fuzz' where afterhours drinking comes with a sense of existential dread to match the giddy sense of fun. If 2019 carries on where 2018 left off for Self Help, the fun they bring isn't going to stop any time soon. *Sue Foreman*

THE SHAPES / PANDAPOPALYPSE / MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS

The Bullingdon

Like any good bandleader Shan Shriharan isn't afraid to let his minions become the star of the show. Moogiemán might be the name above the door but it's those around him who have lately elevated his idiosyncratic songs to a higher level and tonight it is Claire LeMaster's bubbling synths, wailing backing vocals and jolly kiddie dancing, along with Clare Heavyside's sax drones, that makes 'Ghost Driver' the sets' high point, capturing the band's ability to mix motorik determination with a childish sense of playfulness, the Masochists cementing their top-drawer-off-the-wall pop credentials with closer 'Mr Curator'. They can still confuse and bemuse but more than ever now, they thrill. Clare Heavyside is an integral part of all three acts tonight, making up one third of Pandapocalypse alongside erstwhile Balkan Wanderers bandmate Stuart Wigby on guitar and singer/keyboard player Rachel Ruscombe King. They're up against it from the off tonight, sadly, Rachel's demure vocals struggling to compete with the guitar, sax and drum machine clatter, so they have to turn everything down to get the balance right, at which point the yakking yahoos at the back of the venue drown them out. They're best when cranking things up a notch and battering out jazzed-up synth-punk somewhere between Sons of Kemet and Carter USM, the lighter, folkier numbers ultimately lost amid the selfish

chatter of people who'd do well to show a bit of respect and shut the fuck up. No amount of talk can stop a Shapes party and anyway everyone's soon enough down the front and bopping around as the now nine-strong band of self-proclaimed old gits bring their nostalgic tales of small town life, loving and fighting to life by way of well-mannered pub rock, classic 60s r'n'b and a little bit of punk spirit. The newly expanded brass section – featuring Clare H again – lift everything to near euphoric levels, be it celebratory or melancholy, or sometimes both at the same time as on long-time favourite 'Passing of the Years'. Ant Kelly and Alix Champ now have a well-honed vocal chemistry that mixes doleful rumination to big-hearted soul and it's no surprise that they work together so well on a festive cover of 'Fairytale of New York', which segues into set finale 'Til They Put Me In The Ground', described in these very pages as the best song The Pogues never wrote. There are moments of lightweight rock fluff but they're swept away in The Shapes' onward rush of good times and good will. They're pretty much the epitome of comfort music, the pre-Christmas gig equivalent of a vintage *Carry On* film and a box of Thorton's Continentals. It'd be nice to imagine they'll one day get the Christmas Number 1 they deserve. *Ian Chesterton*

GWENIFER RAYMOND / FAITH ELLIOTT / ALLY CRAIG

Deaf & Hard Of Hearing Centre

All credit to promoters Divine Schism for putting on a gig this soon after New Year but a hundred appreciative punters prove them right on all fronts. Ally Craig's playing and singing has matured considerably since his early solo performances, and he has grown in confidence accordingly with some great between-song banter. Songs like 'Theda Bara' have a slightly sinister edge, with its carefully picked out notes and rich vocal accompaniment, while his take on Ivor Cutler's 'Beautiful Cosmos' takes it somewhere quite unexpected. The picture of William Shakespeare on his Soundcloud page makes perfect sense, close as he is to a modern-day Oxford bard. Faith Elliott, from Minneapolis via Edinburgh, is an acoustic singer/songwriter whose songs are poignant in an altogether more self-revelatory manner. The pieces are also pacier, with words tumbling over themselves in a way that can be hard to keep up with. The intensely personal, almost confessional style will win plaudits relative to how the content resonates with the listener, and background music it certainly isn't, but she seems to have won some new fans tonight.

Gwenifer Raymond's set is uncompromising in yet another way. Tonight she uses an acoustic guitar and a banjo to fashion her own take on traditional Appalachian and related traditional American music, simply launching right in and not uttering a word until several songs have passed. Our first impression is disbelief that there are only six strings on the guitar, such is the number of notes and percussive force of the delivery, and wonder at the speed of her fingers tearing up and down the frets. Her debut album's 'Requiem for John Fahey' is a useful reference point: he did much to revive interest in early blues and American folk music, gaining fans from people like Sonic Youth, and learning that Raymond started off playing in punk and grunge bands the jigsaw starts to fall into place. She mainly performs her own compositions so her own Welsh upbringing is yet another element brought into the mix, the driving rhythmic melodic patterns defying all ideas of categorisation. Sometimes it's best to forget about musical origins and just let the music carry you away. *Art Lagun*

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0151 @ The Jericho Tavern

Ian Prowse

(Amsterdam/Pele)

One of Liverpool's most respected songwriters. Does This Train Stop On Merseyside? was known to be one of John Peel's favourite songs and has been covered by Christy Moore. New album: Here I Lie available for pre-order now.

Matt McManamon

(The Dead 60s/The Specials/Pinhole)

Over 100,000 records sold. 5 UK Top 40s. Appeared twice on TOTP. Riot Radio has over a million streams on Spotify. Former Rude Boy turned purveyor of Scally Folk.

Jules Reid

Made on Merseyside now based in Oxford. Has performed live in Argentina, Italy, Spain, Germany, UK and USA.

Doors: 19:00

Admission: £6

Thurs 4th April 2019

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BRYDE
The Cellar

Bryde arrives in Oxford at the end of a run of co-headline dates with Lyla Foy, the first time she’s played in the city since leaving Paper Aeroplanes and going solo. The best bits of her poetic songwriting remain from those days and, whilst she still often plays with the backing of a band, tonight the only accompaniment is her electric guitar.

The feel then is something completely different. There is no driving drum beat nor melodic chorus, which gave Paper Aeroplanes a poppy accessibility. Instead, she has gone down a musical path that fits with the ambiance of The Cellar: far more raw and atmospheric than you might expect if you knew her of old. It isn’t a direction that assumes all Paper

Aeroplanes fans will follow, but when it works it really works, as in the emotive ‘To Be Brave’. I’d started to drift; my phone was out, I was looking at my watch. Then I’m brought back in, the rise of the chorus suddenly bringing enough colour and differentiation to engage me again. It’s the classic trope: artist leaves band, artist goes solo, fans follow and give it a go. I can’t help but linger over old expectations. Unfair? Probably, but always the risk.
Jo Cox

THE BOHMAN BROTHERS
Old Fire Station

There’s a doctorate to be written about the crossover between leftfield comedy and improvised music. There are high profile fans, of course – Stewart Lee got air time for an improv duo through his *Comedy Vehicle* series, as well as facing the *Celebrity Mastermind* third degree on avant-guitar trailblazer Derek Bailey, while Vic Reeves snuck an Evan Parker solo onto a top 20 album (“Pack it in, Parker!”) – but there is also a partly shared outlook. Perhaps it’s because both stand-ups and improvisers are often relegated to the sort of pub corners and dysfunctional function rooms that the lowliest of toilet venue rockers would sneer at; perhaps it’s that both art forms always make the most sense in an intimate live environment, or perhaps it’s just that in both cases the unexpected is rarely regretted or ignored, but embraced and incorporated into the show. The Bohman Brothers combine the absurdity of the oddest comedy with the most dadified improv. They have the classic comic double act dynamic, one uptight and starchy in his collar and tie, the other relaxed

and wayward in a potting shed sweater. It’s Morecambe and Wise, Bert and Ernie, ego and id. An introduction in which welcoming platitudes are haltingly and exhaustingly mumbled over a recording of car crashes has the surreal mundanity of vintage Ted Chippington, a feeling bolstered by the fact that the duo make their close-miked scrapes and percussive skitters, not from catgut and drum skin, but from rubber bands, classroom geometry sets and a couple of fetching old-school toast racks. We’ve sat through self-conscious art music trying not to laugh before now, so it’s wonderful tonight to see guffaws invited with such deadpan hilarity, and cut-up texts - think Burroughs meets Mark E Smith meets spam emails – are delivered impeccably: after all, timing is a key concept in both music and comedy, and The Bohman Brothers’ strange, yet strangely ordinary, performance embodies both. Coincidence, perhaps, but we are overjoyed that the final word, enunciated in a hilarious exchange of contrasting extracts from an old guide to tree frogs and a medical Mills & Boon novel, is “mother-in-law”. Fluxus? They’ve only just met us!
David Murphy





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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.

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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.

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TIM TURAN’S SESSION NOTES

Part One
CD BUSINESS

Hello people, and in particular musicians and artists who make music for public consumption. I’m Tim Turan, mastering engineer at Turan Audio Ltd. In the following months I shall be dealing with technical issues regarding the final production stages of making music for release on a wide variety of platforms: CD, vinyl, cassette tape, download and streaming.

I thought I’d start off with what is still the most popular format for physical release: the CD. The CD is not dead, but the enduring choice for musicians and artists who believe in high fidelity sound. Of the 400 titles I cut last year over 90% of them were physical releases, most of them on CD; the rest were on vinyl and a few cassette tapes. For the amount of money it takes to buy instruments, rehearse, record, mix and master it seems most musicians want a physical ‘thing’ to show for the expense.

Now, I get asked a *lot* of questions by musicians about the CD format and so in this month’s column I shall address the do’s and don’ts of preparing your mixes for CD mastering and next month the subsequent ‘metadata’ that is now also required. It’s been required for the last 30 years but it is only recently that people have become aware of it. Ok, here goes

1. When supplying your audio to a mastering facility *always* make sure your levels are at least -2db from peak (0.0). There has to be enough headroom to work with a track. If you see red lights on your meters in the studio, turn the faders down

until there are none. Do *not* send tracks that have been peak limited and are slammed to the digital ceiling. The first thing I have to do is turn them down, which loses resolution and quality straight away before I even start to work on them. In a lot of cases I refuse, knowing that there is probably a better version on the mixer’s system that hasn’t been made to look like a piece of LEGO when you look at the waveforms on the screen. You people with DAW’s (Digital Audio Workstations) know what I mean, so keep levels sensible.

2. Do check your mixes for faults, musical or technical. I will usually pick up on any anomalies, as my clients can attest. This can lead to embarrassment, heartache and despair for the artist but usually ends in a headache for the mastering engineer. Checking your mixes will make life easier for everyone involved in the production chain and save a fortune on paracetamol for all those involved. So, faults include: glitches; pops; drop-outs (microscopic areas of no audio whatsoever); clicks; stereo channel imbalances; phase issues (too many to mention), and a whole raft of ‘shit the artist doesn’t want on the finished record’. Check the start and end of the tracks too. Did you chop the reverb tail off at the end for example. I’ve lost count of the times I’ve had that one. Believe me, it is crazy some of the stuff I come across that the artist and mix engineer hadn’t even noticed. So pass a final critical ear before sending your material off for mastering. Also, if you’re sending your mixes off to one of those online mastering platforms – EMastered, Landr, for



example – no-one is going to cast a critical ear over anything or execute any fixes or solutions. So your mixes will come back still full of the ‘crap’ you hadn’t noticed, only louder!

3. Label your files properly. If you know the track running order then start the filename with a number, preferably using a leading zero. Also, spell your track name correctly. I will use this info for the CD text and my session notes so that is what will end up on the finished product. If your half asleep engineer writes “Booby I love you” instead of “Baby” then I will put that into the CD text and it will be on millions of copies if you’re commercially successful. I will of course question this but there are probably loads of mastering engineers who won’t. So, check your filenames.

Next month I will deal with ‘METADATA’ ... that evil but essential stuff that isn’t even music.

Dr SHOTOVER: Just Say Yes

Ah, there you are, Newbington. Welcome to the East Indies Club ‘Safe Breakout Space’. Pull up a beanbag, and buy us all a Virgin Mojito from the Juice Bar while we listen to some fat-free whale-flute music on the organic jukebox. Yes, you heard me, Newbington. What’s that? *Why the alcohol-free cocktails?* ‘Cos we’re all on the wagon, stupid. Now, pick yourself up off the Fairtrade rug, and get them in. [*Glug-glug, chug-chug*]. Ahhhh, that’s better. So, is there life after Dryanuary? Yes, Drug-Free-buary, obviously. But we’re not going to sign up for any of THAT bollocks, no sir-REE-Bob. I’d never hear the end of it from Spanish Tony, my deal... erm personal trainer, and I’d be banned from those special 70s theme nights at Fondles Nightclub which I enjoy so much. Talking of which, here’s the opium pipe which I picked up on my travels in the Far-Out East when I was an adjutant in the King’s Own Mahavishnu Rifles. Yessss, it’s still loaded with some of the same legendary stash which Brian Jones scored in Marrakesh in 1967. Dy. Na. Mite. I think you’ll agree. Ah, here comes our Club Padre, the Reverend Waters... aka the Vicar of Dribbly. Hey, Vicar... swap you a bang on this for some of that communion wine you’ve got in your satchel... What say, Sky Pilot? [*Slurp-o, slurp-o*]. Ahhh. Now that really IS better. So farewell then, Dryanuary. You were dull dull DULL. And now you are gone. A bit like most of one’s ancestral brain cells, what?



Next month: *Rug Free America*

VICAR OF DRIBBLY: *More ‘tea’, Your Reverence?*

INTRODUCING....

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

Lina Simon

Who is she?
Lina Simon is a solo artist making experimental electronic pop music. Between 2001-05 she played guitar in Elizabeth and then The Edmund Fitzgerald alongside Yannis Philipakis and Jack Bevan, who would go on to become Foals. The original line-up disbanded in 2005 because “it got too serious and I needed to go to university.” Lina continued to write music during university and studied Music Production at Leeds College of Music. She played a show as Eclectic Men in 2009 with Monster Killed By Laser’s guitar virtuoso Lee Laverack at the Brudenell Social Club in Leeds before deciding to go solo, creating music on guitar and laptop. Her first set of songs was awarded Top Tracks in December’s *Nightshift* and she made her solo live debut at The Wheatsheaf the same month.

What does she sound like?
Swirling synths, electronic beats, looped guitars and dispassionately ethereal vocals mixed up with a splash of trip hop, all add up to an atmospheric whole that’s equally foreboding and pretty. Lina’s voice switches from breathless croon to witchy intensity while evoking lost John Carpenter soundtracks and primitive, pioneering electro-pop acts from the late 70s and early 80s.

What inspires her?
“A lot; I think what got me playing guitar was the ease of punk chords and the do it yourself ethic that the bands I listened to applied to their ethic.”

Career highlight so far:
“Playing music with talented people from Oxford such as Yannis Philippakis, Jack Bevan, Max Misirlizade, Hugo Manuel, and Youthmovies.”

And the lowlight:
“Disbanding my first band Mesh. We rocked!”



Her favourite other Oxfordshire act is:
“I would say Salvation Bill because they’re really nice people.”

If she could only keep one album in the world, it would be:
“Nirvana – ‘Nevermind’. Simplicity at its best; moody and evocative; never gets boring.”

When is her next local gig and what can newcomers expect?
“I have a gig on the 2nd February for Divine Schism at the Wheatsheaf and another on the 23rd for Gappy Tooth Industries at the same venue. Expect tasteful fashion and a sense of fun.”

Her favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:
“It can be a great place to earn admiration and at the same time can become a total nightmare for self-criticism.”

You might love her if you love:
John Carpenter; Kraftwerk; Mazzy Star; The Human League; Chelsea Wolfe; Depeche Mode; Boards of Canada.

Hear her here:
linasimon.bandcamp.com

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

A lesson in just how quickly fortunes can change came in February 1999 when **Samurai Seven** singer and guitarist Simon Williams was shot in the eye by an air gun pellet while leaving The King’s Arms pub on Broad Street. Simon, who just a few weeks previously had been celebrating his band’s success at the Shifty Disco pollwinners party and *Nightshift*’s end of year Top, where the Sammies’ ‘Bonnet’ nabbed the Number 1 spot, was admitted to the John Radcliffe where surgeons removed the pellet but specialists were still waiting to see how extensive the damage was. In the immediate aftermath the band were forced to cancel their show at London’s Highbury Garage to help launch Channel 4’s *John Peel’s Sounds of the Suburbs* series, for which the Sammies had recorded the theme tune, as well as a planned gig in Paris. In better news **Blur**’s “secret” show at **Brookes University Union** on February 3rd sold out in under four hours – and this in the days before online ticket sales. The band’s show came with them at their commercial peak and playing the gig to showcase songs from their imminent ‘13’ album. “Gig of the year without a doubt” concluded *Nightshift*’s review, the show ending with a hat-trick of hits: ‘Beetlebum’; ‘There’s No Other Way’ and ‘Song 2’. There were also sold out shows for **Faithless** and **Terrorvision** at Brookes the same week, while down at **The Point** a bunch of hungry young newcomers called **Coldplay** were headlining with support from a band called **Papanappy**, who we’re guessing never quite made it as big as their gig buddies for the night.

10 YEARS AGO

These days she’s something of an elder stateswoman of the Oxford music scene, particularly helming The Young Women’s Music Project, but back in February 2009 **Zahra Tehrani** was still best known as drummer with electro-punk tykes **Baby Gravy** who were making their second appearance on the cover of *Nightshift*, slimmed down from their original six-strong incarnation and teaming up with local rapper ShaoDow for the furious electro-skank of ‘Don’t Touch Me’, the flipside of their new single ‘Did It Again’ on STW Records (“sounding like Kathleen Hannah fronting The Human League,” according to the review). Of course we loved Baby Gravy from the moment we first saw them dismembering pop’s rulebook onstage at The Zodiac, partly because they were always about mad, crazy musical fun, and partly because they really, really upset ancient musos who wondered where the guitar solos and reverence for Eric Clapton were. In a museum probably. Or down a sewer. Great to see Zahra go on to play such a pivotal role in local music, and to know that Baby Gravy singer **Iona Roisin** is still coming up with the goods under her **Verna Hark** guise. Beyond Baby Gravy gigging highlights of the month included **Soulfly**, **Florence & the Machine** and **Friendly Fires** at the **O2 Academy**, **Richard Thompson** at the **New Theatre** and most notably **Magazine**’s first gig in 30 years at the O2, a show that was to prove one of the high points of *Nightshift* entire lifetime, as well as reducing a certain **Jonny Greenwood** to the state of a gibbering fanboy.

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

5 YEARS AGO

Looking back now, February 2014 was something of a vintage month for local gigs, what with **Foals** dropping by for a last-minute, secret show upstairs at **The O2 Academy** – fans queuing from 6am to grab tickets from the box office. “Foals left Oxford a fantastic band but they have come back as one of the greatest in the country,” wrote Stuart Fowkes in his review of the show. Also very much on their way up and set for global stardom were **Glass Animals**, this month making a rare live outing at **The Jericho Tavern** as part of Independent Venue Week and sharing a bill with **Charlie Cunningham**, **We Aeronauts** and **Salvation Bill**. But for all that, possibly the most unforgettable gig of the month was **Fat White Family**’s Oxford debut at **The Bullingdon** (at the time temporarily rechristened **The Art Bar**). Singer Lias Saudi got naked before the first song was over and proceeded to douse himself and everything in sight in a mixture of water, oil, flour and sweat as his band cranked out an astonishingly dirty mix of garage rock, gothic glam, krautrock and sinewy, hysterical rockabilly. “The only thing tempering our unfettered glee about tonight’s astonishing show is knowing that some poor sod has to clean up this mess in the morning,” said *Nightshift*’s reviewer. The band themselves were charged with cleaning the mess up and paying for a new set of monitors. So much fun – easy to forget this month also saw an Oxford debut for **George Ezra**, also at The Art Bar and on his way to headlining Truck Festival, and **21 Pilots**, playing their first local gig and soon to be topping festival bills around the globe.

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TRACKS

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TOP TRACKS

DUTCH-SARNIE

Being sensible should be restricted to stuff like driving a car, checking sell-by dates on fresh fish and voting for important political stuff, though you wouldn't know it from watching the news. Like drinking sprees and the number of kittens you adopt, making music is never a time for being sensible, which is why Dutch-Sarnie finds him/herself atop the pile for the second time in a year. Last time out they provided us with a decidedly obscure word search puzzle and a whole heap of messed-up music that featured samples of everyone from Gary Numan and Stereolab to the Black Panthers and a nuclear attack warning. More of the same here but different. The Numan love remains, notably on opener 'Oxford Morrells', which is basically a bass-heavy shoegaze instrumental cover of 'Metal', while further in we get John Barry, Lee Perry, LFO and shoegaze stars Chapterhouse ripped and layered on these wandering pieces of dubbed-out, spangly electronica, disembodied voices discussing sunflowers and self harm or data analysis as The Orb get reworked into a lo-fi Black Ark studio ramble. "Doesn't it bother you that you spend your life in a state of drug induced tranquillity?" asks an interviewee at one point, to which the answer, appropriately, is "Well, I haven't given it any thought." It all ends with John Peel saying "that was such bollocks" and a Dalek repeating "This is just the beginning". Except it's not the very end as a minute of silence later someone shouts "Ungrateful scum!" and we have to go back to thinking about sensible stuff in music, like verses, choruses, middle eights, lengthy guitar solos and probably an appreciation of technique-heavy blues rock. We don't know who Dutch-Sarnie is. There's a mobile number with the CD but, like Evie Hammond at the end of *V For Vendetta*, not wanting to unmask the titular hero, we don't want to ruin the dream. We only know that he/she makes our lives brighter and more fun.

LAUGHING LAMB

Talking of technique and not playing it sensible, Pete Smith here manages to be both technically adept and musically bonkers on occasion with his band Lucy Leave. Here he gets out from behind his

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

drum kit, straps on an acoustic guitar and barrels through the John Fahey songbook as if he's just been told tea's ready in ten minutes and he better have finished before then. Consequently we get ten tracks of fast-action American primitive guitar plucking, with most racks barely scraping the two-minute mark, sporadic vocals used as part of the instrumentation rather than for their lyrical substance, in the style of Gastr del Sol, and a general in-and-out-and-mess-it-all-about approach to tunesmithery that recalls Lucy Leave's own love for The Minutemen. Pete himself describes Laughing Lamb as "primitive guitar post-punk jazz-punk art," which we guess it is of a fashion, to which you could add ADHD American folk-jazz. There's even a track on the album that's just a recording of lambs laughing. Of course there is. See, why be sensible when you can be a bit crazy. No one went to their grave wishing they'd had more early nights, read all the instruction manuals and chosen steamed broccoli over pie and wine. And if they did, an early grave is all they deserve.

GREAT APE

Back to Planet Sensible with a hefty bump now as Great Ape send us a video for their song 'Cold Stone', a slo-mo, soft-focus montage / spiritual journey that goes from small boy looking out at the wonder of the natural world through various bus, train and boat windows, through various stages of life, including meeting a pretty lady and holding her hand on a beach, to having a wee lad of his own and concluding with an old man walking along the street as a young boy, doubtless his grandchild, cavorts some more on the beach. There's a lot of beaches in the video, along with an awful lot of mawkish sentimentality. But what does the music sound like, you ask? We're not really sure – we were too busy waiting for the end of the video to see if the Natwest or Lloyds logo would appear with the life-affirming slogan: "Always here for you (like herpes)". It doesn't, but it might as well do. We did get a vague impression of something resembling Stornoway's 'Fuel Up', but, like, dull and inconsequential, or maybe a half-arsed Coldplay cast-off. Oh, and a stand-out bit of rhyming: "Come back to me / Infinity." We've probably been surreptitiously brainwashed and must now head out to open an easy access cash ISA or something. Doubtless a more sensible way to look after your money than handing it over to a nearby barkeeper and telling them to keep the ale coming til the cash runs out. And with a soundtrack like this, so much more fun too.

ASTEROX

Funny the obscure stuff you remember. Five songs into Asterox's Bandcamp feast there's a moment of déjà vu as the singer jovially bellows, "It's all alright if you've got your health." A scan through a few back issues of *Nightshift* and we discover the song earned the band Demo Dumper back in 2010. Given we barely remember what we did the night before (something Oxford United striker Gavin Whyte could doubtless empathise with), how an almost decade-old demo could keep such a hold on us is odd. It hasn't improved with age, though Asterox themselves have a bit. While the clichéd blues rock is still there, alongside some ill-advised attempts at what might pass as jollity, even wackiness, they seem to have headed down a folkier path too since last we met. So 'I Wish' is all hoedown jiggy and harmonica-led pokery, while the slightly clumsy but thumping '16 Hours' is possessed of grey-haired *joie de vivre*. The odd moment of hamfisted Americana is tragic-comic in its delivery but the heavyweight, borderline proggy 'Time Machine' could almost be John Otway trying to be Metallica, which is a respectable distance from sensible, and you can almost hear their battle cry of "Cropreddy, here we come!"

BERRY BROWN

Berry Brown has obviously failed to follow the sensible advice to get a proper haircut and colour; she'll never get that job working in a bank with that mane of bubblegum pink. Like she'd care anyway. She's too full of the joys of imminent springtime to care about dull stuff like work and mortgages. Instead she's possessed of a sleepy-eyed singing style and an almost folky chart pop that appears to have been made of spare clockwork parts. It's a bit gangly maybe but it's also a bit giddy about being able to run around in the fields and the sunshine, sounding like the lovechild of Sia and Edie Brickell, all fluffy and lightweight and fresh-faced and looking for sugarlumps to feast on. It's called 'Bear Can Dance', which really doesn't sound like a sensible declaration. Good work and roll on summer and all its inherent silliness.

JULIAN WAGSTAFF

Julian here seems to have a good fairy and a bad fairy sat on his shoulders, whispering to him about what to do with his music. The good fairy, who may or not be the sensible one, seems to be telling him to sound like The Clash trying to cover an old Ride song, which works out pretty well for the first few seconds until the bad fairy, possibly sensible but in a boring old fashioned way, tells Julian to bugger all that up by inserting soft rock guitar histrionics into proceedings. So good fairy counters by suggesting the song should be a sort of blues rock

approximation of The Smiths' 'This Charming Man', which bad fairy promptly sabotages by making sure Julian's voice is replaced by that of a jaded pub rock singer. Honours vaguely even after one song, good fairy then suggests Julian sound a bit like Bob Mould on 'Ratmagate' (not sensible song title alert), but bad fairy then tells him to slow it all down a bit lest it be too much like rock and roll fun. The battle continues into 'I Know That She Knows' – good fairy says Kinks and John Lennon, bad fairy says Foreigner and something best forgotten from a pub backroom circa 1975. This conflict rages on throughout Julian's six songs, but sadly, perhaps inevitably, bad fairy gets the upper hand, things become progressively more muddled, less cohesive and certainly less appealing, until the final number is nothing more than a tuneless acoustic busker dirge. "I wanna rewind" declares Julian at one point towards the end. Good idea: let's start again and this time kick the bad sensible fairy into the bin and replace it with a double portion of cream cake, a bottle of single malt or maybe Husker Du's entire back catalogue.

TOILET TRACKS

RICH RAINFORD

If we're taking sensible to mean dull, worthy, unadventurous and lacking any lust for life, rather than not playing with discarded syringes or venomous snakes, then Rich Rainford here might as well have the word tattooed in big bold letters on his forehead (though that in itself might suggest a rebellious spirit that's not apparent at any point during his one song contribution here, 'Where You Gunna Be'). "Don't you forget about me / When you were lying in his bed," wails Rich with a ponderousness he perhaps confuses with portentousness, kicking off three and a half minutes of self torture that he seems to imagine the rest of the human race also needs to be subjected to. Onward he plods with sky-touching pomposity and self pity levels well into the red, any emotional intensity manifesting as tuneless bellowing punctuated by passages of navel-gazing misery. We're just about to suggest the poor chap pours himself a large glass of the hard stuff, but he's already there: "One more drink then I'll be making my own fears" he cries plaintively, except we heard it as "one more drink then I'll be making my own wee," and now Rich is all heartbroken and we're collapsed over the desk in a fit of giggles, just making things worse for the poor fellow. We really need to be more sensible. It's a rotten old world out there and frivolity is a luxury we can scarcely afford. Sorry Rich, please carry on; you were singing about doing a wee. Damn, we're off again. Being silly is such fun.

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**...And You Will
Know Us by the
Trail of Dead**

Fri 8th Feb • 11pm

**The Oxford
Soul Train**

Sat 9th Feb • 6.30pm

Cash

Mon 11th Feb

Jimothy Lacoste

Thur 14th Feb

Alexander O'Neal

Fri 15th Feb • 6pm

Blue October

Sat 16th Feb • 5.30pm

**Buckcherry
& Hoobastank**

Sat 16th Feb • 6pm

**Omar
with Live Band**

Mon 18th Feb

Ruts DC

Fri 22nd Feb • 6.30pm

**Cypher16
& Lest We Forget**

Sat 23rd Feb • 6pm

Stone Broken

Sat 23rd Feb • 6.30pm

**Scott Bradlee's
Postmodern
Jukebox**

Mon 25th Feb

Sea Girls

Fri 1st Mar • 5.30pm

**P.O.D. &
Alien Ant Farm
+ '68**

Fri 1st Mar • 11pm

**My Nu Leng
& M8's**

Sat 2nd Mar • 6.30pm

**Kanadia
- Album Launch**

Sat 2nd Mar • 6.30pm

The Coral

Sat 9th Mar • 6pm

**U.F.O. - "Last
Orders" 50th
Anniversary Tour**

Sat 9th Mar • 6.30pm

**The Springsteen
Sessions**

Tue 12th Mar

**The Japanese
House**

Thur 14th Mar

Hayseed Dixie

Mon 18th Mar

AJ Tracey

Wed 20th Mar • 6.30pm

Ady Suleiman

Thur 21st Mar

The Treatment

Fri 22nd Mar • 6.30pm

**CoCo and the
Butterfields**

Sat 23rd Mar • 6.30pm

**Lene Lovich Band
Stateless 40th
Anniversary Tour**

Sun 24th Mar • 6.30pm

Bars and Melody

Tue 26th Mar

Gerry Cinnamon

Tue 26th Mar

**Skarlett Riot
+ Fahran + Sertraline**

Thur 28th Mar

**Fun Lovin'
Criminals**

Fri 29th Mar • 6.30pm

**Wille
& The Bandits
+ Rainbreakers**

Mon 1st Apr

**The Slow
Readers Club**

Tue 2nd Apr

Yak

Fri 5th Apr • 6.30pm

**Goldie
Lookin Chain**

Sat 6th Apr • 6.30pm

The Dualers

Wed 10th Apr • 6.30pm

KING NO-ONE

Sat 13th Apr • 6.30pm

Nilufer Yanya

Mon 15th Apr

Circa Waves

Thur 25th Apr

**Under The Apple
Tree – Live
on tour with
Wildwood Kin
+ Loud Mountains**

Sat 27th Apr • 6.30pm

Sleaford Mods

Sat 27th Apr • 6.30pm

UK Foo Fighters

Sat 4th May • 6.30pm

**The Wedding
Present...
Bizarro Tour**

Tue 14th May

Lucy Spraggan

Tue 14th May

J Mascis

Wed 15th May • 6.30pm

SOAK

Sat 18th May • 6.30pm

Samantha Fish

Wed 22nd May • 6.30pm

Sons of the East

Sat 29th Jun

**The AC/DC
Experience -
Who's Got Big
Balls**

Fri 20th Sep • 6.30pm

Boyzlife

Wed 27th Nov • 6.30pm

Electric Six

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