

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every
month
Issue 286
May
2019**

Catagood

"That line, 'What if mum passed away?' has the power to take an audience off guard and grab them from the start; it makes you feel like a tiny, vulnerable child"

Feline groovy with Oxford's mogtastic music makers

Also in this issue:

YOUNG KNIVES return
Introducing **DAISY**

plus

Festival news, gig previews and reviews, releases and five pages of Oxford gigs for May

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

THE BULLINGDON

MAY 2019 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Tuesday 16th April Simple MayDay DJ Rum Mor Elia Doors: 10pm	Friday 17th May Straight Outta Cowley Doors: 10pm	Friday 31st May We Are Not Devo Doors: 10pm	Wednesday 25th June Jeffrey Lewis & Los Bolts Doors: 10pm
Wednesday 1st May MayDay After Party Doors: 6pm	Saturday 18th May Musical Medicine Horse Meat Disco Doors: 10pm	Friday 31st May Thank U, Next Doors: 10pm	Thursday 27th June Goodness Day & Night Feat. Laurel Halo Joe Doors: 10pm
Wednesday 1st May Haute Mess Doors: 10pm	Wednesday 22nd May RHR Redfern, Hutchinson & Ross Doors: 10pm	Saturday 1st June Musical Medicine FOUK Doors: 10pm	Friday 28th June The Total Stone Roses Doors: 10pm
Friday 3rd May P.Y.T Doors: 10pm	Thursday 23rd May Master of None Shaving Primates Dan McKean Band Doors: 10pm	Thursday 14th June Sisters of Funk Doors: 8.30pm	Thursday 4th July Algiers Doors: 10pm
Saturday 4th May Basic Monki Doors: 10pm	Friday 24th May Bloodstock Festival M2TM Final Doors: 10pm	Friday 7th June Candy Says Doors: 10pm	Monday 8th July Hamilton Loomis Doors: 10pm
Tuesday 7th May C Duncan Doors: 10pm	Friday 24th May Bully Jive Afriquoi (DJ) & Moving Still Doors: 10pm	Friday 7th June Fluorescent Adolescent Doors: 10pm	Thursday 11th July Cloud Nothings Doors: 10pm
Wednesday 8th May The Beths Doors: 10pm	Friday 24th May Bully Jive Afriquoi (DJ) & Moving Still Doors: 10pm	Saturday 8th June Reggaeton Party Doors: 10pm	Friday 12th July The Dub Feat. Nick Manasseh Field Frequency Soundsystem Doors: 10pm
Friday 10th May Stone Foundation Doors: 10pm	Saturday 25th May Rawdio Randall Indika Riggamortiz Soundsystem Doors: 10pm	Thursday 13th June Be Good Doors: 10pm	Saturday 10th July Outlook Festival Launch Party Doors: 10pm
Friday 10th May Break Stuff Night of Nu-Metal Nostalgia Doors: 10pm	Sunday 26th May Cats are Gods Catgod & Lucy Leave Death of the Maiden The August List Ciphers Despicable Zee Doors: 4pm	Friday 14th June Pinoy Rock Legends Doors: 4pm	Wednesday 17th July Shonen Knife Doors: 10pm
Saturday 11th May Simple Helena Huaff Doors: 10pm	Sunday 26th May Cats are Gods Catgod & Lucy Leave Death of the Maiden The August List Ciphers Despicable Zee Doors: 4pm	Friday 14th June Terraforms Ed Rush Doors: 10pm	Wednesday 26th July Easy Star All-Stars Playing 'Dub Side of the Moon' Doors: 10pm
Thursday 16th May Ten Tonnes Only the Poet Doors: 10pm	Sunday 26th May Simple Overmono Doors: 10pm	Saturday 15th June Simple Courtesy Doors: 10pm	Sunday 28th July Outright Resistance Karybdis Order 227 Man Make Fire Doors: 10pm
Friday 17th May Drahla Doors: 10pm	Thursday 30th May Dale Watson & His Lone Stars Doors: 10pm	Wednesday 19th June Jesse Malin Doors: 10pm	Friday 2nd August WhitesnakeUK Doors: 10pm

NEWS

Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU

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Online: nightshiftmag.co.uk



KOLARS, WILDWOOD KIN AND KATY HURT are among the latest set of names added to this summer's **Cornbury Festival**.

Kolars were the surprise hit of last year's weekend, playing sets on the main stage and in the Rapture tent. They join a host of new acts including Nahko & Medicine For the People; Tom Speight; Emily Capell; Holy Moly & the Crackers; Little Brother Eli; Joe Slater; Houndstooth; Mon Laferte; Cable Street Collective and Fun Lovin' Crime Writers across the weekend of the **5th-7th July** at **Great Tew Country Park**. The sixteenth Cornbury is headlined by **The Specials, Keane and The Beach Boys**, with big names including Gaz Coombes; Echo & the Bunnymen; KT Tunstall; Beverly Knight; Elkie Brooks and The Trevor Horn Band already announced.

In addition to the two main music stages, Cornbury have announced the headline acts for the comedy stage, with *Britain's Got Talent* winner **Lost Voice Guy** alongside **Josie Long** and **Rose Matafeo**. Additionally Squeeze frontman **Chris Difford** will be appearing on the Caffè Nero stage alongside a host of acoustic acts. The Riverside stage, which traditionally features an extensive local line-up, will be announced next month. Tickets for the festival are on sale

now, priced £215 for adult weekend camping tickets, with concessions for over-70s and under-16s, and VIP tickets also available. Visit www.cornburyfestival.com for full details.

RIDE are expected to announce details of a new album this month. The band have been in the studio with producer Eril Alkan writing and recording the follow-up to 2017's 'Weather Diaries'. No release date has been given yet but is likely to be released in the autumn, with a single due in the next month or two. [Twitter.com/rideox4](https://twitter.com/rideox4) for news as it happens.

MARTHA will headline this year's **If Not Now, When? Festival**.

The Fortuna Pop-signed Durham quartet top the bill at Divine Schism and Idiot King's all-dayer at **East Oxford Community Centre** and **Fusion Arts** on Saturday 14th September. Other acts so far announced are: Bilge Pump; Chorusgirl; Nervous Twitch; Secret Power; Pet Crow and local acts Junk Whale, Theo and Murderach. A handful of early bird tickets, priced £18, are still available, with tickets priced £20 thereafter. Available from Truck Store and Wegotickets.com. Get updates at facebook.com/ifnotnowhenoxford.

KANADIA headline this year's Riverside Festival. The recent *Nightshift* cover stars top the bill on the Saturday of the weekend of the **20th-21st July** at **Mill Field in Charlbury**. The theme for this year's event is pixies – in tribute to the band Pixies, but fairytale fancy



THE SUN RA ARKESTRA headline the inaugural **Oddball Festival** later this summer.

The event will be the first time the legendary cosmic jazz ensemble has played in Oxford and is the final date of their UK tour.

Oddball is a one-day music and arts festival, which takes place at **The Isis Farmhouse** near Iffley Lock on **Saturday 8th June**, organised by **The Oxford Psychedelic Society**. The day also features live music and DJ sets from **Dutty Moonshine; Tiger Mendoza; Jeramesa; Flights of Helios; Fire Healer; Jali Fily Cissokho; Knobblehead** and **Drones Over Keynsham**, as well as art installations and poetry among other activities.

Organiser Lucian Wong said: "OddBall is a truly collaborative effort on the part of Oxford students and the local community's wealth of artists, freaks, and glorious oddities. It is an exciting and much needed opportunity to transcend the divide between town and gown that characterises our city. In a spirit of both reverence and reverie, OddBall is a celebration of our common humanity."

A free launch event for Oddball takes place in the Bullingdon's cocktail bar on Sunday 5th May from 4pm til midnight. There will be live acoustic sets from Knobblehead, Fire Healer and The Pink Diamond Revue, with a psychedelic rave from 9 through to midnight.

Tickets and full event details at theoddball.org.uk.

dress is encouraged. 2 Tone All Skas and Brickwork Lizards have also been confirmed.

Full details at riversidefestival.charlbury.com.

GLOFEST have announced more acts for their line-up, alongside the line-up for **Flofest** the same day. The twin festivals take place in **Florence Park on Saturday 22nd June** with the free family-friendly Flofest running from 11.30am-4.30pm and the ticketed Glofest kicking off at 6.30pm.

Ska tribute act Hope & Glory, The Shapes and Ska Ba Doo Ba will join already announced headliners Little Brother Eli at Glofest, which will climax with a DJ set from James Ussher along with a light and laser show. Earlier in the day Brickwork Lizards; The Owl Light Trio; Collision Theory; Valentino, and Jen Berkova will play at Flofest.

Tickets for Glofest are on sale now, priced £8 (under-10s free), with a limited number of early bird tickets available from Truck Store and various outlets near to Florence Park, including Florence Park Community Centre. All profits from the festival will go into local community projects. Visit flofest.uk for more details.

JOSEFIN OHRN + THE LIBERATION's show at **The Bullingdon** on the **23rd April** has been rescheduled to Monday 11th November due to "unforeseen circumstances". Similarly **Penelope Isles**' show at The Jericho Tavern, due to take place on the 16th April, has been postponed til **Wednesday 27th November** after the release date for the band's debut album was put back. Tickets for both show remain valid, or refunds available from point of purchase.

HEN OGLEDD, DÄLEK AND SEALIONWOMAN are among the acts confirmed for this year's **Supernormal Festival**.

The three-day celebration of experimental, leftfield and underground music runs over the weekend of the **2nd-4th August** at **Braziers Park** in Ipsden.

This year's festival sold out within two hours of tickets going on sale in March, with the event gaining a reputation as one of the most original and uncompromising festivals in the UK.

Other acts announced include: Acid Cannibals; Ampersand; Anne Robinson & Limpe Fuchs; Dead Neanderthals; Pet Brick; Zu; Djinn; Winnie Herstein; Verba Mansa; Qujaku; Air Loom, and Psychological Strategy Board, while the crown for best named band of the weekend is surely a head-to-head between Godspeed You! Peter Andre and GG Alan Partridge.

For those lucky enough to have nabbed a ticket, the full line-up is available at supernormalfestival.co.uk



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NEWS



GAZ COOMBES plays a special hometown this month to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the **Sheldonian**. Gaz plays a full band show, with orchestral accompaniment conducted by composer and former Oxford University student Luke Lewis, at the historic Christopher Wren-designed theatre on **Sunday 19th May**. Coombes joins Stornoway and The Fusion Project as the only non-classical Oxford acts to perform at The Sheldonian.

As well as being part of the venue's anniversary celebrations, the show will raise money for The Young Women's Music Project and Yellow Submarine. YWMP's Suzy Bowtell will be the support act. The show is already a sell-out.

PET SEMATARY are among the latest acts to be added to Big Scary Monsters' **Summer in the City Festival** on **Saturday 22nd June**. They, along with **Woahnows**; **Rainbow Reservoir**; **Lina Simon**; **Fancy Dress** and **Orchards** join the likes of Tangled Hair; Gender Roles; Lucy leave; Worry; Flirts; Colossal Squid; Junk Whale and Egrets across five venues in east Oxford: Fusion Arts; The Port Mahon; The Library; Truck Store and Brewdog. The day runs from 3pm-2am. Tickets are on sale now from Wegottickets. More info at bsmrocks.com.



DOLLY MAVIES releases a new EP this month. The local singer, and recent *Nightshift* Introducing star, launches the five-song EP with a show at The Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre in St Ebbes on Saturday 11th May. The EP features her three singles so far: 'My Buoy'; 'Drown Me Out' and *Nightshift* Top 10 track

'Distance', as well as two new songs: 'Losing My Mind' and 'Reflection'. As well as the Oxford show, Dolly has recently been touring across Europe, playing shows in Hungary and Portugal. Tickets for the show are available at www.dollymavies.com.

ALL TAMARA'S PARTIES host a one-day mini festival at The Jericho Tavern on Saturday 8th June. ATP, which works to increase the profile of female bands and musicians, hosts Dream Nails; Death of the Maiden; Self Help; Rainbow Reservoir; Drunken Butterfly; Jen Berkova and Meme Detroit, with more acts to be added. The day runs from 1pm til 11pm. Tickets, priced £10, are available from alltamarasperties.bandcamp.com. The ticket includes a free festival sampler album.

ALL WILL BE WELL RECORDS kick off a series of vinyl releases this month. The Oxford/Reading label releases a double A-side 7" of **Easter Island Statues** 'Laika' and 'Skeleton Quay' on the 16th May. The band play a launch set at Truck Store that day. Other acts set for release this year are: Moogiemans & the Masochists; The Pink Diamond Revue; Master of None; Ocean Ruins and Seasons in Shorthand. AWBWs Shan Sriharan said: "The traditional idea of a record label is an organisation that puts out records, real tactile things with grooves capturing the sound, contained in a nice sleeve. We wanted to get back to that and make it easier for small bands to put out limited runs." Find out more at facebook.com/pg/Allwillbewellrecords.

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.

FINALLY, a big *Nightshift* best wishes to Alex Train, singer and guitarist with Quartermelon, who is recovering after being stabbed while saving a friend from muggers in Witney in April. Here's to a swift recovery for the heroic young fella.



YOUNG KNIVES have been talking about their show at **The Wheatsheaf** at the end of May, and are hopeful their new album will be released before the end of the year.

The band's already sold-out gig on the **31st May** is their first Oxford show for six years and comes two years after their interactive 'Barbaric Experiments' installation at Modern Art Oxford, intended to provide the basis for the new record.

Young Knives are now a duo of brothers Henry and Tom Dartnall. Henry spoke to *Nightshift* about the long gap since their last album – 2013's 'Sick Octave' – their hopes for the new one and the freedom they have experienced since disassociating themselves from the music industry. "Has it really been six years? Nice. We've been burning some days: writing and procrastinating I guess, but we have been making music pretty consistently in that time.

"I'm done with expectations or deadlines and just do whatever music we feel like doing. Making music is the really fun bit; touring is great but not in large doses and there doesn't seem to be a point to doing shows unless we are releasing new music.

"Most of the record is made up of material from those Modern Art sessions; a lot of the ideas were already there but we just worked out how we could actually make a playable version."

The Wheatsheaf show at the end of the month is billed as "unhinged and experimental". How much of a shock to the system is it going to be for long-term Young Knives fans?

"If you enjoy our shows it's because you know we are not deferential to the past versions of Young Knives. But you know, we will always make a show for people to watch and enjoy. We just don't like to repeat ourselves too much. I feel that things are becoming a bit safe and I don't know why. The bottom has fallen out of the music business, there's nothing left to lose, so we might as well go wild and make something weird; we are just trying to find things that are a bit out of the ordinary."

"I think 'Sick Octave' genuinely was our best work, I know the first album also had the tunes we had written when we were free of expectation, but still there is something about doing everything yourself that makes the whole thing so much more important. And then when you add in the idea of a 'career in music' to the creative process, well that kind of fucks everything up. Freedom is the only way to make music: we definitely find that just letting go of as much of the noise around you as you can really helps. If you aren't making music that feels free what are you doing? That's what we are trying to push ourselves to do: no care about financial reward or status within an industry: both things we have quite successfully managed to disassociate ourselves from almost entirely. I think we've just got freer on this record, and we will always try and get away from any constraints that change how you make stuff. The idea of subverting the idea of popular music is kind of what keeps us going.

"The new record is taking a while but only because we want to make it right. We aren't in a massive rush to get it out but we are planning the release for this year, possibly. We will play a bunch of the new material at the show though, so you can hear it live first. The trouble is that if we put this record out with a label they will expect returns and promo stuff and it's at that point we kind of glaze over. But we still do need to eventually put some music out so that people can get hold of it; we will find a cool way to do it soon enough."

Follow Young Knives on Twitter @youngknives.



SPECIALS **ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN**
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“IF THE WORLD WAS RULED BY CAT gods humans would be forever ridiculed in embarrassing videos,” surmises *Catgod* drummer George Purnell, pondering *Nightshift*’s question about the logical extension of his band’s name “But there would also be far more mandatory chilling and lying in the sun,” adds Robin Christensen-Marriott, *Catgod*’s nominal frontman and, alongside his sister Cat (obviously) the co-singer in the band.

IF CATGOD TAKE ANY TRAITS FROM cats, it’s more the soft, silky fur, playfulness and breezy demeanor of felines rather than the teeth’n’claws sharp end, though as George notes, “Robin can be very excitable and aggressive when provoked, like a golden retriever on crack. He turns into this strange animalistic alter ego. We can only sedate him via blow dart or a bowl of pasta.” At the end of 2018 the band’s single ‘Heartbeat in My Hand’ was voted *Nightshift*’s Number 2 song

of the year, beaten only by Self Help’s barreling indie-punk anthem ‘Get On With It’. Quite an achievement for a group who just quietly get on with things, releasing a string of singles and EPs since their formation in 2016, gently drawing fans into their softly-sung world of almost folkly lullabies, somnambulating dream-pop and sweet, willowy torch songs, brought to sleepy-eyed life by the close harmonies of Robin and Cat.

THIS MONTH THE QUINTET (ROBIN, Cat and George joined by guitarist Caspar Miles – better known round these parts as drummer in Coldredlight and Pet Sematary – and keyboard player Patrick Bolton – who also plays in local reggae stars Zaia – release their second album, ‘Feel It Go Round’, their first in their current guise. Their 2017 debut, ‘Ready When You Are’, was more of a solo bedroom effort by Robin, with a rotating cast of guest singers, including Cat. The new album features the gorgeous ‘Heartbeat

In Your Hand’, which shows Cat’s voice off in all its dulcet glory, and swooning previous single ‘Blood’ among ten songs of intricately, subtly crafted choral pop. It’s music to listen to while sat on a deserted shoreline, soaking in a warm bath or reflecting on life in an afterhours wine bar. “Robin and Cat are very lucky to have the studio in the garden shed,” explains George of the record’s gently idyllic vibe; “it’s a lovely setting by a lake and really helps the creative process to evolve naturally.” “I feel our sound has a unique quality that allows it to be heard in a range of places,” adds Patrick; “I’ve listened to it while I’m having beers with friends, with headphones before I fall asleep, in the kitchen with my mum in the morning. It always seems to work.”

CATGOD’S ROOTS LIE IN A PREVIOUS *Nightshift* cover band – Balloon Ascents, who later renamed themselves Neverlnd before splitting. “Things had become tiresome by the end of Nerverlnd, sadly, due to a few different factors,” reflects Robin, who played bass in that band. “We had all taken two years to pursue the band at the end of 6th form and though we did have great fun, by the end Jonny and Otto were off to uni and it felt like it was becoming increasingly about keeping on top of the admin rather than making music together. I think we lost some of the magic that we had conjured together previously. I also felt I couldn’t put any of my songs forward to the band and be taken seriously or be supported; altogether I felt the atmosphere was suffocating towards the end.”

BY WAY OF ESCAPE FROM THE strictures of Neverlnd, Robin began writing his own songs, in a Latin style with bandmate Jonny Vickers under the name Roberto y Amigos. “Roberto y Amigos started off with Robin and Jonny playing acoustic originals with a Latin/South American vibe,” explains George; “I joined on drums after recording in Robin’s studio with my old band Homeplanetearth and hitting it off well with the guys. The band slowly built up over time, adding multiple female singers, including Cat. As members joined the sound naturally grew into bigger, more band orientated arrangements. Singers Esme and Morgan, as well as Jonny, eventually left through uni commitments, before Patrick and finally Caspar joined.”

“Jonny and I started jamming and writing music at his house after school,” adds Robin; “I have fond memories of sitting in his bedroom together playing a guitar each and making wacky and weird songs that were quite flamenco inspired at first – we loved Rodrigo y Gabriela at the time. It was one of my first times singing lead vocals live when we played our first open mic night at Sparky’s night at The Half Moon; I was terrified! “The first real fruit of the collaboration was ‘Ready When You Are’. That was the first release as Catgod; Roberto y Amigos didn’t suit us anymore as we didn’t sound so flamenco, plus my girlfriend Iman had drawn a drawing of a Cat adorned with a wing and ancient Egyptian imagery,

which inspired the name and became the album cover too.”

AS THE OTHER SINGERS DEPARTED, Cat gradually became the sole female vocalist in the band. The chemistry between her and Robin is evident and reflects the closeness of the siblings. “We had been very close when we were growing up and Catherine used to make up stories for me,” remembers Robin. “We also loved to trampoline in our garden together and make up dance routines. My parents weren’t together for the majority of my childhood and I had four half sisters. At that age Cat felt very close and dear and it was sad to drift apart when she went to uni in London; I’m glad we’ve reconnected with each other through music. Sometimes it can feel tough for us to connect on an emotional level, so music can be a really beautiful way to come together. Cat moved to Oxford, finding the London life stressful, so we went from there really and the band grew.”

Keeping it in the family, Cat’s first musical experience was playing in a band with her father. “When I was 17 I was briefly in a band with my dad; we played the same five Motown covers enthusiastically and badly. I had a bit of vocal training at drama school but hated getting up in front of the class to sing because it was such an intense environment. I remember one of my friends crying because the singing teacher ripped her vocal performance to pieces. Honestly, I’ve never been very confident with my singing; I enjoy the storytelling angle to being a singer and that’s what’s kept me wanting to get better at it.”

Partly because of the brother-sister connection, but also because of the serenity and purity of Catgod’s songs, one of *Nightshift*’s first comparisons was with The Carpenters: not a band considered cool in their lifetime but whose legacy has been belatedly heralded by myriad bands, including Sonic Youth. Cat: “We didn’t consciously know the Carpenters music but recognised their songs once we looked them up. I love all types of music and remember melodies well but always forget the band name or song title; think that’s to do with my dyslexia. Karen’s voice is sublime, though: so full of longing and edged with pain, so I was chuffed with that comparison.

“Growing up we were into bands my dad played on his record player; classic 70s artist like The Beatles, Cream, The Beach Boys, Van Morrison, and I went through a Pixies phase when I found his ‘Surfer Rosa’ album and I thought the album cover was magic. Particular songs by Lou Reed and Talking Heads were also my jam, I think I’ve played ‘Perfect Day’ and ‘Psycho Killer’ to death though; I can’t really listen to them now.

“Inspiration wise I remember being at my parents own band practices when I was a toddler; I have vague memories of sleeping in the corner and under coats at gigs in the pub, so I’ve always loved the buzz of being around people trying to create music together just for the love of it. I guess that’s where my keenness to try different songs and styles comes from; I’d hate to try and fit into a box for other people’s satisfaction.”

Was there any sibling rivalry between the pair of you growing up? Cat: “There’s quite a few years between us so we’ve never really compared ourselves. We’ve always liked making up dance routines together and entertaining ourselves, not competing for our parents’ attention or affection.” Robin: “I can be quite competitive with people

but it’s different with an older sister relationship. I think it was a very warm thing.” Another thing *Nightshift* noted in a recent review of the band was just how great Cat and Robin’s hair was, suggesting the pair could model for a shampoo ad. Any hair care tips for jealous fans? Cat: “Wash your hair if it gets smelly and sticks to your head. And try to use shampoo bars because it reduces your plastic packaging waste.”

WHILE ‘FEEL IT GO ROUND’ MAINTAINS its stately mood throughout its ten songs, live Catgod can sound wildly eclectic: jazz, funk, electro-pop, reggae, even the more pastoral side of prog get a look in, with nods to Curved Air and Eva Cassidy on occasions. Is there an ongoing desire to see what works or doesn’t? George: “As individuals we are all diverse musicians and fans of a wide variety of music. We are still actively involved in other projects of different genres, and this is naturally translates into the writing process. Robin will come to the band with the bare bones of a song, and we jam around on it until we reach a sound we all like. There isn’t often a considered discussion towards making

“Robin can be very excitable and aggressive when provoked, like a golden retriever on crack. We can only sedate him via blow dart or a bowl of pasta.”

one song a particular genre, and then going a completely different direction with another. We do like to keep the audience guessing.” Robin: “I think as time has gone on, the way we select songs and work on them has developed. In the beginning it was very much a bedroom production with lots of different people, so in a way we could choose any style, as we weren’t so much rehearsing it live. When we released the ‘Heartbeat In My Hand’ EP things started to shift towards a solid band line up and we would jam songs together as a group. Cat and I and Paddy now know what kind of song could work in a Catgod context as I write much more than we release.” Any particular missteps along the way? Cat: “I regret Robin enthusing me to play an electric drum kit live whilst singing and I regret trying to play the keys live when I’d very basic understanding of it. I remembered what to play by my hand shape and position and called chords claw shape 1,2,3,4 etc.”

Robin: “In some ways I wish we had had time to develop our sound and refine things a bit more before we had the gigs we did. Within the first few months of starting the band and rehearsing properly we were doing festivals and reasonably big shows in Oxford and we still weren’t quite clear on the sound we wanted to put across. But hey, that’s the way it was. I think back to when Cat and I were starting out and I’m like, ‘fuck, we did a lot of stuff and work to get to where we are now and I really couldn’t be bothered to do that all again!’”

LEARNING CURVES OR NOT, CATGOD’S music has pricked up the ears of some serious tastemakers along the way. 6Music’s Lauren Laverne picked ‘Someone Love’ as her headphone moment while Tom Robinson has played the band regularly; how much has that helped encourage the band that they’re doing something right? Robin: “It’s a bit like a badge that helps you get more gigs elsewhere, so in that way we have got in front of a good few people outside of town.”

Cat: “When we played an impromptu gig in the Isle of Scilly last May we printed a poster and stuck it up around the island. It had those very things on it and we ended up getting a great turn out of people who said they regularly listen to those DJs. Someone even rocked up from a boat to listen as they’d caught wind of the gig, which was very cool. The same couple also made a point of coming to our gig in Brighton late last year but I don’t think they sailed to that one.”

THE PINNACLE OF CATGOD’S songwriting of course is ‘Heartbeat in My Hand’, a simply gorgeous, barely-there willow-the-wisp of a song and the centerpiece of the new album. It duly melted even *Nightshift*’s hardened heart and captures a raw emotion that anyone who fears the loss of a loved one can relate to. Cat: “The track is special to me because the sentiment of trying to remember what good things you have in your life before something changes or goes wrong is a very relatable feeling. I had a couple of little health things at the beginning of this year and I related to the track on a slightly different level soon after that. Can I just slip in a

little reminder for women to keep up to date with their smear tests. Or, if you’ve recently had one, remind your friends it’s important; it could save their life. “I also think the first line, ‘What if mum passed away?’ has the power to take an audience off guard and grab them from the start, especially when the calm twinkling guitar that proceeds this lures you into a false sense of calm. I know that’s a random thought I’ve had and makes you feel like a tiny, vulnerable child; the rest of the song picks you back up from that and gives you a quiet sense of seizing today and telling the people around you that you love them. “We are all keen readers of *Nightshift* so we felt honoured to be in the list, let alone at Number 2.”

CATGOD LAUNCH ‘FEEL IT GO ROUND’ at The Bullingdon on Sunday 26th May with a show featuring a host of their favourite other local acts, under the title Cats Are Gods. Catgod headline and are joined by Death of The Maiden, August List, Ciphers, Lucy Leave and Despicable Zee. Paddy: “It’s the same weekend as Common People was so we’re pleased to put on some amazing local music, much like The Uncommon Stage did.” Cat: “The Oxford music scene is a vibrant place, full of lots of talented and kind, supportive musicians. We decided to put this on because we love watching these bands live and basically want to celebrate our release by watching them and by proudly fronting the event. I also think it’s important that lots of the acts are women: a much larger proportion than your average gig.”

SOUNDS PERFECT. OR SHOULD WE SAY purr-fect, since everyone loves a good cat pun, right? And since *Nightshift*, like any self-respecting cat, is innately lazy, we wonder if Catgod can give us a suitably cringe-inducing pun to go on the front page? “In Purr-suit of artistic integrity!” “Truly Fur-midable!” “Litter-ally couldn’t be better.” “Fur-real, the best band in Oxford!”

Splendid stuff. For those, and for creating such a lovely new record, Catgod should be feline very proud of themselves.

Hear Catgod at catgod.bandcamp.com

RELEASED

PEERLESS PIRATES

‘Banquet for Bandits’

(Self released)

The risk you run when your band is so closely linked to a particular schtick is to get lumbered with the ‘novelty act’ tag, which in turn shortens your shelf life, regardless of musical quality.

Named Peerless Pirates, and regularly dressing as and singing about pirates, Captain Cliff Adams and crew have always argued they’re not a pirate band, and the variety of their music bears that out to a larger degree, with trad folk, spaghetti western soundtracks, rockabilly and the odd Latin flourish lending depth to the sonic palette alongside the punked-up shanties.

The Crowdfunded follow-up to their self-titled 2016 debut, ‘Banquet for Bandits’ first and foremost shows Peerless Pirates have the songs to rise above the crashing waves of novelty, and in Adams’ spirited tenor, a voice to lead from the front, lending the likes of ‘Skeleton Lab Report’ an elegance to match their roustabout nature.

That buccaneering spirit remains in the likes of ‘Red Admiral’, all flagships and contraband, cresting on a carouselling seaworthy jig that demands to be belted out after a few flagons in a disreputable Cornish inn. ‘Chez El Capitan’ is similarly debonair, a brandy and rum-infused kid cousin to Adam & the Ants’ ‘Jolly Roger’, while the bands’ main touchstones, The Smiths and The Wedding Present, continue to shine through in the effervescent guitar twang and lusty indie vigour. A line-up change since the first album sees new guitarist Owen Whitehouse coming on board and his versatility, bringing in banjo and EBow,



brings a freshness to tracks like ‘Requiem For Old Inventors’; there are cameos for flautist Phil Freizinger (on the sprightly ‘Bonny’s Revenge’) and trumpet from Tim Vallings, while Jimmy Hetherington’s fulsome production lends the record a live energy it’s often difficult to capture, and ‘Banquet...’ fair races along, ten tracks crammed into just over half an hour, a carefree party that might not want you to think too much about the fact it’s been at the dressing-up box but equally doesn’t want you to take it too seriously. It might not be the musical equivalent of Nelson’s audacious tactics at the Battle of the Nile, but it’s proof that Peerless Pirates are a band who can’t be so easily shoved into a pigeonhole (or crow’s nest), and on the strength of the songs here, theirs is a voyage that continues to search for farther horizons.

Dale Kattack



JACK GOLDSTEIN

‘Love, The Answer To The Problem Of Human Existence’

(Beanie Tapes)

If, like me, you were totally bowled over by Fixers’ 2012 album ‘We’ll Be The Moon’, and have since been slaving for a second helping, then this fresh solo work from their singer and songwriter, Jack Goldstein, will go a long way to making you realise why you feel that way.

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LEE RILEY

‘Radiant Waves’

(Self released)

Four new pieces from Lee Riley, a well-established Oxford sound artist and noise experimenter. Oxford has a thriving sound art and improvisational/experimental music scene, but one that is often reticent in promoting itself. Riley bucks the trend by sneaking into Oxford’s rather less out-there ‘regular’ music scene, a prime exponent of guitar manipulation and noise/drone handling.

On earlier works – as evidenced by a surprisingly overflowing back catalogue of releases – Riley’s sound has often occupied dark, dense and cloying soundworlds. ‘Radiant Waves’ doesn’t break away from this for the most part, although it feels a little more delicate, considered and less tethered to noise for its own sake, perhaps; the works here were each recorded in one take, with heavily-treated guitar sounds fed through three amplifiers. Riley describes the mastering work of Mike Bannard as a key part of these four pieces, and that can be heard in the careful textures at play, and subtle edits that add depth and weight to the work.

None of the four tracks exceed ten minutes in length, and most sit at around seven. This makes for an enjoyably succinct listen, steering away from a painful self-indulgence that can often damage this kind of drone experimentalism. ‘Futures End’ is a deeply resonant exploration of multi-layered tones; ‘Mirrored World’ a more sparse, sinister set of almost choral, shifting notes; ‘Divided Time’ is a counterpart to the first track, and almost sounds like a slyly pitch-shifted version of it; finally, the title track is the one which exposes the guitar as the source of all this sound most clearly (although not *that* clearly, you understand).

‘Radiant Waves’ is a pleasing, compact listen. It may not be an obvious huge shift in either direction or approach from Riley’s earlier work, but it’s a collection that suggests increasingly deep research into the soundworlds that can be created using a guitar, some effects pedals, and some careful post-processing.

Simon Minter



FUTUREPROOF

‘Senseless Everything’

(Blindsight)

Everything Umair Chaudhry produces is quality. Everything he produces is dark, loud and unpleasant. After making his name in titanic local post-metallers Xmas Lights, he’s made uncompromising noise under the names Gift of Blindness and Abandon among others. Latest project Futureproof sees him team up with

former Guilt Police and Drove drummer Stephen Frame, so it’s no surprise to learn things haven’t lightened up any.

There is a move away from doom and industrial noise towards a rockier riff-based sound though, the pair throwing themselves fully into a pit of early crust punk (notably Discharge) and extreme metal pioneers like Voivod, four-to-the-floor beats and scuzzy, hacked-out guitars providing the malevolently brittle base for Umair’s vocals, a suitably ugly mix of bellow and rasp. EP opener and title track ‘Senseless Everything’ sets a suitably apocalyptic scene: raw, ragged and feral punk/metal scree and scuzz. ‘Light Bearing Gun’ is vintage velocity anarcho-punk while the EP’s highlight (or darkest corner, depending which way you look at things), ‘Blight’, sounds like Killing Joke’s ‘Requiem’ taken behind the bins for a kicking by GBH and Godflesh, riffs left like twisted strands and shards of metal amid decaying debris.

Eleven-minute epic ‘Demons to Sum’ is a lurching, slow-motion chug and grind of downtuned riffage and brutish deathcore snarl that sounds like the soundtrack to post-apocalyptic wreckage and possibly guttural arguments over who gets to eat the last rat on the fire.

Dale Kattack

having extended itself, notably on ‘Iona’, leaving the song lying like a badly cracked old vase on the floor.

‘Shipton Disaster’ carries a serious message of how the rich railroad (literally and metaphorically) the poor, but compared to The Pogues’ ‘Navigator’, or even Telling the Bees’ ‘Otmoor Forever’, it’s an insipid slog rather than a rousing call to arms. Similarly ‘Little Matty Groves’ is somehow simultaneously hurried and laborious, devoid of feeling or drama.

Throughout the album Christine Ellis gamely tries to lead the line and drag a sense of authenticity into proceedings with some fine sweeping or plucked fiddle, and at her best she succeeds but even she seems to give up at points along the way. ‘Sun & Moon’ lifts things a few notches, but even here you wish they could be gutsier and earthier, and ‘Greek Song’ finds the band, instrumentally at least, finding a bit of a groove, but vocally there’s precious little conviction and ultimately ‘Since Ancient Times’ is a staid facsimile of what great traditional folk music can be.

Ian Chesterton

BRICKWORK

LIZARDS

‘Live at St. Giles’

(Self released)

The follow-up to last year’s well-received ‘Haneen’ album, ‘Live at St. Giles’ is an EP of four new tracks by Brickwork Lizards recorded at their gig as part of the Jazz at St. Giles season last year. Equally melancholy and celebratory, the band span the musical bridge between pre-war gin joint jazz and traditional Arabic and Turkish folk music, here at least eschewing their occasional hip hop forays, doubtless to suit the jazz audience, but it takes nothing away from their effortless fusion, from the opening

MOTHER

‘School Days’

(Self released)

More stadium-sized post-grunge from Mother, Josh Alden’s band joined for this new single by Pet Semetary’s Gaby Elise Monaghan on backing vocals, for a slice of elegant, uptight angst that finds Alden’s voice switching between Tom Yorke croon and Elvis sneer as he sings lines like “Minimum wage keeps me up at night” and “School days are over / I think I’ll stay unemployed,” in true aspiring rock star fashion, the guitars barrelling down The Strokes’ freeway in tandem with Velvet Underground-style organ hum. It’s big and bold and a bit brash but brush away that dusting of bluster and it’s a melodically potent piece from another local band who, alongside Kanadia and Easter Island Statues, are keeping guitar music interesting.

Ian Chesterton

BASIC DICKS

‘Dick Tape’

(Everything Sucks)

When the word punk has been reshaped, resized and polished to a point where it scarcely resembles its original form outside of the true DIY underground, a band like Basic Dicks are a refreshingly scouring experience, a reminder that while it might be preaching to the choir in its own tiny dive-bar churches, it still has teeth and claws and an admirable disregard for musical niceties. There are some great song titles on this new EP for starters: ‘Gone off Steak’; ‘White Cock’; ‘I Am Man, Hear Me Bore’ and, best of the lot, ‘Giant Potato’, each delivered in frenzied fashion, on the brink of chaos, the message sometimes lost in the two-way vocal attack courtesy of sisters Loz and Taz Corona, but always righteous: sexist pigs come off particularly badly. The good guys, meanwhile, come armed with a guitar that sound like an out of control chainsaw, unsure where its own off switch might be, and battling-tops vocals that hector and squabble, each crawling over the other to get the message across. It’s a blunderbuss approach that has barely changed since Fatal Microbes, Poison Girls and Flux of Pink Indians were slashing chunks out of the system back in the late 70s, but the dizzying clamour and route-one sense of purpose make it an exhilarating ride, and one that’s over so quickly you have time to do it all again, at double the volume, and still be down in time for your (vegan) dinner.

Dale Kattack



GIG GUIDE

WEDNESDAY 1st
DIANE CLUCK + LAUGHING LAMB + FAITH ELIOT: Fusion Arts – Oxford debut for the New York antifolk cult star – *see main preview*
MAYDAY AFTER PARTY: The Bullingdon (6am)

THURSDAY 2nd
ALIENS + MOOD LIGHTING + MEANS OF PRODUCTION + FLINTLOCK RIFLES + WHALE: O2 Academy – Funk, soul and jazz-infused rocking from the band formed by Del Amitri’s Iain Harvie and writer and film-maker Tim May, launching their new album ‘Terradome’ at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show. Local synth duo MoP are among the support.

Wednesday 1st
DIANE CLUCK / LAUGHING LAMB / FAITH ELIOTT: Fusion Arts
A debut Oxford show for the influential antifolk singer, courtesy of Divine Schism. Diane Cluck was born in Pennsylvania and currently resides in Virginia, having lived in California for a while but it was on New York’s Lower East Side that she made her name, back in the early Noughties when she regularly played alongside the likes of Kimya Dawson, Jeffrey Lewis and Regina Spektor at the Sidewalk Cafe. Here is where she caught the attention of Important Records who released all her early solo albums. Renowned for her airy but haunting vocal style and idiosyncratic but intimate and emotive lyrics, Cluck has been cited as a major influence by stars of the calibre of Laura Marling, Florence Welch and Sharon Van Etten. Her songs are stripped back, played usually on acoustic guitar or piano, though she’s played with a band behind her previously and has collaborated with CocoRosie and Herman Dune along the way. Tonight’s appearance comes as she prepares to follow up 2014’s ‘Boneset’, her seventh album, and will be preceded in the afternoon by a singing workshop at the venue. Support comes from Lucy Leave drummer and singer Pete Smith’s American primitive solo project Laughing Lamb, and Edinburgh-via-Minneapolis singer-songwriter Faith Elliott.



MAY

SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – Israeli pianist Eyal Lovett comes to Oxford’s long-running jazz club, combining the classical-sensitive piano trio style of Bill Evans and Brad Mehldua, with traditional Israeli folk music.
TIN MEN & THE TELEPHONE: Ovada – Returning to Oxford as guests of OCM after last year’s four-day residency, Amsterdam-based pianist Tony Roe and his band present an interactive, multi-media show that takes in jazz, hip hop, modern classical, improv, tape loops and more for a concert that’s part gig, part game show, part gadgetry-based mischief.
MATT WOODS: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock – Southern roots, Americana and rock’n’roll in the vein of Jason Isbell, Steve Earle and Townes Van Zandt from the Tennessee troubadour.
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre – Oxford’s longest running open club night continues to showcase local singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists every Thursday.
SPARKY’S NEW MOON: The Half Moon – Sparky hosts his open mic session on the first and third Thursday of every month.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: Cirkus
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford – Open blues jam.

FRIDAY 3rd
ROBBO RANX: O2 Academy – Reggae and dancehall night with veteran London DJ Ranx, whose career has taken him from pirate station Skyline, through a twelve year stint at 1Xtra to his own Robbo Ranx Radio station, working with General Levy, Sweet Irie and Sizzla along the way.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with THE SHAPES + GRUDGEWOOD + FULL CIRCLE BLUE + MATT SEWELL: The Wheatsheaf – Party-hearty 60s r’n’b, new wave, folk and punk from local nostalgists The Shapes at this month’s Klub Kak party, plus metal from Grudgewood, bluesy reggae from Full Circle Blue and acoustic psychedelia from Matt Sewell.
PYT: The Bullingdon – Disco, funk and soul club night.

SATURDAY 4th
DAY OF THE DEADBEATS: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock – Local country soul stars Deadbeat Apostles host their annual roots festival – *see main preview*
THE WEDDING PRESENT: O2 Academy – David Gedge’s enduring indie heroes celebrate the 30th anniversary of second album ‘Bizarro’, so expect Weddoes classics ‘Brassneck’, ‘Kennedy’ and ‘What Have I Said Now?’ as well as other faves from across the years.
METAL 2 THE MASSES: The Wheatsheaf –

First semi final of the metal and rock battle of the bands to in a slot at this summer’s Bloodstock, tonight with Hymn To Apollo, Crimson Tusk and The Hope Burden.
BASIC: The Bullingdon – House and techno club night with DJ and Friends label honcho and former Radio 1 selector Monki, plus Ben Holt and James Weston.
THE UNASKED QUESTION: Fusion Arts – Two sets of improvised experimental music, with Pat Thomas, Mark Browne and Martin Hackett fusing electronics, sax and percussion, while Dan Goren, Spinecakes and Késia Décote mix up trumpet, electronic drones and loops and piano.
SMOOVE & TURRELL: Old Fire Station – North-East duo Smoove & Turrell bring their “northern funk” to tonight’s Glovebox show, mixing up northern soul, jazz and hip hop, the band originally championed by Craig Charles.
SPARKY’S SPONTANEOUS SHOWCASE & SPOTLIGHT JAM: The Half Moon – Three live band sets and open jam session, hosted by Sparky.
SCRATCH CRACKLE & POP DJs: Harcourt Arms
IN IT FOR THE MONEY: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Pop and rock covers, 60s-90s.
STEAMROLLER: Brewey Tap, Abingdon – Heavy-duty r’n’b in the vein of Hendrix and Cream from the local stalwarts.

SUNDAY 5th
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms – Weekly open mic night.
FRANKLIN’S TOWER + GLENDALE TRAIN + MATT SEWELL + RIVERSIDE VOICES: Donnington Community Centre (6pm) – Free evening of acoustic live music, including Grateful Dead tribute Franklin’s Tower.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Tree, Iffley (4-6.30pm) – Free afternoon session with the local blues, funk, rock, psych and ska veterans.
JAM SESSION: Red Lion, Kidlington (5.30-8.30pm)

MONDAY 6th
NEKRA + TERRA SOROR + MISERY GUTS: The Library (6.30-8.30pm) – Venomous, livewire hardcore punk from London’s Nekra at tonight’s Smash Disco early show, the band made up of members of Frau, Sarcasm, Self Defence Family and Pesadilla. Post-punk noise from neighbours Misery Guts.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Castle – Weekly open mic night.

TUESDAY 7th
C DUNCAN: The Bullingdon – Gentle gentleman Chris brings the gentle – *see main preview*

WEDNESDAY 8th
THE MURDER CAPITAL: The Jericho Tavern – Post-punk sonic violence from Dublin’s rising roughnecks – *see main preview*

THE BETHS + HANS PUCKET + JUNK WHALE: The Bullingdon – Acerbic fuzz’n’jangle from the New Zealand indie crew, touring their debut album – *see main preview*

THURSDAY 9th
SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – Saxophonist Kelvin Christiane comes to the long-running jazz night.
THE FRANK BURKITT BAND: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock – Bluesy, soulful country and American roots from the New Zealand-based Scottish singer.
DIPPER MALKIN: Turl Street Kitchen – Refined, classical-infused traditional folk from viola/guitar/voice duo Dipper Malkin, stars of last year’s Oxford Folk Weekend.
THE ACCIDENTALS + JESSICA MEUSE: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Orchestral indie-folk, country and bluegrass from Michigan trio The Accidentals at tonight’s Empty Room show, the band touring their recent live album having previously shared stages with acts as diverse as Brandi Carlile, Joan Baez and Kelle Williams. They’re joined by country singer, guitarist and violinist Jessica Meuse, whose talents have seen her on *American*

Saturday 4th
DAY OF THE DEADBEATS: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock
A gentle but high-quality introduction to festival season as local country-soul stars **The Deadbeat Apostles** host their second annual all-day on the banks of the Thames at the historic Isis Farmhouse. While there’s no set stylistic theme the music tends towards the rootsier end of the spectrum for the most part, with the hosts’ energetic mix of Grand Ole’ Oprey and Harlem Apollo as good a climax to a day of music as you could hope for, the band led by two great vocal talents in Mike Ginger and Michelle Mayes. They’re joined across the day by local alt.country and folk-rock heroes **The Epstein**, back in action after a bit of a hiatus; haunting and powerful folk-drone stars **The August List**; rock’n’roll and rockabilly maestros **The Long Insiders**, channelling the spirits of Jerry Lee Lewis, Roy Orbison and Jody Reynolds through The Cramps’ gothic mud slick; expansive bluegrass and folk ensemble **The Knights of Mentis**; blues rockers **The Ragged Charms**; atmospheric, spaced-out gloom rockers **Flights of Helios**, coming in where Radiohead meets Neu!; Delta and Chicago blues duo **Beard of Destiny**, and veteran local guitarist Johnny Hinkes’ traditional country crew **The Prairie Clams**. As well as the music, beer and all that necessary stuff, there’ll be kid-friendly activities and sideshows. Summer’s here folks, here’s the entry gate.



Idol and the Vans Warped tour.
ICONS – DIVAS OF POP: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Celebration of female vocalists, with tributes to Whitney Houston, Celine Dion, Tina Turner, Dusty Springfield and Carole King among others.
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford

FRIDAY 10th
STONE FOUNDATION: The Bullingdon – Soul, jazz and funk from the Midlands outfit, touring their new album, ‘Everybody, Anyone’, the follow up to their Paul Weller-produced ‘Street Ritual’.
FIRST RESERVES + THE RELATIONSHIPS + CUBAN DUKES: The Wheatsheaf – A first gig in almost two years for local scene godfather The Relationships at tonight’s It’s All About the Music, the band, led by Bard of Cowley Road Richard Ramage, bringing a quintessentially English sense of suburban melancholy to Byrds and Go-Betweens-inspired indie.
BREAK STUFF: The Bullingdon – Nu-metal retro club night.
ABINGDON JAZZ FESTIVAL: Long Gallery, Abingdon Abbey – Opening night of the annual three-day jazz fest, featuring sets from Art Theman, Gilad Atzman & the Orient House Ensemble; Thixotropy; The Fleur Stevenson Trio; The Alvin Roy Quartet; Funk Bake and Heavy Dexters among others over the course of the weekend.
WHOLE LOTTA DC: Fat Lil’s, Witney – AC/DC tribute.

SATURDAY 11th
BLAENAVON: O2 Academy – Brighton’s indie garage rockers return to town again, out on a headline tour after last year’s appearance at Truck Festival and previously going out as support to Bloc Party, The Sherlocks and Sundara Karma. A new album is preceded by recent single ‘Catatonic Skinbag’.
OXFORD SOUL TRAIN: O2 Academy – Classic soul, funk and disco club night.
METAL TO THE MASSES: The Wheatsheaf – Second semi-final of the heavyweight BOTB with King Bolete, Keyed Up, Bloodshot and more.

SIMPLE ft. HELENA HAUFF: The Bullingdon – Dirty acid, Chicago house, electro and more from Hamburg’s acclaimed Helena Hauff at tonight’s Simple, the DJ and producer host of her own Birds & Other Instruments night in her native city, keeping the spirit of early techno primitivism alive on her album ‘Qualm’.
DOLLY MAVIES: Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre – Local singer-songwriter Dolly launches her new EP, featuring recent singles ‘My Buoy’, ‘Drown Me Out’ and *Nightshift* Top 10 track ‘Distance’, her hushed, romantic and ethereal semi-acoustic pop drawing inspiration from the likes of Daughter, Sade and Tanya Donnelly.
KRISTOFER + ZEUS: Harcourt Arms – Unplugged night at The Harcourt.
BOTLEY CRUE: Tap Social, Botley – Indie, new wave and Britpop covers from the local crew.
THE PETE FRYER BAND: Cricketers, Cowley – Rock and blues covers from the veteran local singer/guitarist.
ABINGDON JAZZ FESTIVAL: Long Gallery, Abingdon Abbey
MUGENKYO TAIKO DRUMS: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Europe’s longest running Taiko tribe bring a theatrical feast of Japanese rhythm to Didcot.



Tuesday 7th
C DUNCAN: The Bullingdon
As far removed from the black painted walls and sticky-floored spirit of rock and roll mayhem as it’s possible to be without actually be a nun, you can imagine Christopher Duncan’s music being played in church. There’s an almost hymnal quality about his warm, somnambulating dream pop and his complex choral arrangements only add to the spiritual feel of his records: 2015’s Mercury-nominated debut ‘Architect’ and 2017’s follow-up ‘Midnight Sun’ as well as new album ‘H.E.A.L.T.H’ (produced by Elbow’s Craig Potter). Unsurprising coming from a classically-trained multi-instrumentalist who plays everything on his albums and even designs the sleeve artwork. Perhaps this is what gives Duncan’s music its gentle, insularity, like nothing in the real world imposed upon its making. He’s been described as electro-pop, folk-pop and neo-classical, but none of those really fit with a sound that owes as much to Bach and Burt Bacharach as it does to Fleet Foxes, Air and The Cocteau Twins. It’s hauntingly pretty and intricately arranged and best enjoyed with your eyes shut, imagining pristine glacial landscapes, idyllic meadows or floating among the stars with God and stuff. Without a doubt this month’s gig least likely to provoke a moshpit.

A-WATTS: White Hart, Eynsham – Classic 50s rock’n’roll.

SUNDAY 12th
JACK GOLDSTEIN + MAX BLANSJAAR + DESPICABLE ZEE: Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre – Former Fixers frontman Jack Goldstein returns to Oxford to launch his fifth album, ‘Love: The Answer to The Problem of Human Existence’ on Beanie Tapes, the famously unpredictable singer and composer happy to mix and match glam, grunge, country, lo-fi pop and the gnarlier side of electronic music, while taking inspiration from the forgotten corners of uncool – from Todd Rundgren to Suzie Quatro. Always a treat. He’s joined by local lo-fi fuzzpop *wunderkind* Max Blansjaar whose effervescent, intimate songs touch base with Beck, Graham Coxon and Courtney Barnett. Eastern-infused electronic adventuring from Zahra Tehrani’s Despicable Zee project to open the show.
MAMMOTH PENGUINS + BIRDS OF HELL + APHRA: Fusion Arts – Buoyant indie fuzz from Cambridge’s Mammoth Penguins at tonight’s Divine Schism show, the trio back in town after supporting Chorusgirl here in November and now touring their album ‘Hide & Seek’. Atmospheric electro-pop and shoegaze from Norwich’s Birds of Hell, plus new young



Wednesday 8th

THE MURDER CAPITAL:

The Jericho Tavern

They’ve only released one single so far but The Murder Capital are already picking up a dizzying array of rave reviews and predictions of glory. Fully justified from what little is available to hear online (not much) and the Dublin quintet’s artfully brutish live shows. They look like an 80s football firm, or a bunch of suited and booted gangland enforcers and their stage presence is one of restrained mayhem. Their roots in Ireland’s capital have drawn comparisons to Fontaines DC, and they’re not unjustified, both bands sharing a tightly wound obstinacy and propensity for musical mayhem about them. Both bands have shared stages while elsewhere along their way The Murder Capital have supported Idles, Shame and Slaves, with whom they share musical DNA. Throw in some brooding Joy Division post-punk propulsion, a bit of Bad Seeds sleaze and a dash of Pixies sharpness and a picture emerges of a band capable of sonic violence but also poetry and a lithe, melodic approach to punk and its trailing tentacles. Debut single ‘Feeling Fades’ was produced by Flood, who’s previously worked with Nick Cave, and he brings the power of the band’s live sound, but it’s up close and personal you need to see and hear The Murder Capital. They’re here to slay.

acoustic singer/songwriter Aphra.

NO HORSES + TONY BATEY & SAL MOORE + MARK BOSLEY & PETE LOCK: The Wheatsheaf (3.30-7pm) – Klub Kakofanny host an afternoon of unplugged live music in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar.
ABINGDON JAZZ FESTIVAL: Long Gallery, Abingdon Abbey
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms
A-WATTS: The Black Swan

MONDAY 13th

RALPH BEEBY & THE ELEPHANT COLLECTIVE: The Bullingdon – Fingerpicked acoustic folk-blues in the vein of Davy Graham, John Fahey and Nick Cave from singer and guitarist Beeby, playing in the Bully’s front bar.
FAIRPORT CONVENTION: Nettlebed Folk Club – The Godfathers of English folk-rock return to the intimate setting of Nettlebed’s historic folk club as they build up to this year’s Cropredy Festival.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Castle

TUESDAY 14th

J MASCIS: O2 Academy – Rearranged from January, the Dinosaur Jr frontman and grunge icon brings his latest album, ‘Elastic Days’, to town, a rumination on time and the passing of the years, where he appears at his most plaintive and vulnerable, aided along the way by Mark Mulcahy and Black Heart Procession’s Pall Jennings. Having cropped up in assorted Greatest Guitarists lists over the years, Mascis is probably a full-on rock treasure now (and having turned down invitations to join Nirvana twice, he played with the surviving members at their Rock’n’Roll Hall of Fame induction back in 2014) and live he still finds room for a few Dinosaur classics, including the sublime ‘Little Fury Things’, as well as covers of songs by The Cure and Mazzy Star. A living legend and no mistake.
LUCY SPRAGGAN: O2 Academy – Whimsical hip hop-infused acoustic pop from the former *X-Factor* contestant, best known for her song ‘Tea & Toast’, back in town as part of a tour to promote her fifth album, ‘Today Was a Good Day’.
SAY SUE ME + SCHADE + RAINBOW RESERVOIR: Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre – Classically cute indie jangle, surf pop and shoegaze shimmer in the vein of Camera Obscura, Alvveys and Allo Darlin from South Korea’s Say Sue Me at tonight’s Divine Schism show. Effervescent pop-punk from Rainbow Reservoir in support.

WEDNESDAY 15th

SOAK + PILLOW QUEENS: O2 Academy – Life, love and the LGBT struggle from the Derry star – *see main preview*
GRAINNE DUFFY: The Bullingdon – Slick blues and soul from the County Monaghan singer back in the Shire having played at last year’s Cornbury Festival, her debut album, ‘Out Of The Dark’, recorded with members of Sharon Shannon and Van Morrison’s bands, her husky blues voice drawing comparisons to Bonnie Raitt. In her native Ireland she’s supported everyone from Little Feat to Ocean Colour Scene and she comes to town to promote her most recent album ‘Where I Belong’.
MSRY + LAST HOUNDS + CENTURIES: The Wheatsheaf – Oxford metalcore tyrants Msry return to their spiritual home, tearing it up in the high-octane style of Cancer Bats, Architects and Monuments, physical damage likely as the band launch an all-out musical assault.
FARA: The North Wall – Traditional and contemporary Highland and Island songs, piano ballads and fiddle tunes from the Orcadian quartet, back in the Shire after their show at Nettlebed last year, and out on tour to promote second album, ‘Times From Times Fall’.

THURSDAY 16th

TEN TONNES: The Bullingdon – Melodic rock inspired by Tom Petty from Ten Tonnes, aka Ethan Barnett, brother of George Ezra, who he recently supported on tour, as well as Ratboy and Tom Grennan, out on a headline tour to promote his eponymous debut album, produced by The Maccabees’ Hugo White and Dan Grech, who has worked with Wolf Alice, The Killers and Liam Gallagher.
SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – Jazz guitar virtuoso Maciek Pysz comes to The Spin.
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre
SPARKY’S NEW MOON: The Half Moon

BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford
THE TIGER LILLIES: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Brechtian punk cabaret from the veteran madcap combo, where pre-war Berlin meets The Roxy via Monty Python.

FRIDAY 17th

WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden – Back for its twelfth year, the award-winning eco festival hosts headliners Tunng, Martin Harley and Belshazzar’s Feast over a weekend of folk and roots music – *see main preview*
DRAHLA: The Bullingdon – Sonic Youth and Husker Du-inspired noise-pop from the Yorkshire fuzzguns – *see main preview*
QE2: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribute to Queen.

SATURDAY 18th

WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden
SAMANTHA FISH: O2 Academy – Blues and roots rocking from Kansas guitarist and singer Samantha Fish, back in Oxford for the first time since her appearance on the 2012 Blues Caravan Tour. Since then she’s become one of the leading lights of the live blues scene, winning numerous awards, including a sweep of gongs at last year’s Best of the Beat Awards: Best Artist; Best Blues Act; Best Guitarist and Best female Vocalist.

Wednesday 8th

THE BETHS / HANS PUCKET / JUNK WHALE:

The Bullingdon

Divine Schism are on a riole at the moment with a constant stream of great local shows this year from Gwenifer Raymond, Big Joanie, Kristin Hersh, Damo Suzuki and Rattle among others. Tonight sees an Oxford debut from New Zealand’s Beths, over in Europe to promote their recent debut album ‘Future Hates Me’. The quartet, led by singer, guitarist and chief songwriter Elizabeth Stokes and school chum Jonathan Pearce, formed at the University of Auckland, where all four of them were studying jazz, but they bonded over a love for the indie sounds of their youth: Phil Spector-produced 60s pop, 80s jangle and sweetness and spiky post-grunge guitar pop. So their jangle’n’fuzz comes with serrated edges, acerbic, self-deprecating lyrics, a hefty chunk of angst and humour, a hook-heavy hurry and flurry mix of Best Coast, Sleater Kinney, Alvveys, The Breeders and Jenny Lewis. A treat for old school indie kids and new school DIY pop lovers. They’re joined tonight by fellow Kiwis Hans Pucket, playing a 60s-styled slacker rock, and local indie supergroup Junk Whale, made up of members of Daisy, Worry and Basic Dicks, with a bolshy bubblegum pop attack in the vein of The Wonder Years.



VIOLENCE IS GOLDEN + DAMAGED REICH: The Wheatsheaf – Metal night.
MUSICAL MEDICINE with HORSE MEAT DISCO: The Bullingdon – Top drawer disco from Vauxhall’s renowned Horse Meat Disco crew tonight, longstanding HMD residents James Hillard, Jim Stanton, Filthy Luka and Severino, bring their forward-thinking party vibe to Musical Medicine, having enjoyed forays to NYC and Berlin in recent times.

CHARLIE DORE & JULIAN LITTMAN: Quaker Meeting House – Folk and country from the veteran singer and actress who enjoyed her sole hit, ‘Pilot Of The Airwaves’, back in 1979. Since then she’s written songs for Celine Dion, George Harrison and Sheena Easton as well as co-presenting *Rainbow* in the 70s. Out on tour with long-time collaborator Julian Littman, she’ll be playing tracks from her recent ‘Dark Matter’ album, as well as that old hit, possibly.
BEN HOLDER QUARTET: St. Giles Church – Gypsy jazz in the style of Paganini and Stefan Grappelli from violinist Ben Holder, opening the latest Jazz at St. Giles season.
DAMN GOOD REASON: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Heavy rock covers.
A-WATTS: Wantage Town Football Club (3.15pm)

SUNDAY 19th

GAZ COOMBES + SUZY BOWTELL: Sheldonian Theatre – Local legend Gaz plays a special orchestral show in aid of Yellow Submarine and The Young Women’s Music Project as part of the 350th anniversary celebrations for the historic Christopher Wren-designed concert hall, Gaz following in the footsteps of Stornoway in being one of very few non-classical acts to play here, tonight performing songs from across his 25-year career, from Supergrass to last year’s Mercury-nominated ‘World’s Strongest Man’.
WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden
DAISY + THE TRAVIS WALTONS + PET SEMATARY + FANCY DRESS: The Library – Single launch show from the local emo starlets, keeping it sharp and spiky, yet soft and fluffy in the vein of Jimmy Eatworld, Dive Dive and Los Campesinos! – *see Introduction feature*
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms
JAZZ: The Abingdon Arms, Beckley (6.15 - 8.30pm) – Free live jazz with Adam Waldmann (saxophones), Frank Harrison (keyboards) and Mark Hodgson (bass).

MONDAY 20th

RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC: The New Theatre – Big stage tribute.
COIG: Nettlebed Folk Club – Canadian-Celtic folk from the multi-award-winning Cape Breton roots ensemble.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Castle

TUESDAY 21st

WASTELL-MARINO: Old Fire Station – Experimental music on bowed cymbals, gongs, tam tam and electronics from duo Mark Wastell and Luigi Marino at tonight’s Oxford Improvisers show.

WEDNESDAY 22nd

SONS OF THE EAST: O2 Academy – Blues, roots, bluegrass and an Aussie take on traditional folk from Sydney’s rising stars, back over in Europe, promoting new single ‘Silver Lining’.

RHR – REDFERN, HUTCHINSON & ROSS: The Bullingdon – Southern fried rock, Americana and blues from guitarists Troy Redfern, Jack Hutchinson and Mike Ross, rooted in the jam band scene and drawing inspiration from Lynyrd Skynyrd, The Allman Brothers and The Grateful Dead among others.
ALYN SHIPTON’S NEW ORLEANS FRIENDS: St. John the Evangelist – Traditional NO-style jazz from Shipton and band.

THURSDAY 23rd

CROCODILES: The Jericho Tavern – Smoke-shrouded psychedelia, garage rock, indie and 60s beat pop from San Diego’s longstanding indie stalwarts, taking inspiration from The Jesus & Mary Chain, Echo & the Bunnymen and Sonic Youth across seven albums of lo-fi noise, collaborating with Cat Power, The Raveonettes, A Place to Bury Strangers and TV Personalities along the way.
THE GREATEST HITS OF MOTOWN: The New Theatre – return of the big stage tribute to the legendary label, with the hits of The Temptations, Stevie Wonder, The Four Tops, Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye, The Jackson Five, The Isley Brothers, Edwin Starr and more.
SHAVEN PRIMATES + MASTER OF NONE + DANDELION: The Bullingdon – EP launch for proggy local electro-rockers Shaven Primates, plus dark, gothic electro in the vein of Mark Lanegan and The Horrors from Master of None.
SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – Polar Bear saxophonist Mark Lockheart is the guest at tonight’s Spin show.
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford

FRIDAY 24th

BLOODSTOCK – METAL TO THE MASSES FINAL: The Wheatsheaf – One local rock or metal band will find out if they’re playing at Bloodstock this summer.
AUTUMN SAINTS + THE HOLY FOOLS + EMMA HUNTER: The Port Mahon – Atmospheric Americana from Autumn Saints at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show.
BULLY JIVE: The Bullingdon – Club night with Afriqoi and Moving Still.

SATURDAY 25th

INNER PEACE RECORDS: O2 Academy – The local hip hop label / collective play their biggest hometown headline show to date, the expansive group of rappers, singers and producers delivering a loose but tightly wound freestyle set of conscious hip hop with a rich soulful edge – courtesy of singer Tiece – joining renowned rhymers and beatmakers Rawz, Tang the Pilgrim, Elliot Fresh, Terao, Palmer Eldritch and King Khan Shamanic, among others. They’ll be playing tracks from last year’s ‘The Forge’ album and more and having stolen the show on the Uncommon Stage at Common people last year, will once again be on a mission to prove themselves one of Oxford’s most creative forces.
I LOVE REGGAETON: O2 Academy – London’s biggest reggaeton party night goes on tour, bringing the Puerto Rican melange of hip hop and Latin American and Caribbean dance to town.
RAWDIO: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass and jungle club night, tonight with Randall on the Riggamortiz soundsystem.



Wednesday 15th

SOAK / PILLOW

QUEENS: O2 Academy

Aged just 13 Soak, aka Bridie Monds-Watson, started recording songs in her bedroom and posting them online; by 16 she was fighting off record labels and publishing companies, while studying at musical college. She ended up quitting the course so she could support Tegan & Sara on tour; she subsequently signed to Rough Trade and found herself in the 2015 BBC Sound Of long list. Still just 22 she releases her second album this month; ‘Grim Town’ is the follow up to her Top 40 debut ‘Before We Forgot to Dream’, produced by Villagers’ Tom McLaughlin, and expands on her mellifluous indie-folk tales of growing up, family, friendship and identity. Identity is important to the highly vocal LGBT champion who from a young age spoke out against the bigotry of her country’s laws on sexuality and has become a figurehead for the equality movement in Northern Ireland. The new record is just gorgeous: from the woozily romantic ‘Everybody Loves You’ to the buoyant and dreamy ‘Knock Me off My Feet’, Soak is ethereal and emotive with just the right amount of bedroom ramshackle about her, her voice and songs recalling the likes of Laura Marling, Emmy the Great and Camera Obscura, capable of delivering gravelly summer cheer and autumnal melancholy with equal power. Support comes from fellow Irish crew Pillow Queens, mixing up folky pop melodies with Weezer-ish slacker rock on recent single ‘Gay Girls’.

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with BORN IDEAL + PIQUED JACKS + THE FACTORY LIGHTS: The Wheatsheaf – The monthly music club night celebrates its 17th birthday, continuing to showcase a mixed bag of sounds each time round. Tonight’s sets come from Faringdon’s epic indie rockers Born Ideal; Florence’s Piqued Jacks, influenced by The Killers, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Biffy Clyro, and locals The Factory Lights, mixing politics, melancholy, romance and nostalgia into their emotive folk-pop.
BLUEHOUSE + THE COOLING PEARLS + MAX BLANSJAAR + ME LOST ME: Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre – Divine Schism bring Melbourne’s acoustic folk-pop duo Bluehouse to town, the pair inspired by Joan Armatrading among others. They’re joined by local gothic folk romantics The Cooling Pearls and lo-fi scuzz-pop starlet Max Blansjaar.
CURT AHNLUND + THE CHRIS REEVES BAND: Harcourt Arms – Electric blues from the singer and guitarist.
ETHAN JOHNS & THE BLACK-EYED

DOGS + NIALL KELLY: Old Fire Station – Glovebox host the BRIT Award-winning producer, who’s worked with The Vaccines, Laura Marling, Kaiser Chiefs, Tom Jones and Kings of Leon among others, as well as playing with Ryan Adams and Rufus Wainwright. He’s back in town after his show at The Bullingdon in October last year, promoting new album ‘Anamnesis’, bringing an intimate campfire vibe to his American folk music.
OSPREY & CO + BEARD OF DESTINY + DELTA HARDWARE: The Port Mahon – Funky blues from Osprey plus Delta blues from BoD at tonight’s It’s All About the Music gig.
A-WATTS: Red Lion, Old Marston

SUNDAY 26th
CATS ARE GODS: The Bullingdon (4pm) – This month’s *Nightshift* cover stars host and headline an afternoon and evening of their favourite fellow local acts, with sets from *Nightshift* favourites The August List; Lucy Leave; Death of the Maiden; Ciphers and Despicable Zee – *see main interview feature*

Friday 17th – Sunday 19th
WOOD: Braziers Park
Started in 2008 by brothers Robin and Joe Bennett as a response to the floods of 2007 that devastated Truck Festival as well as much of the rest of Oxfordshire, WOOD has not only established itself in the local calendar since but become as much of a pioneer on the festival scene as Truck was. Last year it won the Greener Festival Award at the UK Festival Awards and has been nominated in a swathe of categories at this year’s International Green Festival Awards.
The twelfth anniversary finds WOOD continuing to do what it’s always done so well: host three days of music that falls loosely into the folk/Americana/world/roots fold across various stages and tents powered by renewable energy (used fat, cycle, solar), alongside organic food and drink, compostable toilets, workshops, talks, kids activities and more, while again celebrating an icon of British wildlife – this year’s is The Year of the Owl.
This year’s headline acts are folktronica pioneers **Tunng** – previously headliners in 2015 – blues and folk slide guitarist **Martin Harley**, and **Belshazzar’s Feast**, the band formed by folk scene stalwart and former Bellowhead fiddler Paul Sartin, reinvigorating old English dance tunes, ballads and war poems. Joining them will be **Midnight Skyracer**; **Coute Diomboulou**; **Morganway**; **Frankie Lee**; **Gwenifer Raymond**; **AK Patterson**; **Nick Cope**; **The Brickwork Lizards** and many more. At a point where the world is at a crossroads as far as climate change is concerned, WOOD remains a beacon of hope for the future of all festivals.



SIMPLE ft. OVERMONO: The Bullingdon – House and techno club night with producer brothers Tom and Ed Russell, better known under their individual DJ names Truss and Tessela, playing a joint set.
SUNDAY AFTERNOON SOCIAL: The Wheatsheaf (3.30pm) – Free downstairs session with blues crew Mojo Demon, plus Lost Dogs, Larry Reddington, Fancy Wooton and Tim May.
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms
BLUES JAM: Fat Lil’s, Witney (3-7pm) – Open blues jam.

MONDAY 27th
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Castle

TUESDAY 28th
ALI HORN: The Wheatsheaf – Liverpoolian balladeer Ali Horn tours his new single ‘Modern Voodoo’.

WEDNESDAY 29th
THE CARSON McHONE BAND + AGS CONNOLLY: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Austin, Texas singer McHone makes her Witney debut, touring her acclaimed second album ‘Carousel’, drawing comparisons to Gillian Welch for her mournful, conversational balladry and honky tonk country.

THURSDAY 30th
DALE WATSON & HIS LONE STAR: The Bullingdon – More high-quality Americana courtesy of the reliably excellent Empty Room promotions folks tonight with the return of travelling troubadour Dale Watson, self-styled guardian of authentic vintage country and a man who’s become a long-standing critics favourite and cult concern for the vitality he’s brought to traditional sounds. Having escaped childhood poverty in Texas through music Watson has frequently relocated, from LA, where he was part of the legendary Palomino Club’s house band, to Nashville and on to Austin, he’s become a recognisably tattooed figure of fiercely independence standing against the glossy modernisation of country music. Along the way he’s developed a style he calls Ameripolitan whose roots lie in classic country, rockabilly and truck driving songs. While he’s possibly more successful in the UK and around Europe, his enviable back catalogue, dating back to the early-90s and including most recent album ‘Sun Sessions’, has earned him a small army of dedicated fans at home and abroad.
SPIN JAZZ CLUB: The Wheatsheaf – With jazz guitarist John Etheridge.
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre
BLUES JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford

FRIDAY 31st
THE YOUNG KNIVES + LEE RILEY: The Wheatsheaf – Back for their first hometown gig in six years, and promising a night of “unhinged and experimental” music, Henry and Tom Dartnall continue to take their waywardly inventive post-punk into ever more strange and brilliant places, their forthcoming new album – the long-awaited follow-up to 2013’s ‘Sick Octave’ – having been previewed with a musical installation at Modern



Friday 17th
DRAHLA: The Bullingdon
Not fitting in is the driving force behind Leeds’ Drahl. They didn’t fit in in their native Wakefield, so moved to south London, where they failed to fit in. So they moved back north and found a home in Leeds’ burgeoning DIY music scene, finally fitting in to an extent while making music that fails to fit into conventional song structures or current musical trends. The trio, led by singer/ bassist Luciel Brown and singer/guitarist Rob Riggs, take an oblique approach to post-punk, inspired by Wire and The Fall as well as Sonic Youth’s exploratory art-rock, shoegaze and Husker Du-inspired wiggled-out psych-grunge. Brown’s somnambulating, stream-of-consciousness spoken/sung vocals and cryptic lyrics are immediately reminiscent of Kim Gordon, while Rigg’s guitar sound owes something to Wire circa-’154’, but they’re not in thrall to their influences, possessed of strong melodic edge as on tracks like ‘Fictional Decision’ and the superb ‘Silk Spirit’, which earned them a whole new set of fans. Unsurprising given their ethos and location, they hooked up with Hookworms’ MJ, who produced their 2017 ‘Third Article’ EP and they’ve been out on tour with Subpop’s METZ as well as Ought. Tonight’s gig is part of a national headline tour to promote debut album ‘Useless Co-ordinates’ and if they continue to avoid fitting in musically, they’re set to become part of the UK alt.rock landscape.

Art Oxford last year. Tonight’s show is already sold out – *see interview feature*
ALL EARS AVOW + KILL THE IDEAL: O2 Academy – Stadium-polished post-grunge rocking from Swindon’s All Ears Avow, touring their new ‘Skin & Bones’ EP, recorded with Funeral For a Friend, Bring Me The Horizon and Bullet For My Valentine producer Romesh Dodangoda.
WE ARE NOT DEVO: The Bullingdon – Return to town for the Devo tribute.
THE TROPICS + TIECE + OCTAVIA FREAUD DJ: Modern Art Oxford – Kicking off a month of gigs at MOA to launch artist Claudette Johnson’s new exhibition, London jazz-funk five piece The Tropics come to the gallery’s courtyard; they’re joined by local soul and r’n’b singer Tiece, while curator Octavia Freud spins 60s East Coast jazz, 70s Afrobeat and contemporary UK jazz tunes.
BASS ODYSSEY: O2 Academy

SLEAFORD MODS
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POTTERY
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
19.08.19

SLEAFORD MODS
O2 Academy
Oxford
27.04.19

DRAHLA
The Bullingdon
Oxford
17.05.19

ALGIERS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
04.07.19

PLASTIC MERMAIDS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
02.10.19

GIRLI
The Bullingdon
Oxford
28.04.19

CROCODILES
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
23.05.19

CLOUD NOTHINGS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
11.07.19

EASY LIFE
O2 Academy
Oxford
08.10.19

C DUNCAN
The Bullingdon
Oxford
07.05.19

YOUNG KNIVES
The Wheatsheaf
Oxford
SOLD OUT

SHONEN KNIFE
The Bullingdon
Oxford
17.07.19

JESCA HOOP
The Bullingdon
Oxford
31.10.19

THE MURDER CAPITAL
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
08.05.19

CANDY SAYS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
07.06.19

EASY STAR ALL STARS PLAYING “DUB SIDE OF THE MOON”
The Bullingdon
Oxford
24.07.19

JOSEFIN OHRN & THE LIBERATION
The Bullingdon
Oxford
11.11.19

BLAENAVON
O2 Academy2
Oxford
11.05.19

HONEYBLOOD
O2 Academy2
Oxford
08.06.19

THIS IS THE KIT
O2 Academy
Oxford
15.08.19

FONTAINES D.C.
O2 Academy
Oxford
26.11.19

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YAK

O2 Academy

Any band that incites a man in his 50s into enough of a rage to empty a full bottle of Lipton Iced Tea over a young mosher is a band worth seeing. Yak come on stage without a fuss and are captivating from the off. There’s something about Oliver Henry Burlsem – maybe his unshakeable confidence, maybe his now classic choice of all white outfit – that leaves audiences transfixed. The first few tracks are very Yak-of-old: solid, aggressive and accomplished three-piece punk-rock, carefully designed to get as many people as possible game for a mosh pit. At first there is a reasonable amount of resistance in

the room (as per the Lipton incident) to the kind of full-on-circle-pit obviously desired by the band, but it only takes a few songs; ‘Victorious’ and ‘White Male Carnivore’ both come early in the set, and along with a whole lot of charisma from Burlsem get at least the front third of the room fully involved. A few tracks in Yak-proper bring a horn trio and keys onstage, a move that takes their sound away from the purely punk-rock set-up of ‘Alas Salvation’ to something a bit more original, even funky at times. The song that really shifts the tone is the title track from ‘Pursuit of

Momentary Happiness’, which sits somewhere between a heavier version of Neutral Milk Hotel and something that wouldn’t be out of place in a Julian Casablancas side project. As the set continues, the sax, trumpet and trombone combo come into their own and turn an already powerful group into a juggernaut. Yak veer in and out of a playful self-assuredness reminiscent of The Rolling Stones, (perhaps because Burlsem looks a lot like a young Mick Jagger, which, given the uncanniness of the resemblance, he’s doubtless sick of hearing), though at times the wall of sound crumbles and we’re left with

quieter, contemplative tracks made remarkable by the contrast. The set flies by and we’re treated to an encore that sees all seven band members head to the back of the room for a final acoustic offering where the line between fans and performers blurs and the mic – or, in this case a megaphone – is passed around with glee. Though elements of their new material are mellow and more experimental than ‘Alas Salvation’, the boys definitely haven’t gone soft as this crowd surfing, beer spitting, fight starting hour and a half proves. If the shift between their first two albums is anything to go by Yak will keep getting stranger, and even more fun to watch. *Amelia Gabaldoni*

GOLDIE LOOKIN CHAIN

O2 Academy

“ICE, ICE DILDO!” This is how Goldie Lookin Chain open their set tonight, and I see no reason to question genius. The inimitable Newport crew have a packed room chanting about homemade pleasures from the freezer before I’ve even managed to get my pint. These Welsh rap legends know how to start a party. And this is a crowd that’s absolutely up for it. You’d think the hits would be the highlights, but every track from ‘One For the Ravers’ to ‘Bad Boy Limp’ and ‘Newport State of Mind (You’re Not From Newport)’ has us jumping, punching and yelling until our throats are raw. ‘Guns Don’t Kill People, Rappers Do’, (‘reached number one in Patagonia – where they speak Welsh. The song’s not in Welsh’) and personal favourite ‘Your Mother’s Got a Penis’, are ‘raz’ of course, but the GLC are bangin’ throughout. Safe. Said Oxford chorus ranges from hardcore tribute fans in shiny pink tracksuits and glowing glasses to our local opera correspondent, and is just as exuberant in its support for 2013’s ‘Baneswell Express’ (‘the range of soft drinks and

crisps is the best”) as it is for 2004’s ‘Soap Bar’. ‘Your Missus Is a Nutter’ (drum&bass remix), replete with strobe lighting, has the O2 utterly shaking. You wouldn’t think seven Newport lads dressed in solid gold-effect bling jangling over matching trackies (or in one spectacular case, a one-sleeve Fila jacket) could so successfully rouse the infamously unrousable Oxford scene, but unencumbered by instruments or stage clutter, the posse jog and strut around the stage and – in what is the real clincher as to why this gig is a smasher – they engage, in both song and banter, directly with the crowd. Goldie Lookin’ Chain represent something sorely missing on the modern music scene: skilful, unpretentious joy. Not the pleasure of hearing a perfectly noodled chord, or the trance-like state induced bysome dirty synth scuzz, but straight up sweating, leaping, taking the piss out of yourself joy. Their satirising lyrics and musical pastiche – the whole shtick – is an affectionate poke in the ribs to the everydayand uninspired reality of life. They’re Newport’s ying to the yang of Nottingham’s Sleaford Mods, and for all their humour and surface simplicity, it takes skill to pull it off. And even more to sustain it for close to 20 years. We need more like this and you knows it. *Clare Dodd*

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PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS / MÉSANGE

The Bullingdon

Is post-metal pilates a thing? Tonight’s show might well be an exercise in pushing sonic possibilities, but it’s also apparently the ideal setting to get a proper work out.

Bending, stretching and lunging his way through Mésange’s set, guitarist Luke Mawdsley’s movement is made all the more free by his choice of

loose fitting dress (although, we’d argue that blue isn’t his colour). Low, thrumming guitar tones are pulled from the fretboard as his movements become ever more extravagant. Tonally, Mésange initially evoke the groundbreaking efforts of Dylan Carlson’s ‘Earth 2’ album or SUNNO)))’s molecule re-arranging barrage. But as the set progresses,

the band soften their approach with Agathe Max’s violin becoming more vital in the compositions. The result is an evolution in sound, from primordial grind, to life-affirming classical nuance. Adopting an aggressive form of tai-chi, Pigsx7’s vocalist Matt Baty is the focal point around which the band’s Sabbath-inspired bombast

revolves. A howling, barking ball of fury, he constantly threatens to strangle himself with his microphone lead in-between using it as some kind of resistance training aid. The band’s latest album, ‘King Of Cowards’, sees the band move away slightly from the elongated blackened psychedelic workouts that populated their debut, ‘Feed The Rats’. They’re now punching harder and (marginally) faster than they were just a couple of years ago. If Baty is the thing you can’t tear your eyes away from, it’s the band’s riffs that provide the throbbing, primal, aural hook. Their relentless stoner grooves insist on movement, inspiring the entire room to rock back on their heels and lurch forward in unison. An outbreak of moshing threatens to spiral out of control as the band hit their stride and Baty’s reverb and delay drenched vocals soar above the frugging throng.

In the brief moments of respite between songs, Pigs seem almost surprised that they’ve managed to sell out the venue. Their gratitude seems at odds with the sheer aggression of their music, but when the blitzkrieg of ‘A66’ kicks in, uniting the band and audience, it seems clear that the band’s purpose is to bring us all together with their sonic epiphanies. Right now, there’s not a band better equipped to do just that. Pigsx7 are the real deal and they’re only going to get better.

Sam Shepherd

NILÜFER YANYA

O2 Academy

The audience hushes as the inimitable NilüferYanya begins her set, the small but mighty 23-year-old taking a breath before commanding the upstairs of the O2 on a Saturday night. Opening with the glorious ‘Monsters Under the Bed’, Yanya saturates the audience with vocals that oscillate between gentle warmth and rich, sharp, punch-you-in-the-face lurches of emotion. She begins her set alone on stage, establishing a quiet and reserved confidence that later cascades into fierce intensity with some of the more upbeat and jazz-infused alt-pop bangers such as ‘In Your Head’: the song that undoubtedly drew in a wave of new fans for its indie-pop ferocity. The song ‘Melt’, appearing mid-set, acts as a microcosm for how her set unfolds; beginning slow, warm and welcoming, it grows from within itself and rises into something that lurches in all the right places, endlessly captivating.

Following this opening, she completes the rest of her performance accompanied by a glorious band that boasts drums, keys, bass and the delightful saxophone of Jazzi Bobbi, though Yanya still commands attention with her soulful dark pop and introverted lyrics. Guitar fuzz melts alongside the addition of this very welcomed sax, the presence of which ameliorates an already stellar debut album with the kind of instrumentation that plays out even better live.

Yanya spends the interludes between songs in a shy and introverted manner, but I’m of the

opinion that musicians who pour their soul into their music – be it lyricism, song writing, their performance, or the entire package – need not accompany their set with unnecessary banter to intimately engage the audience with their craft. Yanya’s music does just that: serving as an open wound to her life lived thus far, albeit one frequently accompanied by a composite of jazzy electro-pop divinity. Yanya’s music invites you to delight in the wealth of experiences and emotions one encounters by 23, though you might get lost in either the bluesy warmth of her vocals or the swelling intensity of her band.

Amy Barker

JIM JONES & THE RIGHTEOUS MIND / DEADBEAT APOSTLES

The Bullingdon

The Deadbeat Apostles provide a typically gutsy and uplifting warm-up to tonight’s Stand Up To Racism show. The local six-piece take classic country rock traditions and lovingly update them for the modern age, particularly strong on vocal arrangements. They represent the lighter side of Oxford’s roots and Americana scene, the emphasis firmly on belting out a tune and having a dance, and their Day of the Deadbeats festival at the Isis on May 4th should be unmissable.

It’s nearly thirty years since I last encountered Jim

Jones in his (now revived) band Thee Hypnotics, at the Treworkey Tree Fayre near Liskeard. That notorious festival was so royally fucked-up that it ended with the official security going around in gangs mugging people, even taking the watches off their wrists. But the band played a dynamite set, nearly blowing their friends and headliners Loop offstage. Never one to opt for a quiet life Jones has soldiered on, forming The Righteous Mind in 2014 after the breakup of The Jim Jones Revue. Tonight they all look fantastic: pointed quiffs, sharp clothes and enough black hair dye to sink a navy. Two keyboard players face each other across the stage while the upright musicians pose unashamedly in their all black attire. The backbone and real star is the drummer: tight, expressive and hard-hitting in every sense. Jones himself spends much of the set shaking a pair of maracas, his deep, throaty voice bearing all the hallmarks of a life consumed in and by rock’n’roll. There’s plenty of material from new album ‘CollectiV’, with its industrial guitar sound right at the edge of distortion, Jones playing Keith Richards’ 1964 Gibson Hummingbird throughout the LP. Taken as a whole everything works together perfectly, wild abandon matched with solid songwriting and blazingly proficient playing. The Bully is the perfect size for the experience, and even legendary record producer John Leckie has found his way to Cowley Road to see what the fuss is about. With an ear to bands like The Cramps and even a nod to Roy Orbison, Jim Jones continues his own rock’n’roll journey, and everyone here is very happy to be along for the ride.

Art Lagun

RATTLE / FARM HAND / AFTER THE THOUGHT

Fusion Arts

It’s been some years since Matt Chapman Jones performed as After The Thought, but we assume the music has been quietly playing somewhere all the while, the stately melodies and soft, glowing synth pads hiding behind the moon or in the spaces between electrons, waiting for him to plug in again and broadcast them. Wielding a guitar, keyboard and a Tetris endgame block of pedals, Chapman Jones ladles Mogwai noise onto John Carpenter motifs, simplicity taking us by the hand and bouncing us between fuzzy warmth and isolationist eeriness. Don’t make us wait so long for the next one.

Another person who would be welcome to come back over the Severn Bridge is Shape Records founder and Islet member Mark Daman Thomas, AKA Farm Hand. If After The Thought’s palette is relatively sparse, Farm Hand’s is positively digi-Spartan, consisting of loops or tinny backing and vocals that tend to be so smothered in reverb or effects that lyrics are largely indecipherable, although when he tells us the songs are about “summers in rural mid-Wales” or “eating nettle soup”, we believe him.

There’s a playfulness in the performance, Thomas prancing around, cracking jokes and jamming over a recording of himself

greeting each and every one of us by turn, but although his set is a cheerful lo-fi joy – a market stall knock-off of Fixers’ cyber-euphoria – there’s also a strangely monastic feel to much of it, like religious rites corrupted into secular games. Perhaps there’s never much difference between druid and clown.

A scribbled note on the door of Fusion Arts reads “No drumming tonight. Sorry!!” But, seeing as Nottingham duo Rattle have dragged a pair of drumkits all the way to Oxford, we guess they decided the ignore the injunction. In common with the other acts, their music is ostensibly simple, but powerfully hypnotic, repetitive interlocking patterns occasionally decorated by tuneful little chants.

Like vintage techno or even vintager New York minimalism, there’s a shudder of excitement when a chugging groove is punctuated by a sudden authoritative snare crack or floor tom tattoo (or some sparingly utilised dubwise FX from a gent hunched over a tiny mixing desk).

Rattle sound like a robot Art Blakey playing under some demonic skipping rhymes. Try keeping that sort of wonder out with a handwritten sign, mortals.

David Murphy

DAGS / WORRY / BASIC DICKS / JEFF / MISERY GUTS

The Library

A few doors up the road on a fresh spring Monday night, Circa Waves are playing to a packed house at the O2. Here at The Library the true spirit of punk and independence plays out to a considerably smaller hardcore of fans.

Hardcore being the operative word for much of this Shred Or Die show. Openers Misery Guts seem to be made up of body parts of various other local noise outfits but are intent on out-noising all of them with a cacophonous racket that’s almost too straight-down-the-line to even qualify as route one: high velocity, low maintenance d-beat topped with spartan, militant vocals reminiscent of Annie Anxiety, a tumbling, twelve-minute wrecking ball that’s no frills, a few spills but importantly, full of thrills,

Jeff eschew the politics for songs about dating and breaking up, the duo, featuring Worry guitarist Hannah Watts on drums, a tumbledown, grunged-up take on New York anti-folk, as if Moldy Peaches dispensed with the niceties and went the full garage rock; it’s a bit of a mess but rich in perky enthusiasm.

After that relative breather, Basic Dicks bring the anarcho-punk venom back to the room, each of their sub-two-minute songs a short, sharp needle stab of feminist ire, singers Taz and Loz Corona firing off each

other vocally and physically like a female yin to Extreme Noise Terror’s macho yang at times but with room for humour, as on ‘Slap’, where the male gaze is skewered via buckets and trowels of makeup.

Hardcore of a different ilk from Shred or Die hosts Worry, DC dive bars replacing south London squats, polemic replaced with an edge of misanthropy and nihilism. “Everything you love will die” rasps man-mountain Nathan Ball, but while he leads the line with heroic brute force, it’s guitarist Hannah who steals the show, cutting out huge, meaty Dag Nasty-like riffs as she loses herself in frenzied headbanging.

After which, headliners Dags, from Italy, seem to lack energy or direction. Their more considered emo approach feels like a step back. Perhaps we just have to retune our ears. Twenty minutes later we’re still waiting and their set begins to drag, neither emotional nor hardcore, more like an old school Fleetwood Mac fan’s idea of what Fugazi should sound like. It’s an oddly disappointing end to a mostly fun-packed evening and as we hit Cowley Road and mingle with those leaving Circa Waves, we know that at least in one dark corner of east Oxford, punk is alive and very much kicking.

Dale Kattack



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TIM TURAN’S SESSION NOTES

Part Four
“The Vinyl Frontier” (Part 1 an introduction)

Leaving the CD behind us for a while, I want to focus over the next few months on what is undoubtedly the most toxic plastic on the planet: VINYL... or to give it its full name, Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC). Unfortunately often the ‘right on’ people who want to save the planet from plastic (myself included) are in a lot of cases the same ‘right on’ people who espouse vinyl LP records, and the hellish, crude oil and chemical processes needed to realise them. Hey ho. I will refer to these products as ‘records’; the full name is actually phonograph record. Referring to them as ‘Vinyls’ is silly, as is referring to a CD as a ‘Polycarbonate Aluminium Sandwich’. So ‘records’ it is.

This is an introduction to what will be a lengthy description over the coming months of the whole process, from mastering audio destined for records, to cutting the lacquer, making the stampers, test pressings, labels and playback issues. The cutting and subsequent pressing of records is in my opinion one of the most inexact sciences I’ve ever encountered. It is a scientific process for sure but the results will almost certainly be different every time. I’m actually writing this listening to my Record Store Day purchases: Frank Zappa and Swervedriver, one of which I mastered.

One of the strange phenomena I’ve encountered recently is that a lot of people buy records to use as decorations for their homes: the covers look snazzy used as art posters! I know quite a few people who buy records but do not possess a turntable. The resurgence of records in the last five years in particular seems to be fetishistic as far as I can see. The dedication to vinyl some folk have borders on rabidity despite its inferior sonic and technical performance when compared to Hi-Def digital formats. Let’s face it: a needle wiggling around in a dust filled plastic groove is a pretty archaic form of technology these days. But people love the sound that results from this almost comedic playback method. I have the luxury in my studio to make direct A/B comparisons of records I have mastered with the digital master that they were created from. I can tell you in *every* case the digital master sounded superior to the vinyl record. In

some cases the difference is quite shocking. Preparing masters for record cutting is a very different process to preparing masters for CD. I have accumulated over 40 years of knowledge trying to get the best cut for a record, having talked at length to cutting engineers along the way to achieve the optimum cut.

The current formats available for records are 12”, 10” & 7”. The playing speeds can vary from 78 rpm (revolutions per minute), 45, 33½, 16%, and yes, believe it or not, 8%. Playing a record will wear it out. The stylus comes in direct contact with the groove walls and with every play erodes them slightly. Incidentally the average groove length on a 12” @ 33½ is 1500ft (460 m) and the relative speed of the record in relation to the stylus is about 1mph. Its relative speed is faster at the outside edge than the inner grooves, which is where we encounter another problem: ‘inner groove distortion’ (more on that in a later issue). CDs on the other hand play from the inside out and the rotational speed of the CD is altered over time to provide what is known as ‘constant linear velocity’ (CLV). Also the CD does not wear out from having a laser shone at it. One other amazing fact about the vinyl disc: RCA developed a format called CED (Capacitance Electronic Disc). It was a short lived video format. Yes, that’s right: video on a vinyl; it actually existed for a few short years in the early 80s.

Next month I’ll get into the nitty gritty of preparing audio for records.



THE WHEATSHEAF
Thursday 2 nd May – <i>THE SPIN JAZZ</i> 7:45pm EYAL LOVETT GROUP
Friday 3 rd May – <i>KLUB KAKOFONNEY</i> 7:45pm THE SHAPES GRUDGEWOOD / FULL CIRCLE BLUE / MATT SEWELL
Saturday 4 th May 7:35pm METAL 2 THE MASSES - SEMI FINAL 1
Wednesday 8 th May – <i>IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC</i> 7:35pm SMASH FALCON
Thursday 9 th May – <i>THE SPIN JAZZ</i> 7:45pm KEVIN CHRISTIANE
Friday 10 th May – <i>IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC</i> 7:35pm FIRST RESERVES THE RELATIONSHIPS / CUBAN DUKES
Saturday 11 th May 7:35pm METAL 2 THE MASSES - SEMI FINAL 2
Wednesday 15 th May 7:45pm MSRY / LAST HOUNDS / CENTURIES
Thursday 16 th May – <i>THE SPIN JAZZ</i> 7:45pm MACIEK PYSZ
Saturday 18 th May – <i>RAHIMFEST</i> 7:35pm VIOLENCE IS GOLDEN / DAMAGED REICH
Thursday 23 rd May – <i>THE SPIN JAZZ</i> 7:45pm MARK LOCKHEART
Friday 24 th May 6:45pm METAL 2 THE MASSES FINAL
Saturday 25 th May – <i>GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES</i> 9pm BORN IDEAL / PIQUED JACKS / FACTORY LIGHTS
Tuesday 28 th May – <i>FLINTEL MUSIC TOUR</i> 7:45pm ALI HORN
Thursday 30 th May – <i>THE SPIN JAZZ</i> 7:45pm JOHN ETHERIDGE
Friday 31 st May – <i>CROSS TOWN CONCERTS</i> 7:45pm THE YOUNG KNIVES
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Dr SHOTOVER: Hey Hey, We’re the Flunkies
Celestial greetings to you, o ugly one. What was your name again? Ah yes, Newbington. So, Newbington... pull up a pewbington, and get us all a Woods & Coke with extra jelly babies on the side. Here in the East Indies Club bar we like – every now and again – to celebrate the lives and works of certain selected musical legends. This time our libations take the form of a tribute to those well-known deceased stalwarts, Peter Tork and Peter Tosh. Yes, yes, the ex-Monkee and the ex-Wailer. (Ok, it’s true, I get them mixed up – my memory hasn’t been the same since Operation Julie). Hence the double-header in the bar tonight, with a jukebox full of such mighty mash-up hits as *Last Train Inna Clarksville*, I’m Jah Believer and *Reggae Valley Sunday*. Respect, seen? Meanwhile, another ‘Late Great’ worthy of our tributes is of course Scott Walker. Apart from his lush mournful baritone and surreal late 60s ballads, we are particularly keen on the fact that one of his ‘difficult’ later albums featured the sensitive artiste garnering extra-special sound-effects, by... punching meat. Most of us East Indies Club members have been happily pummelling pork, battering brisket and lamming into lamb ever since, though our more sensitive Vegetarian Undergrounders have of course been contenting themselves with twatting some tofu and kicking some quinoa instead. And have you ever heard the amazing thwacking sounds you can get from chastising Cheddar cheese? A real eye-waterer. Talking of which, I will take another drink off you, Newbington. Make this one a tribute to Mark Hollis... and if you come up with any ‘Tork Tork’ jokes, I will belabour you with this wheel of Double Gloucester. Cheese! Down the hatch!
Next month: *Danish Blue Oyster Cult (again)*



Chuck Berry Tribute – Johnny Brie Goode

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

Who are they?
Emo quartet Daisy are: Luke Allmond (*vocals / guitar*); Angus Mackay (*guitars*); Ali Stores (*drums*) and Hannah Watts (*bass*). Originally a three-piece they came together through a selection of other local acts, with Luke previously fronting Vaguelworld as well playing and recording as a solo artist: “We mostly convinced each other to join each other’s bands.” Hannah was the most recent recruit; she also plays in Worry, Jeff, Blood Horse and Junk Whale, while Luke moonlights in Holy Moments, Blood Horse, Worry and Pet Sematary, and Ali can also be found fronting Blood Horse who might be considered Daisy’s violent evil cousin. The past two years have been spent “writing and playing together, trying to figure out what works for us.” Their debut EP was released last year. A new single, ‘Access/Agency’ is out on the 3rd May.
What do they sound like?
A hearts-on-sleeve fuzzy, angular racket; alternately tender pop-punk balladry and wide-eyed, wide-mouthed spit and spirit. Emo of the old school with the emphasis on strong melodies, led by Luke’s gently powerful vocals. Or, in their own words: “emo pop bangers.”
What inspires them?
“We all use music as a catharsis; a lot of the songs are inspired by emotional turbulence so making music serves as a good release for that, but also it’s just fun being in a band with mates. Luke has a difficult time shutting up in general so it’s useful for him to just vomit all of his emotions into a song.”
Career highlight so far:
“Last year we went on tour, which was a first for all of us. It was really cool spending a week in each other’s company and playing music every night. We have another one in May so we’re all very excited for that too.”
And the lowlight:
“We once played an awful gig in London on Luke’s birthday. We had



to drive through the snow to get there, then when we arrived there was basically no one there apart from the other band who played for way too long and then left halfway through our set, as well three of our friends who were from Oxford anyway; bless them.”
Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:
“There are lots of great acts at the moment but we think Elliot Vanderhyde is particularly underrated. Prolific, imaginative and honest; defo worth your time.”
If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:
“‘Alopecia’ by Why?”
When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect?
“We’re playing at the Library on May 19th as the last night of a nine-date tour so you can expect us to be pooped but well rehearsed.”
Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:
“Favourite thing is meeting new people and making new friends; least favourite is promoters who don’t pay bands, and only book men.”
You might love them if you love:
Los Campesinos!; Jimmy Eat World; Dive Dive; The Lemonheads.
Hear them here:
daisyuk.bandcamp.com

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

Always sad to bid farewell to one of our favourite bands and back in May 1999 we said goodbye to one of the absolute greatest ever bands Oxford has produced in **Beaker**. The quartet made their debut on the now legendary ‘OXCD’ compilation before releasing singles for **Shifty Disco** and **Fierce Panda** and attracting the attention of various major labels. “The band will live forever in my mammeries,” said singer Sam Batlle. They bowed out with a sold-out show at **The Zodiac** at the end of the month. Ah, we still miss them. While Beaker were waving goodbye, a host of new local acts were saying hello, at **The Oxford Punt**, which took place on the 13th May. Among those making a new name for themselves were **The Workhouse**; **Hester Thrale**; **JOR**; **Passion Play**; **Whispering Bob**; **Richard Walters**; **Soma**; **Angel Delay**; **Moonkat**; **The Four Storeys**; **Osprey**; **X-1**; **Black Candy**; **Callous**; **Chamfer** and **Nortica**. While many of those names are consigned to history, various members are still active. Richard Walters is set to release a new album later this year; The Workhouse remain an influential act on the post-rock circuit; Osprey is still a mainstay of the local scene as promoter and performer, and Black Candy reformed for a while a couple of years back. The Four Storeys are now **The Long Insiders** in a very different musical form; Chamfer singer **Nick Breakspear** plays solo around town; Callous guitarist Tim Darch fronts **Spinner Fall**; X-1’s Al Kenny is making noise with **Mamzer** and Nortica singer

Asher Dust remains at the forefront of all that is fun and interesting in Oxford music. Of the seven venues used for the Punt that year only **The Bullingdon** and **The Jericho Tavern** remain. **The Elm Tree** is now Big Society; **The Point** is some rancid burger grill above The Cape of Good Hope; **The Fuggle & Firkin** reverted to its original Red Lion name; **Po Na Na** is long gone and **The Dolly**, later **The Cellar**, closed last month. 10 YEARS AGO A decade later and **Desert Storm**, **We Aeronauts**, **Black Hats** and **Winchell Riots** were among the acts playing the **Oxford Punt** in May 2009. The annual showcase of local talent was topped by **The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band** whose riotous, drunken set has gone down in local legend as one of the great Punt sets of all time. Other acts playing that night included **Mary’s Garden**; **Dial F For Frankenstein**; **Bethany Weimers**; **Spiral 25**; **Matt Kilford**; **Laima Bite** and **From Here We Run**. Dial F were also that month’s *Nightshift* Demo of the Month, while Black Hats were the Introducing band. Again, looking at the venues used, now condensed into the city centre, **The Purple Turtle** and **The Cellar** have both recently closed, while **Borders** bookshops is now a Tesco Metro and **Thirst Lodge** has reverted to its Pennyfarthing name but no longer hosts live music. Other gigs this month included shows by **La**

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

Roux, **Holy Fuck**, **The Joy Formidable**; **Gallows** and **Patrick Wolf**, all at the **O2 Academy**, though local music news this month was dominated by festival line-up announcements. **Supergrass** and **Ash** were set to top the **Truck Festival** bill, while **Stornoway** had been selected to play **Glastonbury**, winning the Emerging Talent competition. 5 YEARS AGO More Punt fun back in May 2014, with **Kid Kin**; **Lee Riley**; **Julia Meija**; **Rawz**; **Hannah Bruce**; **Jordan O’Shea**; **The Cooling Pearls**; **Salvation Bill**; **Art Theefe** and **Flights of Helios** among those acts still among us, while **Girl Power** (later **Guilt Police**), **Vienna Ditto**; **Beta Blocker & the Bodyclock**; **Balloon Ascents** and **Swindlestock** were also among those playing. Swindlestock morphed into **The Great Western Tears**, while Balloon Ascents split up but spawned this month’s cover stars **Catgod** as well as singer Thomas Roberts’ solo project **Zerowe**. Beyond The Punt, **Augustines**’ show at the **O2 Academy** descended into delicious chaos when their set overran the venue’s curfew, so the band took to playing on Cowley Road, and then **The Library** when the police turned up. Also at the O2 were **Wolf Alice**; **Catfish** and **The Bottlemen**; **Marmozets**; **Hot 8 Brass**; **Tame Impala** and **Jungle**. Local folk heroes **Spiers and Boden** played at the **Town Hall**; **Rae Morris** was at **The Art Bar**.

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TOP TRACKS

BRITE SPIRES

A debut recording here from a local band whose name is new to us and who have zero online presence bar an unused Twitter account. Only a clutch of retro-futuristic Youtube videos confirm their actual existence, and by ‘eck are we glad they exist. Singer Clare Violet claims to be a milliner while her haircut on the CD sleeve suggests she might have hung out with A Flock of Seagulls back in the early 80s. Classic synth-pop is where this is rooted: opener ‘Mercury Arc’ has one foot on the neon-lit disco podium, the other in a dimly-lit futurist bar, dispassionate Ladytron-like vocals alongside a Moroder pulse and some discreetly histrionic guitars that come from the Ultravox school of stadium synth-rock. ‘Pale in LA’ is lighter and poppier, Pet Shop Boys via cheesy, fluffy, sweet-natured, sleepy-eyed chart pop, but they’re more subdued on ‘Tremolo 7’ a robot-with-soul lament, the song sounding like it’s waking from a long slumber, the band showing off their slightly more awkward slick side without losing the sleekness too much and if ‘Dark Descending’ crashes a little too far into DIY make-do-and-mend, no matter, we’re already hooked. We’re donning our silver jumpsuits, drawing on the Kohl eyes and shimmying around the *Nightshift* office like it’s 1981 all over again. It’s not the most elegant of sights – in fact we’ve seen wildlife stampedes on David Attenborough shows with more style and grace – but we’re happy and that’s not something you’ll hear us say very often. Now’s your time to ask to borrow a tenner.

ADAM YOUNGMAN

“I’ve been writing and recording acoustic songs in my college room during my free time,” begins Adam Youngman’s letter. “As I have enough songs for a CD now...” and how many songs does Adam think is enough? Three? Four? Half a dozen? How about nineteen. Plus a bonus track. In case we needed a little something extra after sitting through fifty minutes of acoustic bedroom recordings. You spoil us, Adam. Mockery aside, this is actually quite nice, at least the first couple of servings. ‘Solitary’ and ‘Eats You Away’ are typical hushed and starry-eyed campfire folk-pop in a vaguely Nick Drake / Eliot Smith kind of way and Adam has a delicate, almost falsetto vocal style that reminds us of The Low Anthem’s Ben

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

Knox Miller. The barely-there minimalism conjures its own midnight ambience, just the occasional scraping of guitar strings to detract from its pretty wandering. But beyond the first six or seven songs you’re struggling to stay alert or even awake as the same formula is repeated with the barest of variety (there’s a nice moment on ‘Washed Away’ – track 16 – when it sounds like it’s raining, perhaps hiding Adam’s tears) and since the tracks here are compiled in reverse order of when they were written and recorded, Adam seems like he’s gradually devolving musically at times. At least until we get to – ta da! – the bonus track, ‘I Miss You’, which is labelled as being “from my next set of songs”, when if you think about it, it isn’t. Anyway, thanks for inviting us round to your college room, Adam; you were gentle-natured and unimposing company and the tea was lovely, if just a tad milky. And really, we’d had our fill after six cups. Brevity, dear boy: this isn’t a university thesis.

TILLY VALENTINE

Maybe Adam should team up with Tilly Valentine, who could teach him something about keeping things short and sweet but also persuade him to stop moping about in his room and get down the local disco where he could see the sunnier side of life. This song, ‘Brick By Brick’, is the soft’n’feathery follow-up to last year’s soft’n’feathery debut, again teetering on the borderline between girl group ballad and playful electro-pop with just the merest hint of trip-hop sultriness. It’s not all joy unconfined in Tilly’s word: “The grass is greener on the other side / But I’m stuck in the middle / And I can’t sit back and enjoy the ride / When I don’t know where we’re headed,” she chirrups in the chorus, but lyrical uncertainty aside, this smells of summer and hope and something carefree. And don’t we all need a bit of simple cheer right now.

LIFE INC.

Last time we encountered Life Inc. they were going up against Easter Island Statues amongst others in a battle of the bands for a main stage slot at last year’s Common People; they didn’t win but impressed with a stadium-ready sound that recalled U2 at times. This one track offering, ‘The Last Double Act’, is decent enough post-Foals indie funk, morphing into post-Libertines rock, and onto a full-on extended guitar wig-out. It’s got energy to spare but little by way of memorable melody in the tank, a dynamic, well constructed four-minute chunk of yeah, not bad. But it needs a decent

tune and some more rage to really fulfil its potential. Perhaps they could take a note out of that BOTB’s winners, Easter Island Statues, on the melody front – a band who manage big, bold and brash but also come up with the goods on the tune front. And maybe a bit more bite to go with the bark – go grab some Murder Capital or Crows records on your way to the next band practice.

JKB

JKB is the work of singer-songwriter Jacob Brant – we’re guessing his middle name begins with a K – Keith or Kevin or Kombustible Kaleidoscope – who was, he tells us, previously singer with local band Narcissism who were Demo of the Month a decade or so ago. He also tells us he’s been living abroad for most of the time since then and if the degeneration of his musical output is a symptom of that exile, we suggest building giant border walls immediately to prevent any more exiles returning. This *could* be great, what with Jacob’s portentous baritone, some decent guitar spangle and a general leaning towards the gothic, but too often it’s overbearing and self important: “Listen to me, I have great wisdom to impart” his voice seems to cry out. A voice that he says has been compared to Nick Cave: perhaps by people who have never heard Nick Cave but have a vague idea of what they think he should sound like from the look of him. Or Nick Cave if he couldn’t sing and was really drunk and cross about stuff and couldn’t play guitar either but was going to hack at this detuned acoustic guitar while disseminating all the shit stuff in the world to an audience with one eye nervously on the exit. “All those twisted psychic vampires” is the opening line of ‘The Distinction That Defines’. Promising start. “All those twisted fucking Tory cunts” he continues. How can we not love this guy? Eight minutes later, as the strumbling wreck of a song finally dissipates into the ether, we begin to see how. The next track is nine minutes long but at least comes with a sax solo to distract you and thereafter everything unravels untidily with ‘The Tale of the Weary Banbarian’, a provincial am-dram society parody of goth. We dunno, maybe coming back to live in Banbury after ten years living in Tuscony or Alsace or somewhere has got to him. He’s not happy, that much is certain, and while unhappy is par for the course with goths, in this case we don’t see why he needs to inflict it on us too.

BEAUFERAL

Like some kind of karmic musical opposite to JKB, Beauferal seems heroically optimistic about life, singing/yelping/ranting “Everything’s alright / Every thing is all right” and “You’re so *BEAUTIFUL*” at the climax of his song ‘Passion For Eve’. He is also heroically fucking dreadful. A sort of homebrewed lounge crooner reduced to performing in the cupboard under the

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stairs after succumbing to methylated spirit addiction. Seriously, the acoustics on this make your local village hall sound like Sydney Opera House, Beauferal sounding like the confused but angry ghost of a deceased local community choir singer, hammering away on his primitive Bontempi. On ‘Picture In My Room’ he conjures a cheap, cheesy synthetic organ sound and even cheaper, cheesier synthetic horn parps as he tunelessly navigates a sea of musical uncertainty, like Daniel Johnston reincarnated as a budget cruise ship cabaret entertainer. By ‘Everything’ he’s moved onto cheap, cheesy synthetic strings, an aching torch song inasmuch as we have toothache by the time it’s over, and come ‘Forever’ he’s onto a cheap, cheesy synthetic flute sound, vocally losing his rag as he cries “I want you / I want you forever” as the object of his desires heads for the door, saying she’s just off to the shop to buy a bottle of Prosecco before boarding a bus for somewhere – anywhere – never to return. “Everything’s alright / Everything is all right” he continues to bellow with worryingly frenzied hope in his heart. It really isn’t mate. It’s all broken. You broke music. And not all the king’s horses or all the king’s men could even start to work out how to put this mess back together.

TOILET TRACKS

STRAY GHOST

Stray Ghost is the work of a guy called Anthony Baden Sagers, which sounds like a character from a Tom Sharpe novel. He tells us: “Under the moniker Stray Ghost, Anthony releases his new piano centric album, ‘A Shade Under Thirty’ – which is a young man’s reflections on the world around us and life as he hits the big 3-0. It’s steeped in melancholy and cinematic romanticism,” which of course made us sit and deeply consider the emotional challenges the poor lad must be facing as he approaches such decrepitude. And in no way made us snigger at the raging pomposity therein or the overripe pretentiousness of imaging a series of instrumental piano pieces could convey the innermost thoughts of someone so sensitive he imagines the world around him as a solemn, poetic cocoon in which he is surely drowning. “This lime tree bower my prison” and all that. What does it sound like? As you might imagine: some piano, some washes of synthesizer, some... er, more piano. The stately, nay, majestic, consideration of the passing of time, man’s dreadful mortality, and whether he’s too old to still have a Captain America pillowcase. And what of birthday cake? Indulgent chocolate or something lighter? A nice lemon drizzle perhaps? Got to watch that cholesterol. Don’t want ‘A Shade under 40’ to end up a funeral march, do we.

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Sat 11th May • 6.30pm

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Sat 11th May • 11pm

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Sat 11th May • 6.30pm

Bingo Lingo Oxford 2019

Tue 14th May

J Mascis + Rosali

Tue 14th May

Lucy Spraggan

Wed 15th May • 6.30pm

SOAK + Pillow Queens

Sat 18th May • 6.30pm

Samantha Fish

Tue 21st May

End Of An Era - Vol 1 ft Keeva Mairéad, The Auburn Project, Novacane, The Chess Club

Wed 22nd May • 6.30pm

Sons of the East ft Amistat, Five Fathoms Deep

Thur 23rd May

End Of An Era - Vol 2 ft Ellie Armetta, Kiera Gabrielle, The Roaches, RedShift, A Dying Breed

Sat 25th May • 6.30pm

Inner Peace Records ft DeSide, DeeQ, Erbz & Those That Know DJs

Sat 25th May • 11pm

I LOVE REGGAETON

Sat 25th May • 11pm

#6MILLI Summer Send Off

Fri 31st May • 6pm

All Ears Avow & Kill The Ideal

Fri 31st May • 11pm

Bass Odyssey

Sat 8th Jun

Honeyblood + LUCIA

Thur 20th Jun

Band Of Horses + Lion

Tue 25th Jun

The Dead South

Thur 27th Jun

Cat Power

Fri 28th Jun • 11pm

Mad Cobra

Sat 29th Jun

The AC/DC Experience

Thur 4th Jul • SOLD OUT

Belle & Sebastian

Thur 25th Jul

Elvana: Elvis Fronted Nirvana

Fri 2nd Aug

White Denim

Thur 15th Aug

This Is The Kit

Sun 25th Aug

Little Steven & The Disciples Of Soul

Fri 20th Sep • 6.30pm

Boyzlife

Sat 28th Sep • 6.30pm

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

Thur 3rd Oct

Pierce Brothers

Fri 4th Oct • 6.30pm

CoCo and the Butterfields

Tue 8th Oct

Easy Life

Sat 12th Oct • 6.30pm

Antarctic Monkeys

Sat 12th Oct • 6.30pm

The Divine Comedy

Fri 18th Oct • 6.30pm

Amber Run

Fri 25th Oct • 6.30pm

Jake Clemons + Ben McKelvey

Sat 26th Oct • 6.30pm

Guns 2 Roses + MOTLEY CRUED

Sat 2nd Nov • 6.30pm

The Dualers

Mon 4th Nov

Feeder

Thur 7th Nov

Little Comets

Sat 9th Nov • 6.30pm

Snarky Puppy

Mon 11th Nov

Elder Island

Thur 14th Nov

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

Fri 15th Nov • 6.30pm

The Treatment + Airrace + Lake Acacia

Fri 22nd Nov • 6.30pm

Half Man Half Biscuit

Tue 26th Nov

Fontaines D.C.

Wed 27th Nov • 6.30pm

Electric Six

Thur 28th Nov

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