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NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every month **Issue 292** November 2019

"Our insecurities have been commodified by the likes of Google and that doesn't feel like a comfortable place for society to be in."



Oxford's club-friendly electro-pop crew talk technology, mental health and dancing into the revolution.

Also in this issue:

RITUAL UNION reviewed Introducing THE GRAND MAL

plus

All your Oxford music news, previews and reviews, and seven pages of gigs for November

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NOVEMBER 2019 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Rawdio: 5th Birthday Arkaik, Saxxon, Mistik, MC Bassman The Shapes The Vernons Future Edwin & The Keepers Doirts:7pm Reggaeton Party cors: fipm Cate Le Bon Grimm Grimm

Come Jive With Me Touching Bass Nigel Garage

Simple Dr. Rubenstein

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A Night Like This Evade Escape, Lonesome, Melwood

Note: Tymi Spector

The Rhythm Method

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Lankum So Fetch: 2000s Party

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Tracksuit & Trance: N Trance Doors: Spm

Musical Medicine

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Spontaneous Potter

Jaws

Jon Boden & The Remnant Kings

Thursday 21st November Oxford City Festival

Aliens Pink Diamond Revue

Follow 22nd November Blackwater Conspiracy

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Doors: Apes Saturday 23 of November

Reggae Got Soul Daddy G (Massive Attack)

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The Oxford City Festival

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London Calling

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Killswitch UK The Iron Road

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Andy Vaic

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Fluorescent Adolescent

Fritzy 6th becember Low Island

Raving Trippy Flower Power

Saturday 7th December Musical Medicine Lucid Stannard

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Bassface x Shook

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Old Skool Oxford Top Buzz

John Otway

Friday 20th December

P.Y.T

Saturday 21st December Bott & Burns By-Night

Dr Banana

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Nang Tunes: Xmas Party Boots Hym

Reggae Xmas

Thursday 26th December

Deep Cover Boxing Day Bash

Friday 27th Secretor

Pitch Black Doors: tipm

Rawdio: Xmas Link up

Diversitigate Cowley Road NYE Festival

NEWS

Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU Phone: 01865 372255 email: editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk Online: nightshiftmag.co.uk



DIVINE SCHISM are starting a record label to run alongside their live music promoting. The first release will be Lucy Leave's second album 'Everyone Is Doing So Well' on 24th January; this will be preceded by a triple A-side single 'Thumbs' / 'Snow' / 'Hey, Male Saviour' on 22nd November. Check out facebook.com/ DivineSchismPresents for more release and gig news.

OXFORD CITY FESTIVAL

returns this month, with two weeks of gigs by mostly local acts across various venues around Oxford. Organised by local musician and promoter Mark 'Osprey' O'Brien, the festival kicks off on the 15th November and runs til the 30th, taking in some 30 shows at The Half Moon, The Wheatsheaf, The Bullingdon, Cirkus and The Port Mahon. Full OCF listings in this month's gig guide.



LACUNA COMMON supported Biffy Clyro in October as part of their prize for winning Jack Daniel's Sound of Summer competition, a national battle of the bands that saw the Oxford indie rockers triumph over 1,000 acts from around the UK. They opened for the chart-topping Scottish rockers at Birmingham's Digbeth Arena on the 17th October as well as playing shows in London,

Liverpool and Glasgow as part of a JD-sponsored tour.

MY CROOKED TEETH are included on a tribute album to Canadian indie rockers The Weakerthans this month. 'One Great Tribute' is released on the 15 November and includes 23 cover version, including tracks by Frank Turner and Billy Pettinger among others. All proceeds from the sale of the album will go to The Centre for Addiction & Mental Health and The Canadian Mental Health Association.

My Crooked Teeth also release their own new single 'Something Real' on the 8th November, available at soundcloud.com/my-crooked-teeth.

GLITCHKRIEG release a single in aid of local anti-abuse charity Clean Slate this month. The band, formed by Brendan Morgan from Grub and Twat Daddies' Jon Little, release' Touch Me I'm Six(teen), a twisted dance cover of Mudhoney's grunge classic 'Touch Me I'm Sick'. It's available from the 31st October. Get your copy at

glitchkriegox.bandcamp.com.

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

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.

PLEASE NOTE that due to the sheer volume of releases we are being sent now, we can no longer promise to review everything submitted. This month alone we received 18 new releases and had room to review nine. For the best chance of getting a review, please submit tracks as early as possible before release



THE SHAPES release their debut album next month and bandleader Anthony Kelly has been talking to Nightshift about the record and the band's new line-up.

"A full album has been on the cards for a while, as we have produced six EPs to date, the last one being 'Oh You' earlier this year. Being in such a large band and everyone having busy lives with many members in other bands, it's hard to find time to make a plan and finance a record especially after a very busy summer with festival gigs."

Big favourites on the Oxford scene over the past few years for their mix of 60s r'n'b, new wave pop, punk and folk, as well as their strong storytelling, often based on Anthony's years growing up in Cowley, The Shapes' album will feature a mix of new songs and reworked oldies.

"We toyed with a 'Best Of' album from our previous EPs but then decided to record five new songs. I then wanted to add brass to some of our old songs and to remix them, so we could create a different feel, so we added brass and remixed 'Passing of the Years' and 'April Showers', as they were all a bit rushed when we originally recorded them. We also re-recorded 'Mr Sandman' in a different key and have created a more rustic version. We also have a really good live recording of last year's Christmas gig at The Bullingdon, so have added a live version of 'The Sunshine Song' to honour the memory of the late, great Tony Jezzard.

"I'm aware it might be the only album we ever record, so I wanted it to cover the whole range of The Shapes' years, with some new songs added to keep it fresh. The album also includes 'Till They Put Me In The Ground', plus 'Oh You' and 'New Train' as the original recordings. 14 tracks in total, which also includes a very new song which isn't listed and most of the band don't even know about!"

Over the past year or so The Shapes have expanded to include a full brass section, which has taken their sound to another level.

"We're now a nine-piece, which I love. One of my favourite albums is 'Searching For The Young Souls Rebels' by Dexy's Midnight Runners and I always loved the brass section on that record and how they blew it hard and loud with attitude. I always hoped that one day I would have a brass section in The Shapes. I was really excited when Andy, Clare and Bethan signed up to play, as they are all great musicians and the easiest going bunch I've ever worked with. We have enjoyed the most wonderful year of gigs; we all get on so well and are a really happy unit, which I think manifests itself in our live shows.

"We're launching the album at the Bullingdon on Saturday 2^{nd} November with support from Edwin & The Keepers and Vernons Future. and then we've got our traditional Christmas party on the 20th December, again at The Bully - it's our spiritual home.

"We have crowd funding page toward financing the album and promo video and have been overwhelmed with the support that has been shown already after a few days of launching it."

To contribute to the album fundraiser, visit www.gofundme.com.

A VERY FOND NIGHTSHIFT FAREWELL to our chum Nell Wimpenny who leaves Oxford this month to return to her native Manchester. A long-time part of Oxford's live music scene as a

musician and DJ, most recently Nell was instrumental in the return of live music to The Port Mahon where she was manager, restoring the pub to its rightful place in the local scene. All the best for the future, Nell!



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A Quiet Word With

IOW ISLAND



"MUSIC DOESN'T HAVE

borders in terms of our ability to listen to it," says Low Island's Carlos Posada; "we can listen to music from all over the world without lifting a finger. But in terms of travel, this question is particularly important for British artists at the moment. Touring in Europe is a really important part of any UK band's career, and up until now it's been relatively easy and feasible to do on tiny budgets. All of this could change after Brexit and, needless to say, that is a huge shame. We work on such tight margins on tour; throw in a carnet, higher merch taxes, more paperwork, and the whole thing immediately becomes far more challenging to do on your own."

CARLOS AND HIS

bandmates in Low Island are talking to Nightshift in the wake of a hectic year that's seen them playing across Europe where their star is very much in the ascendance, as well as festivals and shows across the UK, including Glastonbury and a tour support to Crystal Fighters.

This month the quartet head out on their biggest headline tour yet, in support of a new EP, 'Shut Out the Sun', that gathers together recent singles 'In Person', 'Search Box' and 'When You Wake' as well as most recent release 'Long Answer'. The tour will bring them

back to Oxford for a show at The Bullingdon on the 6th December as well as featuring a one-off reprisal of their Low Island & Friends multi-media shows in London that sees the band collaborating with artists to make for something more than a simple gig night.

LOW ISLAND ARE CARLOS.

alongside fellow singer and multiinstrumentalist Jamie Jay, bassist Jacob Lively and percussionist and drummer Felix Higginbottom. Childhood friends, the band formed from the ashes of previous local favourites Wild Swim who split around the time the members headed of to university.

United by a love of electronic dance music, Low Island's mix of house, funk, synth-pop and airy, almost ethereal vocals has seen their shows blur the lines between gig and club night: like neighbours and friends Glass Animals, they're a band to dance to.

IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS

since the quartet last appeared on the cover of Nightshift, so Carlos updates us on some of the stuff they've been up to in recent times.

"The last two years have gone by in a semi-blur of van calls and fiddling about on synths at 2am in studios, but thankfully I can still remember some of the highlights; our song 'In Person' got on the

6Music playlist; we've played a lot more in Europe; we supported Crystal Fighters at our favourite venue in London, Brixton Academy, and we played at Glastonbury. It's important to give a shout out to the lowlights too: gear failure at Glastonbury in the 30-degree heat; being accidentally booked for a drum&bass festival with an unsympathetic crowd, and missing our flight back from Malaga after a show in Gibraltar because the border guards were trying to charge us €3000 duty on our own gear!"

"This year has been really great for us, especially squeezing in several outings into mainland Europe... while that's still possible for a touring band," adds Jamie; "I'm sure all these shows have got us better known, but that's probably easier to judge from the outside. Ultimately, we're having a good time and playing to new audiences in new places... and they seem to be into the music."

MAINLAND EUROPE IN

particular has taken to Low Island, where they are regulars on the festival circuit, and the band have noticed the difference between gigging there and back in the UK. "It's such a cliché to say but from an artist's point of view the difference is really night and day," says Felix; "there is a very different infrastructure around organising

festivals in Europe; often there is only one band playing at a time and the audience move altogether between stages. Obviously for artists like us that's amazing as it guarantees a massive crowd... and the catering is better.'

That said, the band are excited to be heading out on a headline tour here in the UK, with a full stage production to complement the

Jacob: "We're buzzing. The Arts Council have given us some financial support so we're bringing a proper production with us on the road. Although we've played round the UK a fair amount in the past, this feels like something exciting

Having previously toured their 'And Friends' night, this time round only London gets the full works. Felix: "Low Island & Friends originally came from getting bored with the standard format of gigs. We wanted to share the platform with phenomenal artists from beyond music. We offer them a fee that we pay out of our own pocket and they bring their dance, performance or artwork to our unsuspecting audience. Sometimes we can afford to do this, sometimes we can't. To be honest, the amount of organisation and red tape it takes to get the industry to do something different, especially at our level, means that it takes a lot of people

getting on board just to make it

Do you feel you're bigger in London than Oxford?

Jacob: "What a question! The honest answer is, I have no idea. Oddly this will be the first tour in which we've played in both London and Oxford so I guess we're about to find out!"

LOW ISLAND'S DESIRE TO

break out from the standard banddoing-a-gig format has also taken in interactive choreograph pieces and a live soundtrack to a catwalk show at University of the Arts London; what different challenges do those projects bring them compared to writing new songs, and what things have the band learned from each that have maybe fed into their songs and live show? Jamie: "We've always enjoyed collaborating with artists from different mediums on their projects and ours. There are so many technical differences to each art form, which can pose difficulties because everyone is speaking a different language. But there's also a lot of common ground and understanding when it comes to the more fundamental aspects like form, pace, journey, meaning and emotion. For me, these processes point out the elements of music that matter, and those that really don't! We're often more experimental in these collaborations, which allows us to discover new sounds, which we then take back into our songs/ productions."

THE LATEST SET OF THOSE

songs takes the form of that new EP this month. The four songs on it share a common theme of people's connections with each other through the prism of online technology, from search engines to social media and the effects, often detrimental, that can have on them. Most recent single 'Long Answer', which came out close to World Mental Health Day. deals with mental illness and the way society views it, in particular the damaging way people can be embarrassed to talk about how they feel. It's written from close personal experience of a friend. Was it difficult to write a song like that when it concerned someone so close to home?

Jamie: "We like to think that our songs apply to a lot of people's experiences, so it was much more painful to see a friend go through such a horrible time than it was to write a song about it. The worst part was the stiff upper lip things they said: "it's just one them things"; "it is what it is"; "this is so embarrassing", and "I'm supposed to be there for everyone else", some of which ended up as lyrics in the song.

It was really frustrating to hear these phrases because the person sounded like some sort of involuntary spokesman for a distinct and ancient brand of male repression, one which people are finally starting to question.'

What do you think needs to change as regards how mental health is seen and treated? It seems to be something that, at last, people, particularly men, feel able to talk about. Do you see grounds for optimism?

Jacob: "There are definite grounds for optimism; it's becoming a national discussion which is really important. Artists like Idles and Dave are breaking ground in the debate and it feels like this is an issue that is really cutting through and resonating with everyone that

with the internet, particularly the likes of Google. How unhealthy do Low Island feel people's increased reliance to the online world is? Carlos: "I think it's unhealthy, and we all know it. In terms of search engines, I don't think it's all bad. It has opened up the possibility for people to look into things about their health, sexuality, identity and a whole host of other issues which they might not have done otherwise as a result of feelings of shame, or being stigmatised in their peer group or community. What is unsettling is that the information and data we provide when we search is being sold to third parties. Our insecurities have been commodified, and that doesn't feel like a comfortable place for society to be in."

And that song followed 'In Person';

"There are grounds for optimism. Artists like Idles and Dave are breaking ground in the debate and it feels like this is an issue that is really cutting through and resonating with everyone that listens to their records."

listens to their records. Obviously it's all part of a process and there's a long way to go but if everyone keeps the conversation going, I feel we're heading in the right direction."

MUSICALLY, 'LONG

Answer' is heavily inspired by Brazilian and Congolese music; having lived in Brazil for a while, Felix experienced the country's musical roots first hand and brought that inspiration back to the UK with

"Yeah, I moved to Rio after I graduated from music college. I'd been playing a lot of Brazilian music in London but I wanted the real shit. So I found a room, brushed up my Portuguese and tried to integrate; it was pretty difficult. Being a white skinny guy from Oxford, I was a bit of a target. Music is treated very differently there: it's not special that you can do it; literally everyone is expected to sing and play percussion. It really changed how I played and thought about music. I got the chance to play with local musicians every day for six months. Obviously with rhythm/groove based music, it doesn't get much deeper than traditional music from Latin America and Africa. We want to make people dance, so we're totally open to any influence that might sink in from genres that do it much better."

SHARING A SIMILAR

theme to 'Long Answer' on the new EP, summer single 'Search Box' deals with the way people interact

does the way technology and humanity interacts scare you? Do you see humans becoming more isolated and thus feeding into mental health problems?

Jamie: "Yes. It's sad to hear stories

of lives being ruined through social media, and it's worrying to think that small groups of people are in charge of these platforms, doing little to intervene. We are only now starting to see the effects of social media on mental health, particularly amongst the youngest in society, who have never known a world without it. It's scary to think how much worse this could get, as the technologies become more and more ingrained across future generations." Much of the core themes of 'Shut Out the Sun' were inspired by

Carlos reading about the Japanese Hikikomori - young men, haunted by a sense of failure in life, who seal themselves off from the world. Is that a particularly Japanese thing or does he see it happening in the UK and elsewhere? Carlos: "The Japanese Hikikomori are a generation of young men who've shut themselves away in their bedrooms because of perceived

failings in their lives. I am no expert but a huge part of their strife seems to come from a claustrophobic Japanese society that deeply stigmatises failure of any kind. It can lead to a profound level of isolation, far-reaching family tensions and surrounding mental health problems. Whilst much of this is specific to Japan, there are elements to do

with masculinity, online loneliness, and external social pressures that felt globally relevant when I was learning more about them. I won't pretend to have the answer for Japan, or anywhere else, but I do think that we need to safeguard against the manicured social media environment where everyone lives an imagined life. We are creating a non-existent ideal to measure ourselves against even though we know it's unrealistic. It's not healthy."

GIVEN THE SUBJECT

matter of 'Search Box' but set against its thumping dance soundtrack, not too far removed from Underworld, Nightshift's review mentioned the idea of partying while the world burned: music as an escape while dealing with what is quite a grim subject; do Low Island ever feel they just want to forget about what's wrong with the world and dance? Carlos: "As someone who is half-

Colombian, yes!"

The anarchist political activist Emma Goldman famously said "a revolution without dancing is not worth having" – a line later borrowed by Alan Moore for VFor Vendetta; is that a philosophy you can subscribe to?

Jamie: "Yes, but only because of the word worth. Revolutions are definitely possible without dancing, but there's probably little point in it if people weren't to come together and celebrate. We're all fans of electronic dance music, and while I don't know how essential it's been to the success of any revolution, it most likely provided a purpose."

What do you think of the current Extinction Rebellion protests? What do you think is the best way to force change in the world?

Felix: "A thousand times yes. Educate vourself and talk about it. Also, stop eating beef: there is absolutely no excuse for it and it's very easy to stop doing."

LOW ISLAND'S

Goldblum?"

homecoming show in December will give Oxford gig-goers a chance to think about the ideas discussed here as well as have a good dance, and the band's popularity is increasing at a rate that means hopefully many more people will get the same chance on this tour and beyond. Before we let them go though, if Google could definitively answer one question for the, what would they ask? Jacob: "What's up with Jeff

'Shut Out the Sun' is released on the 19th October. Low Island play The Bullingdon on Friday 6th

December.

RELEASED

(Self released)

LINA SIMON

'Live a Little'

As Young Knives said in last month's cover feature, when you have no-one to answer to other than yourself, only then do you have musical freedom. Lina Simon sounds free. This new seven-song EP is the follow-up to her Demo of the Month-winning debut at the end of last year. It's an EP of mischievous, lopsided tunes that are alternately languid and scurrying, hysterical and playful, intricate and slipshod. It sounds like music made by actual pixies (as opposed to Pixies, although there's some seriously uptight guitar on the go here that Mssrs Black and Santiago would be happy to call their own). From the high-wired Knife-like synth-pop opening number 'Meet You There', through the tense, fidgety 'Conch' and messy, half-asleep ethereality of 'Never', to the playfully sleazy 'Tortoise' with its chitter chatter beats, rambling synths and Lydia Lunch-goes-pop feel, to 'My Embrace', where Lina fully crunks up her guitar, 'Live a Little' sounds like an artist taking a pair of scissors to the component parts of her songs and cutting them into shapes that don't quite fit together, so the finished article is wayward, often on the brink of collapse. In a week where an



over-enthusiastic record company PR person has sent us the new Sherlocks album no less than four times and its pale, male staleness has threatened to tip us over the edge, Lina's busy-bee, butterflypretty take on lo-fi synth-pop, post-rock and general wobbly oddness makes it feel like we've bypassed autumn and winter and gone straight back into fresh-aired, sunlit spring but still get to keep our Christmas presents. Oh, that more music makers would approach their art with such a childlike sense of freedom.

Dale Kattack



CAMERON AG 'One By One'

(Is That It)

If Cameron AG's self-released EP's 'Way Back Home', and 'Homeward Bound', from either end of 2016, hinted at a crystalline talent, then 'One by One', the multi-instrumentalist singersongwriter's full-length platter of new material, is notable for its soaring confidence.

Where once his timorous, high-register vocals were shyly masked behind layers of echo and distortion, now they are seated right at the microphone, and boy does it pay off. His is a voice of no little addictive purity as it captures the essence of enjoying love and then mourning it. The whole package is a fascinatingly beautiful piece of art: the lonesome, elevated beach house on the cover; the clever semantics of its name, and the recordings completed in Bristol and New York with Brooklyn producer Doug Schadt;

everything is exquisitely observed and refined 'til it is sublime

Simple details, like keyboard choice, characterise each intro; the woozy pub Joanna of the flaming back-draft 'Headlights'; the warm electric keys of the soul gushing 'Night Sky Lies', and the damped down Lennon growl of the title track. In between, the radio hugging indie pop of 'Pillar To Post' and the faintly Gilbert O'Sullivan jaunt of 'Suitcase' keep you skipping through the newly liberated sense of space and atmosphere. Only the penultimate song, 'Photographs', seems like an unleavened and anaemic misstep, but given the breathless tour de force before it, this is a very small nit to pick.

In 2016 Cameron appeared on a respected trendsetting list of 20 people most likely (in the upside down vernacular of youth) to blow. Whether the track-listing ends in a bang or a whimper doesn't alter the fact that this gem is packed with enough affecting ordinance to finally launch him as a star.

J.O.S.E.P.H. 'Enlightenment'

(Substance)

Another new alias for Substance Records' Joe Truby as he explores his more progressive house side on this seven minute thumper, bringing a sense of euphoria to a characteristically fluid rave banger that favours melody and, well, progression, over wham, bang, thank you m'am, but ticks every hands-in-the-air box you need and fair flies across its expansive duration.

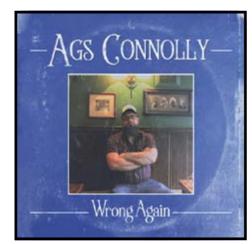
Ian Chesterton

MOWVES 'Wet Signal'

(Self released)

It's been a curious few years for straight up, wiggle your hips and pump your hands in the air techno. Twenty years on from the Phils from Bedford of this world ringing in to make a request for Dave Pearce's Love Groove Dance Party, naked showmanship at Manumission and the original release of Goldie's 'Saturnz Return', the movement has been through the wringer. The comedown has been hard and had seen dance music disappear under a rock of introspection in some quarters and repackaged in a highly commercial way in others, the latter following the America's refashioning of the genre as EDM. In the former camp, the likes of Factory Floor, Jon Hopkins and Daniel Avery have returned dance to its intelligent beginnings but there have been encouraging signs lately of a return to the hedonism of the glory days. A recent release by Maya Bouldry-Morrison as Octo Octa has proved to be something of a landmark in this respect but Oxford has also not been slow to produce some highlights. Pandapopalypse have created a stir with their Fat Boy Slim homages and now Mowves have followed suit with a quite frankly exceptional four track volley in 'Wet Signal'. The title track begins with the headbangingthump of a Paddox or Coloureds - two Oxford outfits of the past, and it's from the ashes of the latter that Mowves have sprung – but laces the brutality with a dancefloor ready wail of a refrain, creating an instant earworm. 'Bad Graph' then recalls another Oxford enterprise, Tiger Mendoza & Dave Griffith's landmark 'The Shadow', with its beginning of real menace but then spills into another mood entirely, evoking Calvin Harris of all people and providing less an invitation to toe thump, more an absolute obligation. 'Dry Signal' maintains the mood, an anniversary two fingers to the Criminal Justice Bill with its insistent BPM assault but then producing something really special with a nagging keyboard ringtone. By now, were this a club, shirts would be off and wheeling skywards, Fabrizio Ravanelli style, and 'Chrono Trigger' does everything to maintain the mood as the denouement, sending us into the virtual taxi queue with a warm feeling of euphoria in our hearts.





AGS CONNOLLY

'Wrong Again'

(Finstock Music)

The photos of Ags Connolly on the cover and inside the album sleeve show the singer sat alone in a bar, looking variously wistful and defiant. Perfect for the music really, since Ags' unreconstructed old time country is set firmly in

Connolly is joined by a sterling band across these ten songs, including fiddle player Eamon McLoughlin, who's worked with Emmylou Harris, and Michael Guerra, the in-demand accordion maestro whose credits include The Maverick. The former brings a sweeping elegance to songs like 'Early Morning Rain', while the latter's contribution to the sparse 'Lonely Nights...' brings the song fully to life. Perhaps the unsung hero of 'Wrong Again' though is bass player Anna Robinson, particularly on the album's title track

with some inventive underpinning of the song.

the genre's heartland of heartache, with lonely

highlight 'Lonely Nights in Austin' typical of his way with a through-a-glass-darkly storytelling

night laments like 'Indian Sign' and album

and late-night reflection.

These are Ags Connolly's songs though and as ever he sounds older than his years and like a man steeped in the spirit and traditions of American roots music. The album finishes with the ironically titled 'Sad Songs Forever', the most upbeat song on it: barroom sing-along western swing with the fiddle to the fore, and even as Ags sings "I want sad songs forever" he sounds like he's having the best time he's had in a long while. Dale Kattack

heavy and beefed up but with the quartet keeping to a medium paced assault for the most part, the album can feel like it lacks variety. 'Glitch' ups the pace a few notches but seems to sacrifice some weight in the process and on occasions across the album the vocals don't lock into the music, making the band sound like they're still finding their feet.

'Black Spiral' manages that balance between a faster pace and staying true to the heavyweight cause but often you're wishing they'd really tear it up and Oglesby fully let rip and ruin his tonsils. Maybe The Grand Mal are victims of their own pedigree: we love their parent bands that much we expect magic each and every time. If not exactly an album that's going to lay waste to all before it, like much of Desert Storm's output, this is a decent album that should appeal to fans of Kyuss,

Sabbath, Clutch etc. Ian Chesterton

THE GRAND MAL 'The Grand Mal'

(Self released)

The Grand Mal is made up of Desert Storm twins Ryan and Elliot Cole alongside Dave Olgesby and Rob Glen, of the now defunct Mother Corona. Stylistically there are few surprises on this debut album: steady, solid stoner and desert rock riffage, over steady, solid rhythms and Oglesby's rasping vocals, partway between Ozzie Osbourne and Billy Corgan. Steady and solid really the order of the day across these ten songs, mostly sounding like they've been cut from granite and standing imperious in the face of relentless sandstorms. But there's not much here that's truly inspiring. 'Synapse Transmission' is a stand out piece - a towering song that even in this company sounds

MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS 'Ghost Driver'

(All Will Be Well)

"Monsieur Descartes, if you're so smart / Why do ghosts and zombies always live apart / One is disembodied, the other has no mind / Now isn't that a match of the perfect kind?"

Never one to tackle things in the most obvious fashion, Shan Shriharan once again takes an oblique approach to life on this elaborate, meandering, engaging new single, which clocks in at over seven minutes, has no obvious chorus or hookline beyond sporadically yelped "I'm a ghost!" and seems to exist on a different plane to most music. Pretty much like ghosts themselves. It's both a mood piece and a motorik journey, a tangle and jumble of oddly shaped, disparate parts that somehow manage to coalesce into a far greater whole. Shimmering, middle-distance guitar, handclaps, sax skronks, softly bubbling electronics, some elegantly soulful backing vocals and the odd bit of wandering Mick Karn-style bass. It sounds like The Fall having a pop a The



The's 'Soul Mining' in the style of Gary Numan's 'Dance' album. Of course it shouldn't work. It should be a complete mess, and yet it's both hypnotic and immersive, the musical equivalent of finding a battered box wrapped in newspaper under the Christmas tree and finding a strange looking but ultimately beautiful stray kitten inside. The very best kind of surprise. Dale Kattack



MSRY

'Loss'

(Self released)

Sprechgesang is the word used to describe a vocal style partway between singing and talking. We're not sure if there is an equivalent word to describe that meeting point of screaming, bellowing and vomiting, but if there was it could be MSRY vocalist Kial Churcher's new middle name. After the huge critical acclaim afforded last year's ironically titled 'Safety First' EP, 'Loss' finds the band in no mood to rein things in, six belligerent blitzkrieg slabs of virulent metalcore with no room for niceties or anything clean, the addition of bassist Harvey Lake since the last EP only serving to further bolster a sound that already had its dials set in the red.

'Imposter' actually seems to features the sound of Churcher vomiting for real, but the way he spits the words out across the EP suggests a man whose mind is a burning building and his ideas can't get out fast or furiously enough as guitarist Keir French fans the flames with spiky sheet metal guitar carnage. High point of an exhilarating ride is closer 'Still Breaks My Heart', featuring a guest turn from Cancer Bats' Liam Cormier, one of MSRY's closest musical kin and chief influences. but at this stage, MSRY are leading their own charge - full pelt to death or glory. Or, given Churcher's onstage antics, both at the same time.

LOW ISLAND 'Shut Out the Sun'

(Self released)

Low Island have been drip-feeding tracks from this new EP for a few months now. The first two singles, 'In Person' and 'Search Box', explored our relationship with technology, and how much of the internet distorts how we connect with each other, by way of a Friendly Fires-esque electrojam and big house beats respectively. However, 'Long Answer' - the third and most recent single – moves to challenge poisonous notions of masculinity ("You can shake all the old ideas of how you should be... we need to talk about it") over a glorious groove that harks back to the Burundi beat drumming and rambling ostinato basslines of early 80s bands like Bow Wow Wow. The message is emphasised by the juxtaposition of this sadly only fairly recently openly acknowledged sentiment with the retro-sounding synthesisers; how did we get here? Where did we lose our way? We really do need to talk about it. Kirsten Etheridge

GIGGUIDE

FRIDAY 1^s

SUNSET SONS: Truck Store – The Anglo-Australian surfer-rock crew launch their new album, 'Bloodrush Déjà Vu', following their showing at Truck Festival in the summer. SHAKESPEARS SISTER: The New Theatre –

Siobhan Fahey and Marcella Detroit ride side by side once again – see main preview

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with BRITE SPIRES + THE SCOTT GORDON BAND

+ RICHIE STIX & THE BRAIN PEOPLE: The Wheatsheaf – Sleek'n'shiny silicon synthpop from recent *Nightshift* Top Tracks crew Brite Spires at this month's Klub Kakofanney, the band's pop inspired by Ladytron, Pet Shop Boys and Ultravox. Support from blues-infused Americana man Scott Gordon and band. RAWDIO: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass and

Friday 1st

SHAKESPEARS SISTER: The New Theatre

If Banarama's reunion back in 2018 was a nice surprise, few could have seen Siobhan Fahey's other band getting back together. Such was the rancour surrounding her split with Marcella Detroit back in 1993 (Fahey essentially sacked her via a third-party speech at that year's Ivor Novello Awards) the pair didn't speak for 25 years. A sad end to a regularly intriguing band, best known for their mega hit 'Stay', which sat atop the charts for eight weeks in 1992, but who had so much more about them than that epic slice of polished pop. 'Stay' saw Detroit taking the lead vocal role for the first time, which precipitated the tensions between her and Fahey and Shakespears Sister (the name is a misspelling of The Smiths' single which stuck) has always really been Fahey's solo project, beginning after she quit Bananarama back in the 80s, disillusioned with the direction they were being forced into. and intermittently continued after Detroit's departure, but the reunion between the pair sees the classic form of the band back and on tour to promote a Best Of compilation, 'Hits Party', featuring old faves like 'You're History' and 'I Don't Care' as well as new material – spaghetti western-themed comeback single 'All the Queen's Horses' and the gorgeous team-up with Richard Hawley, 'When She Finds You'.



NOVEMBER

jungle club night.

FLAT LAGER + SELF HELP + STUPID BLOODY TUESDAY: The Jericho Tavern –

Double headliner from boozy punk rock fighters Flat Lager and ebullient pop-punk stars Self Help. Tuesday-phobic sounds from the openers.

WHOLE LOTTA DC: Fat Lil's, Witney – AC/DC tribute.

JK CHAMELEONS: Woodstock Social Club – Dire Straits tribute.

SATURDAY 2nd

WONDERLAND: The Port Mahon – Having reformed last year for sets at Cornbury and Riverside, the local goth-pop stars return, showcasing new songs alongside 90s classics like 'Falling', Children of the Sun' and 'Crushed', the band finding a spangled middle ground between All About Eve, The Sundays and Skeletal Family. THE DUALERS: O2 Academy – Ska and reggae from Croydon's enduring outfit, formed back in 1999 by brothers Tiber and Si Cranston, themselves sons of renowned 60s ska DJ Bill Cranston. After Top 40 hits in 2004 with 'Truly Madly Deeply and 'Kiss On the Lips', they

in 2010.

THE SHAPES + VERNONS FUTURE +

EDWIN & THE KEEPERS: The Bullingdon –

Local stars The Shapes play songs from their full
debut album, the band mixing up a nostalgic sense
of longing and melancholy with an up'n'at'em
party vibe, where The Pogues, Tom Petty and
Van Morrison get their 60s r'n'b vibe on. They're
joined by Oxford/London indie survivors Vernons

continue to tour, despite the departure of Si back

Future, with their roots in Liverpool's 80s scene. **REGGAETON PARTY: The Bullingdon**

 Puerto Rican melange of hip hop and Latin American and Caribbean dance club night.

ROLFE HIND'S BEYOND THE ISLAND: Holywell Music Room – Oxford Contemporary Music host an evening exploring Indonesian music, featuring Javanese metallophones interweaved with gong chimes and prepared piano. The show also includes a chamber work by Symon Clarke for gamelan instruments and flute.

105AD + CAITLIN ASHCROFT: The Harcourt Arms – Jazz, blues, ska and pop from

the guitar and harmonica duo.

RATPACK LIVE: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Tribute to Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy

CENTRELINE: Kings Head & Bell, Abingdon

- Noughties pop-punk and alt.rock covers.

SUNDAY 3rd

EVERYBODY YOU KNOW: O2 Academy –

The London-based rap/electro-pop duo tour their new 'Look After the Pennies' EP.

BEARS DEN: O2 Academy – Plaintive folk-

pop from Communion signings Bear's Den, back in town to promote third album 'So That You Might Hear Me', following tours with chums and

musical kindred spirits Mumford & Sons.

JACK SAVORETTI: The New Theatre –

Gravel-voiced blues and soul from the singer, touring his sixth album, 'Singing To Strangers', his first Number 1, and back in Oxfordshire for the first time since playing at Truck and Cornbury festivals.

OPEN MIC NIGHT: Harcourt Arms – Weekly open session

TRACY ISLAND + BEARD OF DESTINY + FRANKLIN'S TOWER: Donnington

Community Centre (6pm) – Free evening of live music with 60s and 70s-inspired prog pop from Tracy Island, blues from Beard of Destiny, Grateful Dead-inspired rock from Franklin's Tower.

MONDAY 4th

CATE LE BON: The Bullingdon – Pop contrarian Cate returns, fresh from her Mercury nomination – see main preview

FEEDER: O2 Academy – Grant Nicholas' popfriendly post-grunge rockers return to town after their show here in 2017 on the back of their tenth studio album, 'Tallulah'.

MAKING TRACKS: The North Wall – A touring celebration of world fusion sounds, including Orcadian fiddle player Louise Bichan; Kenyan nyatiti and obokano player Rapasa Otieno; Czech kantele and guzheng player Barbora Xu; Spanish-French singer Luna Silver; Turkish fiddle player Melisa Yildrim; Anglo-Indian santoor player Kaviraj Singh and Estonian bagpipe, mouth harp and sax player Katariin OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Castle – Weekly open

ANDY IRVINE: Nettlebed Folk Club – An intimate show for the Irish music legend, an icon of traditional folk music and a pioneer of world sounds, from his spells in 60s and 70s stalwarts Sweeny's Men, Planxty and Patrick Street as well as work with Dick Gaughan and Paul Brady, to more recent experiments with Usher's Island. Widely considered one of the greatest Irish folk singers of all time as well as a renowned social justice campaigner.

TUESDAY 5th

HANG MASSIVE: O2 Academy – Rhythmic ambient world sounds from the hang-playing duo. Rearranged from last month.

REEL BIG FISH + [SPUNGE] +

LIGHTYEAR: O2 Academy – Aaron Barrett's Orange County ska-punk veterans come to town, touring their latest album, 'Life Sucks, Let's Dance', still a major cult concern, and mainstay of the Vans Warped Tour, two decades on from their commercial peak in the 90s and breakthrough album 'Turn the Radio Off', myriad line-up changes having failed to halt the band's enduring popularity. Tewksbury's ska-punk survivors [Spunge] support.

THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD: The New Theatre – Enduring big stage Floyd tribute. OXFORD IMPROVISERS LUNCHTIME CONCERT: Wesley Memorial Church (12-1pm) – Lunchtime improv gig in aid of the church restoration fund.

WEDNESDAY 6th

THE CRUSHING + NEW DEPTH: The

Wheatsheaf – Classic metal and thrash from The Crushing at tonight's Rock Soc show, plus anthemic alt.rockers New Depth.

PADDY STEER + KNOBBLEHEAD: Tan

Social – a strange and exotic world of music from Paddy Steer, sometimes dubbed the Mancunian Moon Dog, at tonight's Upcycled Sounds and Tandem Collective show, the cosmic sound explorer mixing up electronic experimentation, jazz fusion, Balkan folk, noise-rock and drones into an eclectic, spaceward stew. Exuberant psychedelic pop and shoegaze noise from local ensemble Knobblehead in support.

COME JIVE WITH ME: The Bullingdon

THURSDAY 7th

LITTLE COMETS: O2 Academy – Newcastle's ebullient Afro-pop-flavoured indie rockers return to town after their last show here in 2017, playing songs from their new single '3 Minute Faltz', having originally made their name playing guerrilla

Monday 4th

CATE LE BON: The Bullingdon

If Cate le Bon looked less than happy at the Mercury Prize awards ceremony last month it probably more to do with not fitting into the music industry and its glitzy trappings than not winning. Throughout her career, from early days singing in her native Welsh and supporting Gruff Rhys, to her current status as one of the most respected and uncompromising musicians out there, le Bon has played no-one's game but her own. Become part of Welsh pop royalty? Move to LA! Attract serious record label interest? Leave LA and move to Cumbria! Find yourself unable to write anything but beautiful pop songs with tunes to die for? Stick them through a strange, warped psych-folk blender until they sound like something from a different planet! Le Bon's music has always been a balance between awkwardness bordering on ramshackle, and the sweetest melodies you can imagine, her voice, a thing of strange wonder in itself, the magic ingredient that sprinkles even her most oddball moments with musical fairy dust. It can be as warm, rich and homely as a hearth, but simultaneously as unearthly as a siren song. Seriously, she could sing the Welsh phone book and make it sound like a love letter from the gods. She is an artist whose thought trains don't run along everyday tracks, but for all that, she can't help conjuring irresistible pop gems out of bits and pieces that shouldn't really fit together. She is unique and one of the finest musicians of the modern era. Cherish her.



gigs in university lecture halls and call centres as well as supporting the likes of Noisettes, The Twang and Biffy Clyro on their way up. **DEAF HAVANA: O2 Academy** – A first Oxford show in half a decade for Norfolk's Pop-friendly stadium rockers – though they did perform at Truck

DEAF HAVANA: O2 Academy – A first Oxford show in half a decade for Norfolk's Pop-friendly stadium rockers – though they did perform at Truck back in 2017 – whose staying power sees them approaching veteran status as they release their new 'Live at Brixton Academy' album.

CHARLIE CUNNINGHAM: Holywell Music

Room – Rich, reflective, flamenco-flavoured folkpop from Bedfordshire-based singer and guitarist Charlie, once of this Shire, and out on tour to promote his second full album, 'Permanent Way'. ADAM GLASSER: The Wheatsheaf – Spin Jazz Club welcomes chromatic harmonica player Adam Glasser, who has worked with Martha Reeves, Jimmy Witherspoon, Hugh Masekhela, and Dudu Pukwana, back to town.

THRILL COLLINS: The Jericho Tavern – Pop classics skiffle style.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford

Community Centre – After last month's 25th anniversary celebration, Oxford's longest-running open night gets back to showcasing singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists every Thursday.

FRIDAY 8th

THE ROARING 2.0s: O2 Academy – 1920s themed club night with period dance troupes, burlesque, big bands, electro-swing DJs and more. NIGEL GARAGE: The Bullingdon – Puntastic garage club night.

WHITESNAKE UK: Fat Lil's, Witney – Tribute to the metal legends.

SATURDAY 9th

OMD: The New Theatre – The synth-pop legends return with a sold-out show – see main preview SINK YA TEETH: Fusion Arts – Return to town for the electro-pop/post-punk duo – see main preview

SNARKY PUPPY + CHARLIE HUNTER + LUCY WOODWARD: O2 Academy – Jazz, lounge rock, funk and much, much more from Michael League's fusion big band whose ever evolving, revolving membership has seen some 50 members come and go across 13 albums – including new one 'Immigrance' – with a core of 25 or so jamming out mostly instrumental pieces.

DR SYNTAX & PETE CANNON: O2

Academy – Much-travelled Banbury rapper and producer Dr Syntax, who has worked extensively alongside Foreign Beggars and collaborated with Rizzle Kicks and Del the Funky Homosapien as well as fronting Manc hip hop outfit Mouse collective, returns to the Shire alongside long-time collaborator Pete Cannon, playing songs from their new album 'Wallop', with an irreverent approach to rap and techno.

SWITCH feat. SAMMY VIRJI: O2 Academy

- Long-running club night Switch hosts Oxford/

Newcastle bass, bassline and garage star Virji, alongside Mind of a Dragon, Silk and Burt Cope.

SIMPLE feat. DR RUBENSTEIN: The

Bullingdon – Hypnotic trance, acid house and

90s techno from renowned Israeli DJ Marina Rubenstein at long-running techno/house club night Simple.

THE DELINES + THOSE PRETTY WRONGS: St. John the Evangelist – Willy

Vlautin and Amy Boone's alt.country dreamers get back on the road after Boone's horrific accident – see main preview



Saturday 9th_

SINK YA TEETH / TIGER MENDOZA / MEANS OF PRODUCTION: Fusion Arts

Nightshift fell in love with Sink Ya Teeth the

moment we heard their debut single 'If You See Me' back in 2017 – it's woozily dubbedout electro pop equal parts discomforting, seductive and hypnotic, like the greatest lost gem from post-punk's first flowering. Its follow-up 'Glass' was even better, a slinkily propulsive slice of crystalline Moroder disco-pop. Then came 'Substitutes' - fidgety electro-punk-funk that sounds like it shimmied out of the same late-70s wormhole as LCD Soundsystem. Here is a band who can do no wrong. Hailing from Norwich, the duo - Maria Uzor and Gemma Cullingford – are veterans of their hometown music scene, with Gemma previously a member of KaitO and Maria in gothic blues outfit Girl in a Thunderbolt, but together they've found something magic: a bedroom-made discofriendly update on those sublime bands like ECG, Liquid Liquid, Bush Tetras and The Delta 5 that came up in the wake of punk, ignored rock's cast-in-stone rules and cut a swathe of fresh air and sounds through the scene. Following a tour with A Certain Ratio, they released their debut album last year, earning across the board praise and frankly they're one of the best bands we've heard in the past few years. Gloriously inventive stuff. And glorious local support too from electro/ industrial/hip hop crew Tiger Mendoza and austere electro-pop/post-punk duo Means of

DAY OF THE DEADBEATS XI: Isis

Farmhouse – The Deadbeat Apostles host another free evening of roots music and Americana, kicking out a wonderfully soulful blend of country, blues and r'n'b. Tonight's they're joined by Ameripolitan songsmith Ags Connolly, who's just released his third album, 'Wrong Again', and Tennessee-flavoured Americana from The Holy Fools.

ELLES BAILEY: The Jericho Tavern – Rootsy blues, country and soul-rock from the Bristol singer and guitarist whose debut album 'Wildfire' earned her four British Blues Awards nominations;

from recording the follow-up in Nashville.

BOOGIEFEST with MUDSLIDE MORRIS

& THE REVELATORS: The Port Mahon –

tonight's Glovebox show comes as she returns

Classic blues, boogie, rhythm'n'blues and rock from Morris and his band, in the vein of Seasick Steve, John Lee Hooker and Rory Gallagher, plus Revelators DJs spinning rare boogie, blues and



Saturday 9th

THE DELINES: St. John the Evangelist

Fate has a way of chucking all manner of shit at musicians as they strive to make their mark. In the case of The Delines it was a traffic accident that left singer Amy Boone with two shattered legs and three years in recovery. Up until that point the band had been on a steady and certain road upwards on the back of their acclaimed 2014 debut album 'Colfax', picked up and championed by Drive By Truckers' Patterson Hood among others. Then again The Delines was already a band with some serious pedigree – formed by ex-Damnations singer Boone and Richmond Fontaine leader Willy Vlautin alongside Decemberists keyboard player Jenny Conlee and Minus 5 pedal steel player Tucker Jackson as well as Vlautin's Richmond Fontaine band mate Sean Oldham. Boon's soulful voice was at the centre of it all: heartache and longing pervade every corner of her tales of luckless lovers, late-night drinkers and PTSD-suffering war veterans. 'Colfax' was the sound of a beat-up bar midnight confessional, where Dusty Springfield, Tom Waits and Mazzy Star came to buy rounds and swap hard luck stories. Second album 'The Imperial' was all ready to go when Boone was hit by that car. Now recovered, The Delines' story continues and will hopefully suffer no more such setbacks and tonight's gig, for Empty Room promotions of course, is already a sold-out. No there's a happy ending for some seriously sad songs.

rhythm'n'blues tracks.

CHRIS CLEVERLY TRIO + KITH & KIN: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood

- Wychwood Folk Club hosts award-winning guitarist and singer Chris Cleverley with his haunting tales of ghost women, lonesome clock towers, lovelorn mariners and hospital beds, inspired by his childhood in Cornwall and Brecon. **MOVE IT: Woodstock Social Club**

SUNDAY 10th

A NIGHT LIKE THIS + EVADE ESCAPE + LONESOME + MELWOOD: The Bullingdon

- Emo and post-hardcore from south Wales' A Night Like This, who've previously supported Shields, Holding Absence and Parting Gift. **MARILLION: The New Theatre – The** enduring progsters celebrate 40 years of defiantly unfashionable rocking by releasing a set of orchestral reworkings of old favourites.

RACHEL DADD: Truck Store – The Bristolian *main preview* indie-folk singer plays tracks from her new 'Flux' MAHAJANAKA DANCE DRAMA:

SIMON JOYNER: The Library – Intensely personal and poetic songsmithery from Nebraska's Simon Joyner at tonight's Divine

Schism – his Oxford debut. Taking inspiration from Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan, Lou Reed and Townes van Zandt, Joyner has gone on to influence Beck, Gillian Welch and Bright Eyes along the way. John Peel was a huge fan, famously playing Joyner's '94 album 'The Cowardly Traveller Pays His Toll' in its entirety on his Radio 1 show. He's touring new album 'Pocket Moon', recorded with a band of musicians he'd never previously met. Very much a singer-songwriter with a difference.

OPEN MIC NIGHT: Harcourt Arms SUNDAY AFTERNOON SOCIAL: The Wheatsheaf (3.30pm) – Free afternoon of live

music in the downstairs bar with Tony & Sal Batey, The Delta Hardware, Larry Reddington, The Cat Shakers and Fancy Wootton.

MONDAY 11th

ELDER ISLAND: O2 Academy – Atmospheric blend of electronic, soul and pop from Bristol's Elder Island, touring their debut album, 'The Omnitone Collection', produced by Ali Chant who has previously worked with Portishead, PJ Harvey and Perfume Genius.

OXFORD CLASSIC JAZZ: The Harcourt Arms – Classic jazz and ragtime from the local ensemble, playing Jellyroll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Fats Domino and more.

THE POOZIES: The Cornerstone, Didcot

- Founding member Mary Macmaster and longtime cohort Eilidh Shaw are joined by newcomers Sarah McFayden and Tia Files as the leading stars of the UK folk scene continue to explore eclectic trad paths, from Gaelic waulking songs to old-time Americana and more contemporary popinfused folk and country.

OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Castle FRIGG: Nettlebed Folk Club - The sevenstrong Finnish fiddle group return to Nettlebed after last year's debut, playing jigs, reels, polkas and bluegrass tunes.

TUESDAY 12th

YONAKA: O2 Academy - Epic pop-friendly post-grunge rockinge from Brighton's Yonaka, touring debut full album 'Don't Wait Til Tomorrow' following their showing at Truck Festival in the summer.

SPECTOR: The Bullingdon - Back after playing Truck Festival in the summer, the enduring indie stars are back with a brace of new singles, doubtless ahead of a third album. Arch showman Frederick Macpherson and his band have enjoyed the hype and endured the backlash and come out unbowed, their chrome-plated 80s-styled electro-indie inspired by Joy Division and Roxy Music initially and making them perfect festival favourite fodder.

INTRUSION: Cirkus - Monthly goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night.

WEDNESDAY 13th

MYSTERY SKULLS: O2 Academy - Neo-soul and disco house from Luis Dubuc, whose eclectic list of collaborators includes Nile Rodgers, Adam Lambert and Avicii.

LANKUM: The Bullingdon – Irish folk on the autobahn from the experimental Dubliners – see

Jacqueline du Pre Building – Oxford based composer and producer Seb Reynolds and Neon Dance director Adrienne Hart collaborate with award winning Thai dance artist Pichet Klunchun to retell the story of Mahajanaka Jataka, one of the oldest surviving folk tales in the world. The show features live Thai music performed by Pradit Saengkrai and Great Lekakul, and electronic soundscapes performed by Sebastian Revnolds.

THURSDAY 14th

THE SMYTHS: O2 Academy - The Smiths tribute play the band's debut album in full, plus assorted hits.

GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS + CIPHERS + MASTER OF NONE + BRUNO MUERTE: The Library – All Will Be Well

Records showcase, with cinematic post-rock instrumentalists Ghosts in the Photographs, who released their epic 'Taylor Mountain Memorial' single on the label recently, heading into the sonic maelstrom via Mogwai, Ride and Explosions in the Sky. They're joined by drama-laden alt. rockers Ciphers, finding a neat meeting point between Slowdive and Skunk Anansie; electrogothic explorers Master of None, and cigar box guitar swamp blues from Bruno Muerte.

ROCKETMAN: The New Theatre – Big stage tribute to Elton John

DAVID GORDON: The Wheatsheaf – Pianist and composer David Gordon is the guest at this week's Spin jazz club.

SO FETCH: The Bullingdon – Noughties retro dance night.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford **Community Centre**

REVEREND BLACK'S ACOUSTIC

CABARET: The Half Moon - Acoustic blues, country, folk and classic rock night with Bone Machine, Dada Paradox and Richard Brotherton.

FRIDAY 15th

JAMES MORRISON: The New Theatre – Is this the guy who does 'Babylon'? Or are we thinking of 'You're Beautiful'? Actually, can we not think about him at all, please?

EASTER ISLAND STATUES + BLACK HATS + THE AUGUST LIST: The Wheatsheaf - Top drawer triple bill of local heroes as part of Daisy Rodgers Music's 10th birthday celebrations, with recent Nightshift cover stars Easter Island Statues' rough'n'ready anthemic indie alongside bolshy dub'n'goth-tinged post-punk from Black Hats and the peerless dark-folk and drone-rock of The August List.

THE TREATMENT + AIRRACE + LAKE ACACIA: O2 Academy - Classic hard rock and punk from Cambridge's riffmeisters and recent tour support to Buckcherry.

BLACK PARADE: O2 Academy - Noughties emo club night.

TRACKSUITS & TRANCE with N'TRANCE:

The Bullingdon - Retro run through of club classics, with Manchester's million-selling hitmakers N-Trance reliving 'Set You Free' and 'Forever' as well as covers of 'Stayin' Alive' and 'Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?'.

MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS + THE GOLDEN DREGS + PUPPET MECHANIC + ENJOYABLE LISTENS: The Port Mahon

- Kicking off this year's Oxford City Festival is arch local pop maverick Moogieman, on the back of his band's latest single, 'Ghost Driver', their best so far. They're joined by melancholic, downbeat popstrels Puppet Mechanic and 80s-styled electro-pop chap Enjoyable Listens. PANGOLIN + DAN RAWLE: The Jericho Tavern - Funk, jazz, soul and hip hop fusion

from the local septet.

OSPREY & CO.: The Half Moon - Funky blues from Oxford City Festival organiser and local scene legend Osprev and chums.

CRYSTALLITE: Cirkus - Oxford City Festival gig with the local post-grunge rockers. MUDLSIDE MORRIS & THE

REVELATORS: James Street Tavern -

Unplugged show from the blues and boogie band. PINK MAC: Fat Lil's, Witney – Pink Floyd and Fleetwood Mac double tribute-in-one treat.

SATURDAY 16th

SNOW PATROL: The New Theatre -

Relatively intimate show from the mega-selling indie hitmakers – see main preview

DUB PISTOLS + ZAIA + ZEN LEWIS: 02 Academy – Wall-to-wall festival-sized bangers from Barry Ashworth's enduring electro/dub/big/ beat/jungle/hip hop stars, keeping true to their tried and tested formula on most recent album, 'Crazy Diamonds', featuring guest turns from

Monday 6th

OMD:

The New Theatre

OMD were one of electro-pop's finest hitmakers, selling millions around the world with hits like 'Enola Gay', 'Souvenir' and 'Joan of Arc' in the early-80s. As such it's easy to think of Andy McLusky and Paul Humphreys as simple purveyors of pristine pop perfection – and they were, to the Nth degree, but to anyone with a serious interest in electronic music the pair were true pioneers, firstly with their homemade tape machines and modular synths and abstract initial experiments, and later with the likes of 'Dazzle Ships', the follow-up to their multimillion-selling magnum opus 'Architecture and Morality', and the album that almost broke the band: utilizing samples and cut-ups years before such things became mainstream and more fully exploring the political edge that was too often overlooked simply because the tunes were so bloody great. The pair did eventually fall out and McLusky just about kept the name going with diminishing returns, but a reunion was never too far away and since returning fully to action, revisiting many of those earliest triumphs and making new music that skips the cheesier pop period in favour of more cutting edge electro-pop and lyrics, OMD have at last achieved the critical acclaim they always deserved. Not just pioneers and not just creators of great pop music, OMD are also a superb live band and, really, everyone should see Andy McLusky dance before they die. A dying squirrel being the best comparison we've read.



Ragga Twins, Cutty Ranks and Too Many T's. Local dub-pop stars Zaia support.

PROFESSOR GREEN: O2 Academy - He's not a real professor but he is a proper polymath; welcome back to town, Mr Manderson - see main

SWITCH feat, HYBRID MINDS: O2 Academy - Drum&bass duo Hybrid Minds come to the long-running club night.

ALASKALASKA: The Jericho Tavern -Polished synth-pop, experimental jazz and disco

fun from London sextet Alaskalaska, back in town after playing last year's Ritual Union and touring debut album 'The Dots'.

MUSICAL MEDICINE with FOLAMOUR:

The Bullingdon - Soulful house and disco from French DJ and producer Folamour at tonight's Musical Medicine club night.

THE OVERLOAD + RESTRUCTURE + MY DIABLO: The Wheatsheaf - Back in action with a new line-up as part of Oxford City Festival, krautfunk, post-punk poets The Overload bring the revolution and the party back to town where Ian Dury and Happy Mondays meet Can and The Sex Pistols. They're joined by electro-hip hop hoolies Restructure with a witty, ire-fuelled stomp, and heavyweights My Diablo.

GARDEN CENTRE + ROBERT SOTELO + JACK GOLDSTEIN + SHAKE CHAIN: Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre -

former King of Cats man Max Levy returns to Oxford with a full band and a new album, 'A Moon For Digging', with his unnerving mix of lo-fi punk, cartoon creepiness and queasy pop. He's joined by oddball lo-fi chap Robert Sotelo. psychedelic showman Jack Goldstein and Shake Chain, the new band formed by Permanent Slump's Kate Mahoney.

SLOW WEDNESDAY UKULELE BAND: The **Harcourt Arms**

LA PHOOKA: The Half Moon **DOCTOR STEEVO + GREAT APE: Cirkus**

- OCF show with the local electro-pop producer Steevo and grunged-up indie-punk and garage rock crew Great Ape.

A TRIBUTE TO PRINCE: East Oxford Community Centre - Live tribute and more. A-WATTS: East Hanney British Legion - 50s and 60s rock'n'roll.

SUNDAY 17th

FLIGHTS OF HELIOS: Ultimate Picture

Palace (2.30-5pm) – Local psychedelic starsailors FoH perform a live soundtrack to the 1926 film The Adventures of Prince Achmed – the oldest surviving animated movie. The soundtrack, part of the UPP's Weimar film season, features flute, violin, guitars, tabla, percussion and processed vocals.

BLACK WATER COUNTY: O2 Academy -Punked-up Irish folk fun from Bournemouth's Black Water County, infused with the spirits of The Pogues, Dropkick Murphys and The Rumjacks and out on a headline tour after supporting Flogging Molly.

MANNEQUIN PUSSY + SCRAP BRAIN + BLOOD HORSE: The Jericho Tavern - an Oxford debut for Philadelphia's Mannequin Pussy at tonight's Freak Scene show, Marisa Dabice's band continuing to expand their sonic palate on third album 'Patience', the early punk anger of debut 'Gypsy Pervert' increasingly mixed in with emo anguish, epic stadium rock and shoegaze but still managing to balance strong poppy melody with full-on fury. They're joined by regular visitors to town Scrap Brain, fresh from a



Wednesday 13th

LANKUM: The Bullingdon

Watching Lankum play at The North Wall

last year we did wonder how much better the Dublin quartet might go down with a more rock audience than the slightly buttoned-up St Edward's crowd, and tonight's we'll get our chance to see. Lankum – previously known as Lynched, a play on founding brothers Ian and Daragh Lynch, but changing their name in protest against racist murders in the US - are a folk band, but with several big differences. Not least among those are a fondness for acts like Can and Cluster ("This is a krautrock take on an old Donegal fiddle tune," was just one of the more unexpected introductions in that North Wall show), as well as My Bloody Valentine, Michael Nyman and Portishead, all of which make their songs and stories - gathered from their travels around Ireland and often taken from traveller traditions and legends – a highly unusual window into traditional music. Like all great folk acts the quartet are adept at the close harmony singing chemistry that brings the best out of their songs, and the betweensong banter that brings the fun alongside the drones, scrapes and esoteric diversions. Star of the show is Radie Peat, whose intense, hymnal voice on songs like 'Granite Gaze' brings to mind a gothic Kirsty MacColl. The band have a new album, 'The Livelong Day', out, and we look forward to seeing them play to the kind of crowd they really deserve.

European tour, and local mayhemic hardcore crew Blood Horse.

THE STEPHEN EVENS BAND + ALLY CRAIG + APHRA TAYLOR: Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre (3.30pm) – Lunchtime For the Wild Youth host their second matinee gig, with sometime Graham Coxon, Charlotte Hatherley and Damned drummer Stephen Evens with his wistfully idiosyncratic wobble-pop and anti-folk. Ally Craig supports with an abrasively whimsical mix of Slint, Sonic Youth, Deerhoof and Ivor Cutler, while opener Aphra Taylor mixes stark acoustic folk-pop and ethereal dreaminess on her deeply emotive songs.

ALIENS: Truck Store – Stripped-back instore set from the jazz-infused rockers.

OPEN MIC NIGHT: Harcourt Arms SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Half Moon (3pm) -Free afternoon of live music as part of Oxford City Festival with Tim May, Ady Davey and The Accompanied.



Saturday 16th

SNOW PATROL: The New Theatre

Or 'Snow Patrol Reworked' as this tour of relatively intimate shows for the Scottish/Irish pop giants is titled. The idea that The New Theatre would be considered an intimate show for Gary Lightbody and his band back in 1998 when they released 'Songs For Polarbears' and were playing at The Point seems almost laughable now, but two decades, five platinum albums and an Ivor Novello Award later, the band are in the A League as far as popularity goes. People have questioned Nightshift's love for Snow Patrol over the years, but from that raw first album, with what now feels like a weird leaning towards Dinosaur Jr and elements of hip hop, through the undeniably superb 'Run' and 'Chasing Cars' (the most played song on the radio of the 21st Century so far), to arguably the band's best album, 'Eyes Open', featuring 'Set the Fire to the Third Bar', a sublime duet between Lightbody and Martha Wainwright, and onto stadiumsized glory, they have simply done what any globally successful band should do - write big hit singles for big occasions, and if they don't come with the rough edges they did back in the beginning, then tough. After last year's 'Wildness' album comes 'Reworked', an album of hits and more "reimagined", and that provides the basis for tonight's show; unsurprisingly it sold out in a matter of hours. Lighters aloft, people.

NIKKI PETHERICK + HEX COLLECTIVE + BRODIE JOHNSON: Abingdon Guildhall (2-5pm) – As part of the Make Music Abingdon programme, started by the late Sam Prince, three acts perform live and then talk about the craft of

MONDAY 18th

writing music.

SCOUTING FOR GIRLS: O2 Academy - In the words of Marwood, "will we never be set

JAWS: The Bullingdon - Birmingham's dreamy shoegazers return to town off the back of new album 'The Ceiling', mixing up the influences of Ride, The xx and Friendly Fires into their atmospheric, sometimes ethereal indie pop. MSRY: The Library – Virulent, visceral metalcore from local stars on the rise MSRY as they kick off a national tour to promote their new 'Loss' EP, including single 'Still Breaks My Heart', featuring Cancer Bats' Liam Cormier. Remove all breakables and prepare for battle. **OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Castle**

THE LADIES OF NETTLEBED: Nettlebed Folk Club - Charlie Dore, Rowan Godel, Megan Henwood and Jackie Oates takes centre stage at

tonight's Nettlebed showcase.

TUESDAY 19th

PRIMAL SCREAM: O2 Academy - Enduring leading lights of the UK indie and rock scene since the mid-80s, Bobby Gillespie's magpieminded gang return to town after their show here in 2017, and before that their Common People headline in 2016. From the commercial and critical peak of 1991's epoch-making 'Screamadelica', through the krautrock-inspired highs of 'Vanishing Point' and 'XTMNTR' via dalliances with blues rock and a recurring dip back into The Rolling Stones' catalogue, they're equally nostalgic and pioneering, militant and hedonistic, and even as an elder statesman of music, Gillespie remains very much his own

JON BODEN & THE REMNANT KINGS:

The Bullingdon – Former Bellowhead and Spiers and Boden singer and fiddle player Jon heads back out on tour, promoting 'Rose in June' with his string trio The Remnant Kings, playing original tunes and traditional folk songs.

ARISEN + LEAKY TENT + BLACK TISHII + SPIKE HOLIFIELD: The Wheatsheaf -Local rock newcomers Arisen headline tonight's Oxford City Festival show.

PIZZA MIC: The Library – Monthly open session hosted by Ian de Quadros.

IF ON A WINTER'S NIGHT: The Old Fire Station - Oxford Improvisers night.

WEDNESDAY 20th

YAZZ AHMED: St John the Evangelist

- Psychedelic Arabian jazz from the British-Bahraini trumpeter and composer, blurring the lines between jazz, electronic sound design and traditional Arabian music. Tonight's show, hosted by OCM, sees her playing music from her latest album, 'Polyhymnia', backed by her Hafla

DODO + THE SATURN FARMHOUSE + BOREDOMS IN THE BATHROOM + BLUEBYRD: The Wheatsheaf - Oxford City Festival showcase gig.

THURSDAY 21st

A + '68 + FALSE HEADS: O2 Academy -

Jason Perry's reformed post-grunge alt.rockers return to Oxford for the first time since 2009, fresh from a summer of festivals, including 2000 Trees, and revisiting 90s and Noughties hits like 'For Starters' and 'Nothing'.

ALIENS + THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE + MAKE FRIENDS + STARBELLY: The

Bullingdon – Funk, soul and jazz-infused rocking from Aliens, the band formed by Del Amitri's Iain Harvie and writer and film-maker Tim May, playing songs from their debut album 'Terradome' at tonight's Oxford City Festival show alongside electro-acid-surf stars The Pink Diamond Revue and goth-glam heavyweights

THE MATT CHANDLER BAND: The

Wheatsheaf - Versatile guitarist Matt Chandler, whose eclectic style has seen him play with Youth, Poly Styrene and Arno Casterns, brings his jazz trio to the Spin, alongside Hammond and

THE SCOTT GORDON BAND + CAPTAIN **KUPPA T & THE ZEPPELIN CREW +**

DAZE: The Port Mahon - Blues-infused Americana from Scott Gordon and band at tonight's OCF show, plus a capella folk and chap hop from Captain Kuppa T. **CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre**

FRIDAY 22nd

HALF MAN HALF BISCUIT: O2 Academy

- Nigel Blackwell and Neil Crossley return to town with the mighty Half Man Half Biscuit. Since their seminal 80s debut 'Back In The DHSS', Blackwell's none-more-sardonic outlook, inventive punnery and Fall-esque postpunk racket has documented smalltown English life, football and crap telly in peerless fashion, a rare example of laugh-out-loud humour mixing seamlessly with great music. From 'McIntyre, Davitt & Treadmore' to last year's 'No-one Cares About Your Creative Hub, So Get Your Fuckin' Hedge Cut', they remain the same but always on top of their game, with an uncanny knack of splicing together popular culture, everyday life and biting sarcasm. A national treasure, as the late, great John Peel more than

Saturday 16th

PROFESSOR GREEN: O2 Academy

A true polymath, Stephen Manderson's is also a story of triumph in the face of adversity. The kid who would grow up to be Professor Green was raised in Hackney by his grandmother and great grandmother, his chief involvement with his father being having to identify his body when he died when Stephen was 24 – something that led Manderson to give up drugs for good. Refusing a scholarship to a selective school and staying true to his working class roots, he won rap battles and attracted the attention of Mike Skinner who signed him to his The Beats label, while surviving an attack where he was stabbed in the neck. But it was after singing to Virgin that he became the household name he is now. releasing two Gold-selling albums, 'Alive Till I'm Dead' and 'At Your Convenience', and collaborating with the likes of Lily Allen, Emili Sandé, Example and Maverick Sabre, earning a Best Hip Hop Act award at the MOBOs in 2010. Hip hop moves on quickly but so has Green, expanding his work into film and documentary making and campaigning on a number of issues, particularly male suicide, mental health, homelessness among young people and the rise of the far right. If music hasn't exactly taken a backseat, he's got a lot of fingers in a lot of pies and if his planned tour earlier this year had to be postponed after he fractured his neck after a seizure, he's back on the road for this 'Matter of the Heart' tour. A great musician, but so much more besides.



CRAIG CHARLES' FUNK & SOUL CLUB: O2 Academy - BBC Radio's most infectiously enthusiastic DJ and space traveller brings his party-starting collection

of soul, funk and rare grooves back to

BLACKWATER CONSPIRACY:

The Bullingdon - Rootsy blues and country rocking from County Tyrone's hard-gigging Blackwater Conspiracy, channelling The Rolling Stones, Black Crowes and Faces, touring their new album 'Goodbye to Yesterday' following appearances at Download and Ramblin'

CUT THE TRAP: The Bullingdon - Hip hop and trap club night.

EMMA HUNTER + NEON TEEPEE + THE HOLY FOOLS + SHIV3RS: The Wheatsheaf - Oxford City Festival show with drama-laden baroque/surf pop singer Emma Hunter and more.

GNOME + BAD BLOOD RECOVERY + GRAND MAL: The Port Mahon -

Beast-heavy instrumental stoner-metal from Antwerp's Gnome at tonight's Buried in Smoke show, with support from local heavyweights Bad Blood Recovery and The Grand Mal – see Introducing feature **SON OF DAVE: Fat Lil's, Witney – Raw** and rootsy blues from London-based Canadian singer, beatboxer, harmonica player and loop pedaller Benjamin Darvill, the former Crash Test Dummies man inspired by Little Walter, James Cotton and Sonny Terry as he mixes up gospel, Chicago blues, r'n'b and hip hop.

SATURDAY 23rd

THE MONOCHROME SET + PEERLESS PIRATES: The Jericho

Tavern - A return to town for post-punk survivors The Monochrome Set, whose early embracing of lounge and surf pop, as well as an idiosyncratic approach to rhythms and melody and an ironic, oblique lyricism set them apart from the leftfield rock of the late-70s. They've split up and reformed twice in their lifetime, founder Bid and long-term guitarist Andy Warren still helming the band as they tour their latest album, 'Maisieworld', which, characteristically brings Latin pop, bossa nova, Indian raga and chanson to its melting pot. Great support from longstanding local faves Peerless Pirates, themselves inspired by The Monochrome Set as well as The Smiths, The Ukranians and a whole lotta seafaring fun.

OCTAVIA FREUD + MOJAVE + MEANS OF PRODUCTION + DJ ART LAGUN: The Wheatsheaf - Electronica

night at Oxford City Festival with experimentalist Octavia Freud alongside laptop soundscapist Mojave, steely postpunk synth-pop duo Means of Production and Nightshift's own Art Lagun on the

BIFFY McCLYRO: O2 Academy -Tribute night.

REGGAE GOT SOUL with DADDY G: The Bullingdon – Deep, dubby reggae, hip hop, garage, drum&bass and block party classics from the Massive Attack man, back in town after his show for Skylarkin' Soundsystem in 2017.

NINA JADE: The Harcourt Arms - r'n'b. soul and urban pop from the acoustic singer-songwriter.

THE OXFORD BEATLES: The **Sheldonian** – The local Beatles tribute celebrate the 50th anniversary of 'Abbey

FRANKLIN'S TOWER: The Half Moon - Grateful Dead-flavoured fun. **A-WATTS: Woodstock Social Club**

SUNDAY 24th

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SOCIAL: The

Wheatsheaf (3pm) – Free afternoon of live music in the downstairs bar as part of Oxford City Festival.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SOCIAL: The **Half Moon** (3pm) – Free afternoon of live music in the downstairs bar as part of Oxford City Festival, with Sal & Tony Batey, Artisan Blues Trio, Mojo Demon and Delta Hardware.

OPEN MIC NIGHT: Harcourt Arms BLUES JAM: Fat Lil's, Witney (3pm) -Monthly open jam.

MONDAY 25th

PIANO JAZZ: The Harcourt Arms **OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Castle** PETER KNIGHT'S GIGSPANNER BIG BAND: Nettlebed Folk Club - Nettlebed hosts former Steeleye Spanner fiddle player Peter Knight, now concentrating on his Gigspanner band, giving a modern folk twist to traditional songs on most recent album 'Layers of Ages'.

TUESDAY 26th

FONTAINES DC: O2 Academy - Dublin comes alive in raw and romantic rocking fashion with the Mercury nominees - see main preview

FLINTLOCK RIFLES + EARINADE + WATERFOOLS + SPRUNG FROM CAGES: The Wheatsheaf - Fuzzy and frantic indie rocking from Flintlock Rifles at tonight's Oxford City Festival show, alongside post-punk and new wavers Earinade, Witney's grunge duo Waterfools and punk starlets Sprung From Cages. MONKEYFIST: The Wheatsheaf

WEDNESDAY 27th

PENELOPE ISLES: The Jericho Tavern

- Swoonesome indie from Brighton's harmony-pop heroes – see main preview ELECTRIC SIX: O2 Academy – Dick Valentine's garage-glam crew still doing the rounds over a decade and a half on from hits 'Gay Bar' and 'Danger! High Voltage', playing it deliberately dumb with their tongue-in-cheek rock disco bombast. BEN POOLE: The Bullingdon - A

return to town for the rising UK bluesrock guitarist, drawing comparisons to Joe Satriani and Joe Bonamassa, winning fans in Bernie Torme and the late Gary Moore along the way.

DAVID THOMAS BROUGHTON + BELL LUNGS + BETH SHEARSBY:

Florence Park Community Centre -Another chance to catch the West Yorkshire troubadour in Oxford after his show here in February. His ethereal, often improvised



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Tuesday 26th

FONTAINES DC: O2 Academy

If you want any more encouragement to get out and experience new young bands, consider this: 18 months ago Fontaines DC were playing to barely two dozen punters at The Cellar. Tonight the Dublin quintet will face an already sold-out crowd at Oxford's largest regular gig venue, and this off the back of their Mercury Prize nomination. Crosstown Concerts' Simon Bailey, the promoter who brought them on, did the same for Idles and Shame, so maybe check out his shows a bit more closely in future. Anyway, Fontaines DC: their album 'Dogrel' was unlucky to come up against such a strong field for the Mercury Prize; it's a superb debut: raw and romantic, if not exactly a love song to Dublin, then a record as steeped in its architecture and stories as anything by James Joyce or The Pogues - an obvious and readily admitted influence on Fontaines DC frontman Grian Chattens. There's melancholy, defiance, ambition, violence and love ingrained in his words, his rich Irish brogue bringing stories and characters to life over the band's propulsive, angular mix of Joy Division and Fugazi. Which would mean nothing if the songs weren't so bloody great: 'Boys in the Better Land'; 'Too Real'; 'Dublin City Sky' each and every one a readymade festival singalong. Their rapid ascent is well deserved; it's also a reminder that the grassroots is awash with rough diamonds awaiting your discovery.

style of experimental folk music utilises loops, field recordings and the use of radios, alarms and tellies alongside his delicate, ethereal voice, which has seen him compared to Anthony Hegarty/Anohni. Support from electro/dreampoppers Bell Lungs.

MARK COPE + JAMES KIRBY + CAOLA McMAHON + DANIEL MA'ANi: The Wheatsheaf - Oxford City Festival show with former Candyskins and Ninestone Cowboy man Mark Cope and more.

THURSDAY 28th YOUNG WOMEN'S MUSIC PROJECT:

Truck Store – The local community music project launch their 2020 fundraising calendar with sets from Theo and Julia Meijer.

HAPPY MONDAYS: O2 Academy - The

Madchester reunion continues to roll on, the original, and definitive, line-up of Manchester's baddest gang back round again, this time with a greatest hits set, so get ready to twist your melon to 'Wrote For Luck', 'Step On', 'Kinky Afro', 'Lazvitis' and more.

RHYS LEWIS: O2 Academy - After sold out shows at The Cellar and The Bullingdon under his belt in recent times, local bluesman Rhys Lewis follows up with his biggest hometown show yet, with a soulful take on electric blues, including new single 'What If'.

THIS FEELING with THE CLAUSE + THE WHITE LAKES + ARTCLASSSINK + OUT BLUE: The Bullingdon - Indie club night This feeling returns to Oxford, with a mix of classic indie disco and new bands showcase. Tonight's line-up features Birmingham's The Clause, inspired by Oasis, The Courteeners and Kasabian, plus a trio of local bands, including shoegaze and psych-tinged indie crew Artclasssink. This Feeling DJs spin Beatles, Stones and Bowie to Smiths, Stones Roses and

THE LATIN BREW-UP: The Wheatsheaf -Latin-flavoured jazz at tonight's Spin. BLACK FEATHERS: The Jericho Tavern -Gentle, harmony-heavy Americana and folk from the Cirencester duo.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre REVEREND BLACK'S ACOUSTIC CABARET: The Half Moon - Acoustic blues, country, folk and classic rock night with Delta Hardware and Richard Brotherton.

FRIDAY 29th

MAD DOG McREA: O2 Academy - Folkrock, bluegrass and gypsy jazz from Plymouth's Mad Dog McRea, championed by Mike Harding and Seth Lakeman.

LONDON CALLING: The Bullingdon - Clash

SOUL SISTER: The Bullingdon THE JERICHOS + THE RELATIONSHIPS: The Wheatsheaf – OCF show with local scene godfathers The Relationships with their wistful. tweedy psychedelic pop.

THE PEOPLE VERSUS: The Jericho Tavern - EP launch gig for the local chamber pop crew. FACES OF EVE + DREAMEATER + INDICA BLUES: The Port Mahon -

Dancingman presents a heavy-duty triple bill with Hertfordshire's prog metallers Faces of Evil and Andover's metalcore crew Dreameater alongside local riff behemoths Indica Blues. FIREGAZERS: The Half Moon - Trad and contemporary folk tunes.

SATURDAY 30th

BEN OTTEWELL: The Jericho Tavern - The

Gomez frontman returns to town to promote his most recent album 'A Man Apart', his deep, soulful voice bringing rootsy life to his blues and folk songs and doubtless a few Gomez favourites.

DEFINITELY MIGHTBE: O2 Academy – Oasis tribute.

AIRBOURNE: O2 Academy - Gruff, primal rock and roll from Australia's Airbourne, back with new album 'Boneshaker, the follow-up to Top 10 album, 'Breakin' Outta Hell', staying true to their simple and effective AC/DC, Thin Lizzy and Spinal Tap-inspired hard rock sound, all big riffs, even bigger choruses and

unapologetically unreconstructed tales of booze, chicks and fighting.

SWITCH: O2 Academy

SIMPLE: The Bullingdon - An already soldout night in the company of hot UK producer Ross From Friends at tonight's Simple, the man born Felix Clary Weatherall – latest signing to Flying Lotus' Brainfeeder label mixing up myriad influences, from hip-hop cut'n'paste culture, 80s Eurobeat to Hi-NRG and Italo.

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with MASTER OF NONE + STEALING SIGNS + SPILL THE RIVER: The Wheatsheaf -

Another quality monthly dose of mix'n'match music from GTI, tonight with gothic electrorockers Master of None channelling Mark Lanegan, Nick Cave and The National, plus Essex's Stealing Signs, mixing Foals-y fidgetpop with U2's stadium excess, and local sensitive folk-pop types Spill the River.

OXFORD CITY FESTIVAL CLOSING PARTY: The Half Moon - Osprey and Co. bring the month's festival fun to a close. **ANDY ROBBINS: The Harcourt Arms FALLEN ANGELS: Woodstock Social Club**

Wednesday 27th

PENELOPE ISLES: The Jericho Tavern

Bella Union was practically invented to provide a home and an outlet for bands like Penelope Isles. They are one of those bands who sound like third generation descendents of label founder Simon Raymonde's old band Cocteau Twins, possessed of an almost ethereal grace and spectral spangle that draws together spider silk threads of 60s West Coast harmony pop; shimmering dream-pop; classic indie jangle and the wooziest of motorik grooves. Formed in Brighton by brother and sister Lily and Jack Wolter, who'd grown up playing music together in the Isle of Man, and friends Becky Redford and Jack Sowton, Penelope Isles have spent the past few years drip feeding fans with single releases but signing to Bella Union finally brought their debut album, 'Until the Tide Creeps In', in the summer. Inspired by the highly textured sounds of Radiohead and Deerhunter, their delicate touch, driving grooves and multiway harmonies have seen them compared to Grizzly Bear, Tame Impala and Beach House, though they might be what Magic Numbers would have sounded like had they signed to 4AD back in the late-80s, or kindred spirits of lost etherealists AC Marias. Last time they were in town was supporting BC Camplight on tour, but now the spotlight is all on them and on the evidence of that last gig and the new record, they'll shine.



JACK SAVORETTI **New Theatre** Oxford SOLD OUT

CATE LE BON The Bullingdon Oxford

YONAKA O2 Academy2 Oxford 12.11.19

04.11.19

SPECTOR The Bullingdon Oxford 12.11.19

SNOW PATROL **New Theatre** Oxford SOLD OUT

ALASKALASKA The Jericho Tavern The Wheatsheaf Oxford 16.11.19

RHYS LEWIS O2 Academy2 Oxford 28.11.19

JAWS

Oxford

18.11.19

Oxford

ISLES

Oxford

27.11.19

The Bullingdon

FONTAINES D.C.

The Jericho Tavern

O2 Academy

SOLD OUT

PENELOPE

BEN OTTEWELL The Jericho Tavern Oxford 30.11.19

SOEUR Oxford 04.12.19 LOW ISLAND The Bullingdon Oxford 06.12.19

DIRTY HIT TOUR The Bullingdon Oxford 09.12.19

PICTISH TRAIL The Wheatsheaf Oxford 10.12.19

RAZORLIGHT O2 Academy Oxford 13.12.19

BLACK **FUTURES** The Bullingdon Oxford 14.02.19

APRE The Bullingdon Oxford 21.02.19

KIEFER SUTHERLAND O2 Academy Oxford 02.03.20

JAMIE CULLUM **New Theatre** Oxford 16.03.20

THE CAT **EMPIRE** O2 Academy Oxford 20.03.20

LLOYD COLE SJE Arts Centre Oxford 02.04.20

AGNES OBEL Corn Exchange Cambridge 02.04.20

THE NIGHT CAFE O2 Academy Oxford 10.04.20





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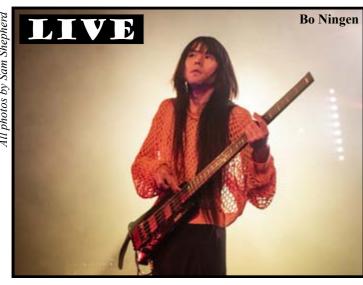


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RITUAL UNION

Various venues

It's barely past midday and not only are we stood in a packed Bullingdon we're wondering if **KNOBBLEHEAD** might have made a great headline act for Ritual Union. Ten-strong and featuring at least two dedicated tambourine players, their loose grooves, alternately otherwordly and folky vocals and tripped-out jams are a full-on psychedelic treat. If the bar is set high from the off, Ritual Union spends the next twelve hours upping it. Cowley Road feels almost flooded with festival goers. clutching timetables and buzzing with a sense of excitement.

Julia Walker is very excited; the **CANDY SAYS** singer tells us as much a couple of times, but it doesn't detract from the band's understatedly imperious set, their songs matching serenity with claustrophobia, restless, insomniac lullabies like 'London' fuelled by insecurity, yet stretching to become something quite magnificent. There's probably no-one out today as excited as EB (pronounced Ee-Bee), a very late stand-in for

Do Nothing, who are stranded in France. It's not just her inventive, kooky blend of poetry, hip hop and electro-pop – where Kate Tempest meets The Streets – or sweetly existential songs like 'If Tomorrow Never Came, How Would It Be Spent?' that makes her such fun; it's also her infectious enthusiasm, unselfconscious dancing and genuinely funny, self-deprecating humour. She brings a surfeit of good vibes and everyone leaves the room grinning. Today's act most likely to make it as a kids TV presenter. and also the best surprise treat of the day.

Is it too early in the day for **BO NINGEN**? Is anyone ever truly ready for Bo Ningen? Their cacophonous space rock is all starship riffs, black hole grooves and demonic incantations and screams. A stray helium balloon drifts across the stage like an alien jellyfish and it seems entirely fitting. This is an incredible spectacle from one of the absolute greatest rock bands on the

Worried we've almost used up

we've even had a drink, we're further impressed by WORKING MEN'S CLUB, whose sonorous gothic-motorik post-punk and harsh electro-pop is indebted to Joy Division and New Order but never at the expense of its own character. THE MURDER CAPITAL deserve an entire dictionary full of superlatives to themselves. The Dublin quintet play a scene-building masterstroke, starting pensively, all brooding atmospherics and delayed gratification, before finally erupting, letting all that gothic tension out in well-aimed salvos, coming to an incendiary climax with singer James McGovern executing an elaborate dive into the crowd while the band contort themselves into a

our quota of superlatives before

We need a little light relief after that and SELF ESTEEM provide it, their close harmony chant-pop moving into almost folky sweetness, while retaining an almost Anna Calvi-like sense of drama about it. FLAMINGODS seem like a cheery bunch, what with their hippies-raidthe-dressing-up-box get-up and

cataclysmic frenzy. Incredible stuff

from a band who, like neighbours

Fontaines DC, are set to go

stratospheric.

funky take on psychedelia. Their new album is called 'Levitation'. Obviously. They're fun enough though there's a strange feeling they might be the previously unexplored pathway between Hawkwind and The Wiggles.

Getting into The Library today is a Herculean task in itself (and getting out again even harder) so we find ourselves perched on the staircase for MAX BLANJAAR's set, just about making out his fun, unabashed mix'n'match approach to garage pop that laces Beck-like eclecticism with Jonathan Richman-like rock'n'roll whimsy.

and sweet, sweet melody are

subsumed – or simply crushed – by

the onward bulldozer sonic assault.

It's unrelenting. And really quite

wonderful. If Bo Ningen cracked

open the gates of hell earlier, Pigs

kick them off their hinges and allow

a Crass t-shirt) has managed that rare thing of packaging political anger and social commentary in If The Library isn't the place for sunshine singalong pop songs like anyone with claustrophobia, PIGS 'Paradise' and the band hit their PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS peak today with a remodelled take PIGS only increase the sense of the on Frank Zappa's 'Trouble Every walls closing in, even downstairs Day'. If we are to have a revolution at the Academy. "It's rock o'clock" with dancing, let Roach be our announces singer Matt Baty and cheerleader. he's not wrong. Pigs are heavy personified, a wrecking ball of riffage where subtlety, frippery

A quick trip upstairs in the O2 finds OLDEN YOLK also in a poppy mood; if their name conjures images of old time America, singer Caity Shaffer compounds the image, looking like an escapee from an Amish community, while they have songs called things like 'Cotton & Cane' but for all their occasional folky leanings, they're a pretty

everything out in all its sulphurous

Musically that's what we get from

THEO, whose airy, soulful jazz-pop

comes backed by her band's funky

hip hop grooves. She's actually

at her best when it's just her and

her piano, allowing her smoky,

mellifluous voice room to do its

Havas at times.

thing, recalling Sade and Liane le

SHE DREW THE GUN might

sound sweet, but their message sure

ain't. Louisa Roach (today wearing

glory. We need fresh air.

straight-up and enjoyable pop band.

BESS ATWELL has a similar folk-leaning poppiness about her, possessed of a lovely dreamy voice, which is matched by Rachel Goswell of SOFT CAVALRY. whose electro-pop retains some of Goswell's other band Slowdive's ethereal quality but takes it into a more pastoral psych-folk place.

From here Ritual Union gets a serious groove on. IBIBIO SOUND **MACHINE** are fantastically funky - strident and heavy like The Temptations to begin with before upping the electro-funk and Afrofuturism, getting down with Isaac Hayes while Eno Williams belts it out Aretha Franklin style and the sax player threatens to lead the room astray Pied Piper-style. Anyone who keeps still throughout this has feet of clay and no soul. Incredibly THE COMET IS

COMING are even better. To begin with, it seems as if the comet isn't coming at all; there's a lengthy delay before they finally get started and they seem to provoke a strong reaction in at least one punter who claims to have gone to school with their saxophonist. "I'm a trumpeter," he says, "I play jazz; this isn't jazz...

before heading off towards south London (apparently). He's right of course, this isn't jazz, and that's Bullingdon. There's certainly links to the obvious influence of Fela Kuti and John Coltane, but there's a whole dollop of electro dancefloor nous and krautrock thrown in for but if they don't have the sense to know a good thing when they hear it, that's their problem and their loss.

pop-friendly finale downstairs at the Academy, upstairs YOUNG KNIVES offer a far more strange and frightening end to the day. Henry and Tom Dartnall are joined tonight by Zahra Tehrani on





Ibibio Sound Machine



you're going to stand there and listen to this aren't you?" he moans why it's packed to the rafters in The good measure. It might irk the purists The Comet came and it destroyed - in it can't get better, they're joined on an entirely friendly way.

Funk of a far more laidback flavour from PREMIUM LEISURE who sound like they're happier to lie in bed than hit the dancefloor but has more than enough slacker charm to get away with it, particularly on 'Water Pistol' with a joyous Supergrass vibe and Ariel Pink-like carefree stoner-pop.

While **TELEMAN** provide the

percussion and she's a perfect fit for their malevolently skewed music. There are moments tonight where the trio sound like they're preparing to go head to head with industrial noise pioneers SPK, so obstinately noisy are they, and for all their innate way with a glorious tune - 'Owls of Athens', 'Terra Firma' they're determined to take this set to some place few have ever dared to journey before. It's tribal; it's funky. Sort of. It's downright oblique at points but at every single point it is just fantastic, and when you think stage by the YOUNG WOMEN'S MUSIC PROJECT drumline. hammering out a militant tattoo that drives Ritual Union to its close and out the other side into a whole new musical universe. It's a superb end to a fantastic

day. Organiser Simon Bailey and his team have built the event up over three years to the point it's a centrepiece of the local gig calendar. And if there's a ringing in people's ears come Sunday morning it's either the dissonant leftovers from Young Knives' set or the buzz of excitement from the day that lasts well after it's packed up and gone to bed.

Dale Kattack



ALL TAMARA'S PARTIES

The Jericho Tavern

All Tamara's Parties is back for another all-day instalment, this time bringing its inclusive vibes, 11-band bill and no-asshat policy – surely soon to be rolled out scene-wide - to the Jericho Tavern.

JOELY kicks things off with her sunny, jazz-inflected songs, swiftly followed by **GHOSTS** IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS,

straightaway showing off organiser Tamara Parson-Baker's bravura programming, as Oxford's loudest drone-band follow Oxford's jazziest rising-star, but the two sets complement each other perfectly and set the mood for a diverse, quietly boundary-pushing day. Bristol's **DRUNKEN**

BUTTERFLY are immediately

impressive, their mainly waltz-time folk-tinged protest songs, acoustic-y on record, are pushed by the fuzzedout guitars first into shoegaze then Riot Grrl territory, before stripping back to a ukulele number; it's a striking, intoxicating sound.

RAINBOW RESERVOIR

songwriter Angela Space today performs intimate keyboard-only versions of her sometimes punkier pop gems. The stripped-back setup proves the perfect platform for her inch-perfect lyrics, deliciously blending deadpan humour and understated anger: "She's a woman not a boat – for all sorts of practical reasons, you might want to know." JEN BERKOVA's opener 'Crazy For You' is the best pop song to

come out of the local scene for a good while and her set is stacked with potential hits with the funkiest of feels, Berkova's clipped, staccato phrase-endings setting off clipped, staccato drums, leaving space for us to wallow in that sublime, squelchy synth-bass.

She's followed the soothing, upbeat tones and downbeat lyrics of CATGOD, led by animal-monikered siblings Robin and Cat. 'Feel It Go Round' showcases their ability to spin joyous music from poignant inspiration. Energetic new material follows, dual-harmony vocals soaring over bouncing basslines and pianist Patrick's ever-delicate key-twinkling. London fourpiece THE OTHER **ONES** then lean into their punk-pop

noisiness with fractious energy. The defiant lyrics to 'Get Your Hands Off Me!' are given a powerful feminist voice by lead singer Steph, backed up by a muscular rhythm section and heavily fuzzed guitar.

Baroque-poppers **DEATH OF THE** MAIDEN open with a new solo number from bandleader Tamara. Her crisp voice and sorrowful guitar speak eloquently of heartbreak and bad men, bringing tears from band and audience members alike. The mood is then transformed by the triumphant sweary singalong 'Shut Up', a supremely sarcastic anthem to unchecked privilege.

London funk-rock outfit WINNIE AND THE ROCKETTES explode onto the stage, hurling the gig into a glorious retro whirlwind. Lead singer Winnie's electrifying vocals light up the room, as the band's towering guitar twang and languid running basslines ooze cool. WOLFS play as charmingly and

as goofily as their name suggests, but most importantly they write excellent powerpop songs like 'Are You Ready'; we're not sure quite what level of irony 'We Came Here To Rock' operates on, but we love it. SELF HELP can sound pretty brutal these days, but they ease us in with the sweetness of 'Gemma'. immediately demonstrating that they really are one of the city's very best - the way drummer Silke Blanjaar pulls back during the chorus is just one thrilling moment of many. 'Glucosed Face Kilah' ramps up the discord like a lot of the band's newer songs - thanks to guitarist

through, as do those catchy tunes. ATP's approach could be seen as a niche thing – 'women's music', diversity for the sake of it – but really it's about looking beyond the mainstream to put on the best day of music possible.

Sean Cousin's noisy solos and

barked vocal passages - but despite

all the grime the humour still shines

Mike Smith & Tom Fitz-Hugh

THE BEVIS FROND / BIRDS OF HELL / SHOTGUN SIX

The Jericho Tavern

Local heavy psych favourites Shotgun Six deal in glassy-eyed riffing, and their main technique is to keep riffing until one of them starts hitting a big gong (not to be confused with hitting a gig bong, though this may also be relevant). For all their New York cool, what they most resemble is a 60s London blues basement band gone wild. They're effectively The Yardbirds, if the yard were a prison yard and the birds were being forced to trudge round it until they'd walked off their heroic drug intake.

"This song's set in the future. And Great Yarmouth". The epic followed by the bathetic; it's a perfect summation of Norwich's Birds Of Hell, who spend 30 minutes squeezing huge emotions into cheap synthesised pop songs, and the bulges where they won't fit make for fascinating listening. 'Spiderman's Let Himself Go' is a melancholic rant about life on minimum wage delivered over the sort of cheeky tune Moogieman might come up with in a pensive moment, whereas 'Practice Punching My Hands, Son' is a breezy ambient wash coupled with an impassioned meditation on the complexities of masculinity that could have been penned by Idles. It ends with a tossed off gag, which suddenly defuses the tension, as does the fact the vocalist looks like Cheech Marin with

Heidi's hairdresser. This is the sort of excellent set you want to watch again as soon as it's finished, to catch the subtleties you missed.

Less of a danger with The Bevis Frond, where one could pop to the bar, the loo and the local Co-Op, and return to find them on the same solo. For theirs is psychedelia of the Keep On Chuggin' school, exemplified by expansive blues-based rockers something like Hawkwind down the Sunday afternoon pub jam, where you might be forgiven for thinking a long solo exists to let one of them visit the carvery. Not that we're saying long-form rock and adept fretboard flightpaths are bad things, and the band does it with an affable effortlessness it's impossible to dislike, but the best moment of the set is 'He'd Be A Diamond', a lovely little folky jangle that sounds like Richard Thompson trying to get on the 'C86' compilation. Frankly, though, a cult band like this has bought the right to do whatever they want; when was the last time you heard an act with a discography stretching back over 30 years say "we're going to do a new one" and get a rousing cheer? So chug on, dear Fronds, you've earned it.

David Murphy

THE DIVINE COMEDY

O2 Academy

Comedy formed and they've been through a lot of transformations in that time; the only constant has been Neil Hannon, though if anything defines Hannon it's unpredictability. Tonight he's true to form, and we're treated to everything from jokes and gimmicks to suave ballads, improvisation, silly costumes, and pastiches of Depeche Mode and Kraftwerk

Opener 'Europop' sets the mood: Hannon's dressed in a cherry red suit and punctuates his deadpan croon with bounces, eccentric dancing, and as much camp buffoonery as the song allows. Surprisingly, none of this seems over the top or cynical. Hannon's charisma is so egotistical and selfironising that it's all just doubly funny: we're laughing at him and with him at the same time, and loving every minute of it. It helps, too, that the songs are excellent. 'Generation Sex' is now thoroughly dated lyrically but still irresistibly catchy; 'Commuter Love' is a wonderful ballad; hits like 'National Express' and 'Something for the Weekend' are raucous fun. Gone are the days when Hannon could hire an entire

It's now thirty years since the Divine orchestra to support him (and it's already crowded enough in here), but the band does a great job of filling the space regardless, keeping everything tight and energetic without ever distracting from their flamboyant frontman.

> There are a few misses. Hannon screws up some of the pranks, but draws such charming attention to his own mistakes that it's often funnier when he fails. Some gimmicks, though, seem to go smoothly without adding anything to the show. For instance, there's a large clock at the back of the stage whose hands get moved throughout the set but it's never clear how the time on the clock links up with the songs, and there's so much else going on that no one ever seems to find time to explain. We can choose to ignore the clock, but that's a lot harder with a misguided Kraftwerk parody called 'The Synthesiser Service Centre Super Summer Sale'. The title tells you all you need to know.

> The energy drops in the second half of the set, and everything ends a bit messily but it's hard not to come away smiling all the same. Eclectic, camp, and utterly ludicrous, it's the funniest gig we've been to in ages. Tom Kingsley

17th Nov-The Sunday Social Afternoon with Tim May/Ady Devey/The Unocompanied +more - 3pm

24th Nov - The Sunday Social Afternoon with Sal & Tony Batey / Artisan Blues Trio

30th Nov - Closing Party with Osprey & Co. + Special Guests - 8:30pm until late!

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/Mojo Demon/Delta Hardware/Cat Shakers - 3pm

22nd Nev - TBC

29th Noy - Fire Gazers

PAT THOMAS & KWASHIBU AREA BAND / PAPA NUI

Isis Farmhouse

Bossaphonik's 15th anniversary party was always going to be a night to remember and even a biblical burst of rain hasn't put off the party faithful, determined to dance away those clouds. Much as we all miss The Cellar the Isis is probably a better venue for the monthly club night, surrounded by nature and with more room to dance.

Papa Nui are as sharply turned out as expected and realise that their ska tunes are most likely to catch the night's mood. Like so many local bands they've come a long way from tentative beginnings and they brim with a newfound confidence, their playing tighter and sharper than when last caught.

Tonight's main act should not be confused with local keyboard legend Pat Thomas, a longstanding part of the improvising scene and collaborator with, amongst many others, Hot Chip's Alexis Taylor in The About Group. This Pat is the 72-year-old, even more legendary highlife legend from Ghana, who has been busy making music since the 1960s. His moniker The Golden Voice of Africa could in truth be granted to many other worthy contenders but his music and

perseverance, leaving his homeland in 1979 for Berlin then Canada, grants him a special place in many hearts. What makes this band so special can be put down to economy: seven players working in perfect harmony, the guitar and keyboards carrying the melody, lush harmonies, unflashy drumming and a twopiece horn section contributing beautiful little motifs that together create something nothing short of transcendent. 'Onfa Nkosi Hwee' from new album 'Obiaa!' is a fine example and a reminder that "African music" is as meaningless a phrase as "European music". In fact it's more so considering the continent's vast size. His return to a more acoustic sound after flirting with electronica has paid off in spades, a balance also achieved so well by Nigeria's King Sunny Adé in the 80s. 'Atesem' if anything works even better, with a tempo far slower than most Western dance tracks yet the darting bassline and neat, nimble horn and guitar lines make any response but dancing impossible. The packed crowd certainly aren't complaining, for this is music truly for the heart, head and

Art Lagun



21th Nov - Aliens/The Pink Diamond Review/Make Friends/Starbelly - 7pm 26th Nov - Flintlock Rifles/Earlnade/Waterfools/Sprung From Cages - 7pm

15th Dec - Xmas Special John Otway & The Big Band Celebrating 50 years of performance

15th Nov - Crystallite - 7pm 16th Nov - The Great Ape Band - 7pm

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DAVID FORD The Bullingdon

On the brink of Brexit, how better to cure our woes than to listen to David Ford sing about how shit it all is. Sadly, Ford doesn't deliver. Perhaps equally sick of the ongoing debate the vast majority of his set sidesteps politics, which is an impressive feat given that's a large part of his collection. Instead he draws largely from his latest album 'Animal Spirits' and whilst this explores issues of economics it does so with a lot less punch than his odes to Maggie Thatcher.

While 'Why Don't You Answer Your Telephone?' shows off his skills on the loop pedal, and his cover of Don Henley's 'Boys of Summer' highlights his capacity to reimagine old songs, it all feels a bit lacklustre, as if the rage and fire of his previous work has subsided into a depressing acceptance of the state of the world. Though his closing rendition of 'State of the Union' brings back a taste of the anger and pure emotion that normally carries a Ford show, even this feels somewhat less than normal, as if he has simply given up the fight.

Elsewhere 'O'Sullivan's Jukebox' shows off Ford's talent on the ivories and in writing rhyming couplets and 'Ballad of Miss Lily' shows why, in my opinion, he's one of the finest guitar players this country has produced. Nevertheless it still seems to all hang in the air, lacking any decisive direction. At a point then when it feels like there is to be comfort from the current state of political unrest in a stranger and a song, instead we're left wanting and longing for a decision which never seems to come.

Lisa Ford

PIP BLOM / PERSONAL TRAINER The Bullingdon

We love it when we find a band who seem, to all intents an purposes, to be made up of spare parts of other bands and who probably shouldn't work as a unit but somehow do. On the one hand Amsterdam's seven-strong Personal Trainer are all over the place: Mark E Smith leading a slightly wayward lounge jazz band? The Sugarcubes without Björk going krautrock? dEUS on a meltdown trip? Yes, yes and yes again. They hit a peak with some cheery chant-along cheerleader punk-pop but generally they're great, messy fun and the lanky keyboard player and trombonist is a spectacle all by himself.

Neighbours Pip Blom aren't nearly so off the wall, but manage to throw enough curveballs into their short, sharp, spiky set to keep everyone on their toes. The band is very much a family affair: singer/guitarist Pip is joined by brother Tender on guitar and occasional vocal sparring, while mum Leonieke is tour manager and minds the merch stall. Dad Erwin, meanwhile, runs Pip's social media and plays in The Eton Crop, whose gig in Oxford last year lead to tonight's visit to Divine Shism. All of which adds to the cheery, cosy vibe of Pip Blom's set, which piles on the indie-pop exuberance, just occasionally lacing it with razor blades. Songs like 'Daddy Issues' are fresh-air, off-the-leash fun: simple and just the right kind of ragged round the edges. Bassist Darek Mercks' perma-grin sums up the enjoyment the quartet seem to be having

onstage and Pip herself seems genuinely chuffed that people in a packed crowd are dancing along. There's more than a little bit of Tanya Donnelley in her sunbeam vocals, while the influence of Sleater Kinney brings a spikier edge to the band's effervescent jangle on tracks like 'Babies Are a Lie' and Pip Blom are just the latest in a line of bands bringing the simplicity, innocence and attitude back to classic indie pop.

Sue Foreman

TORD GUSTAVSENSt John the Evangelist

Norwegian pianist Tord Gustavsen has said that Norwegian hymns are his jazz standards. This might not sound too promising but from the moment the church lights dim and he and his trio walk unobtrusively on stage and begin playing we're enveloped in ninety minutes of compelling, beautifully played, multi-layered music. Tord and his band are here thanks to adventurous programming by Oxford Chamber Music Festival, a gem of a event that regularly punches above its weight.

Much of what the trio play is based on 'The Other Side', Gustavsen's 2018 album, marking his return, after an eleven year gap, to the trio format with which he earned an international reputation and, amazingly for someone catalogued as jazz, a Number 1 in his national charts.

Like the recent album, the concert is part jazz, part hymns and chorales, part classical and part folk. On one level it's a dialogue between the chorales and Norwegian hymns that are in Gustavesen's DNA, and his other influences and his original compositions.

He starts with a probing flamenco-infused solo as a prelude to the trio's re-imagining the Bach's chorale 'O Traurigkeit' that becomes a rolling gospel blues driven on by Gustavsen's left hand. It's music of longing and despair in startling juxtaposition with another music of longing and despair

This is only one of many twists. When Gustavsen plays loud he is surprisingly loud; when he feeds in electronics it's high pitched distortion not discreet background; when he plays Rachmaninov-style chords, somehow he's playing those blues as well, and also he leads the trio off briefly into free jazz territory. This adds an edginess and struggle that both contrasts with and enhances the recurring, often pensive Nordic lyricism, one passage of which is the most tender piece of music we've heard all year.

Gustavsen's pianism constantly merges intellect and superb technique with heart and soul; the other members of the trio are cut from the similar cloth. The soft power of long-time collaborator Jarle Vesperstand's bass drum and the textures he creates with soft mallets on cymbols are intrinsic to Gustav's sound. Double bassist Ellen Brekken, a substitute for the ill Sigurd Hole, joins in with haunting drones and echoes of Norway's national instrument, the hardanger fiddle, and as she gains in confidence the trio's ensemble playing becomes ever more intense.

In between Bach chorales they play mainly Gustavsen originals without break and with one number merging into the next this becomes a single rich mosaic of melodies, textures, dynamics, and atmosphere that seem to leave even Gustavsen a little disorientated.

For a final encore he plays a solo lullaby, which is just what is needed. It's been an immensely intimate and profound show in which Gustavsen has dazzled in a self effacing Scandi way while exposing his musical soul. Magnificent.

JOHN / MILO'S PLANES

The Wheatsheaf

Why have one drumkit when you can have one and a half? Bristolian four-piece Milo's Plane fly out of the gate with jagged staccatto riffs, jumpy time changes and relentless hardcore energy. As the set progresses what becomes striking is the endless variation of style, tone, and even genre within every song. Classic walking bass lines shift to bursts of grindcore and then on to intricate math guitar lines. The highlight of the set is when everything drops out to mournful ambient emptiness punctuated with tortured prepared guitar, only for the band to explode with noise and throw us through the back wall like an old Maxell tape advert. Headliners tonight are two blokes called John who make up a band called John, and John and John who together are John make a sublime noise. The riffs are catchy but without trying too hard and John's drums are powerful and energetic in just the right way. John's aggressive *sprechgesang* vocals evoke Jamie Lehman in his Reuben days and the humongous riffing takes on a Pigs x7-like powerhouse feel; it's just an incredibly dense sound to be made by just two people (named John).

It would be all too easy for this kind of noise punk to feel chaotic but every song is finely honed and trimmed of everything extraneous and despite the barked vocals and recent touring with Idles, it doesn't feel aggressive; instead they are welcoming and enthusiastic. The audience aren't tearing the place apart as John and John might be used to – this is Oxford on a Wednesday after all – but there's an unavoidable positivity in the air. Rebellious music doesn't need to be angry, apparently.

Matt Chapman Jones

GRACE PETRIE

St. John the Evangelist

When themes of welfare, workfare, and walls nestle within your setlist, it would be easy for the night to become a sombre affair, but in the space of 90 minutes Grace Petrie manages to take us on a journey that contains rage, mourning, laughter and hope in equal measures.

For most, it's probably hard to think up a song about zero hours contracts but it's apparently not that hard for Petrie, who also manages to take it a step further, ensuring the crowd are hollering "monkeys" and "nowt" at the tops of their voices in the chorus of 'You Pay Peanuts You Get Monkeys (You Pay Nothing You Get Nowt)'. Elsewhere she ensures the snowflakes are causing an avalanche and adds in a few pops at Trump for good measure.

While it's easy, then, to fathom Petrie's political leanings she manages to deliver them in a way that creates a sense of urgency and humour in equal measures. Suffice to say if Petrie is leading the next protest march it's will be done with a degree of wry irony and laughter. Nevertheless it's not all politics and 'Ivy' is a touching ode to her niece and 'Nobody Knows That I'm A Fraud' speaks to the imposter syndrome that I expect many in Oxford feel is all too familiar.

It's 'Black Tie', however, that unsurprisingly captures the crowd, with almost every single person here singing along. The song, which speaks of the issues facing those of us from LGBTQ+communities, has clearly increased her fanbase ten-fold, moving her from the much smaller Old Fires Station to a sold out St John the Evangelist in the space of a year, and rightly so. Anyone who can wrap the line "and the images that fucked ya, were a patriarchal structure" into a song about how it feels to grow up as a lesbian women deserves every ounce of success she's gained.

Lisa Ford

RICHARD HAWLEY O2 Academy

"Dumbo could only fly if he was holding his feather," deadpans Richard Hawley a couple of songs into tonight's sold out show, "and I need to see my lyrics, cos I took a fuck load of acid in the 80s and can't remember anything now, so can we have the fans turned off onstage please."

Hawley's been slightly derailed by those fans blowing his lyric sheets away and is dealing with it in the dry, droll humour that infuses his show and is as much a part of the man as his wonderfully rich, roughhewn croon, one that brings a dashing sense of romance to even the most down at heel backstreet soap opera.

Hawley's last visit to Oxford was in the more elegant setting of The New Theatre but tonight's show reflects the rather more rock and roll spirit of his recent songs, like set opener 'Off My Mind', a driving slab of gothic rock that's could be a prime Mark Lanegan cut. Similarly 'Standing At the Sky's Edge', slower, more considered, almost a ballad, but infused with desert blues rawness.

A lightness of touch comes with the sprightly 'I'm Looking For Someone To Find Me', Hawley channelling his young Elvis, but even by his high standards he takes things to another level with 'Tonight, The Streets Are Ours', just glorious in its sweep and scope, but matched by the sweet, symphonic 'Cole's Corner', the pavements and streets of Sheffield never sounding more beautiful.

There are odd moments across the ninety minutes where he dips into slightly too cosy balladry, but mostly this is a reminder of one of the finest voices in modern music, an heir to Scott Walker and Sinatra but with a bit of Yorkshire grit rubbed into its skin. "I hope the lyrics to this next song come true," announces Hawley at one point. "It's called 'I won a million pounds". Of course it isn't and Hawley doesn't need to win that sum of money: he's already worth his weight in gold.

Sue Foreman

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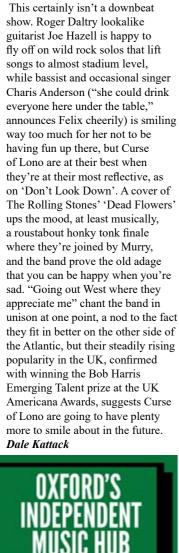


CURSE OF LONO The Jericho Tavern

Like support act John Murry. Curse of Lono are very much at the gravelly, gothic end of country's broad spectrum. Maybe it's the British weather, but while the quintet are rooted in American roots music, they're less wide open highways, more the dark streets of their native London.

Frontman Felix Bechtolsheimer has a weather-beaten growl of a voice that betrays issues from an earlier musical life and this brings a rawness to his band's mix of bluesy country rock, r'n'b and barroom honky tonk. Early on there's a heavy hint of The Doors' 'Riders on the Storm' in the mood of the appropriately titled 'London Rain' and even the heartier boogie numbers only let a certain amount of light in, with lyrics about red wine and popping pills. "This is a happy song about murderous jealousy," Felix announces at one point. 'I'd Start a War For You' is another early highlight, a rumbling, bluesy road trip that's a love song to his wife, and for all the darkness in the music and lyrics - with Bechtolsheimer touching on the addiction in his past while introducing the band's oldest number - there's a warmth about

his writing that brings comfort even in the murk and the mire.



At first, their approach to psychedelia appears decidedly old-school, the mid-century charm with sound effects reminiscent of Star Trek, but the tone soon takes a darker route as lead singer Jyonson

Tsu belts out beautiful tongues that mirror the lyrical techniques of Kikagaku Moyo. They break into intense, impressive drum patterns, courtesy of Satoshima Nani, the energy of which sends the gig into

What makes Acid Mothers Temple stand out is their stretch into accessible genres which prevents them from being trapped within the same audience, a fate many psychedelic bands suffer and tonight's set borders on a house club night at times. The band's control over the audience and transitions seam together the chaotic soundscape, clearly displaying their experience and skill amassed since their conception in 1995. Soon though, the intervals between high and low energy became scarce and any sign of change is shown to be a ruse. It becomes clear that they might have run out of tricks too soon, leaving us with high expectations that can't be delivered toward the end.

For all that, this is an exciting and energetic event from seasoned musicians. Will it evolve further? Considering their 24-year history, probably not if this is what is consistently delivered.

Ziggy Jinda

ACID MOTHER'S TEMPLE AND THE MELTING PARAISO UFO / **FLIGHTS OF HELIOS** The Bullingdon

Acid Mother's Temple are an established Japanese psychedelic band stopping through Oxford for their European Tour. Before they were due to perform, the five-piece are scattered about the venue with an noticeably out-of-town presence – probably all those vibrant jumpsuits and kaftans – wading through the audience like patchouli.

Flights of Helios set the mood with their thumping and rolling beats, softly guiding us through slippery, double-time grooves. Melodic, approachable and dressed to the nines with guitar effects, we couldn't help but notice the obsession of the lo-fi megaphone aesthetic within the psychedelic scene.

Then, Acid Mother's Temple fully make their presence known. The room is suddenly cut with screeches of synthetic wails that suspend us within discomfort and intrigue. Out of this wall of sound, the recognisable tones of guitar emerge into a slow trance that echoes with the babbling of high-pitched alien conversations.

THYLA / OCEAN RUINS / APHRA TAYLOR The Jericho Tavern

Just 17 years old, if Aphra Taylor's nerves are occasionally evident tonight, she's very much an emerging talent: from her opening drum-machine-driven number, 'I Thought You Wouldn't Be There'. she mixes the intimacy and melody of folk with the slacker scuzz of grunge. Her emotive confessional lyrics work even better on the more introspective 'Red' with its neat "I want to go back to those days" sense of longing, and if a couple of numbers feel hesitant and unfinished, set closer 'It Doesn't Slow Down' is a wonderfully sparse piece that recalls kd lang or Cat Power's earliest outings. A few days later she enchants a packed Library as part of Ritual Union, already sounding more confident.

Nothing sparse or intimate about Berkshire's Ocean Ruins: theirs is a powerful bridge between shoegaze and stadium rock, the centrepiece of which is singer Kate Herridge's piledriving voice; Cher's strident soul laced with a Tanya Donnelly-like quaver that lifts songs like 'Jenny's Ghost' and 'Broken Toys' to almost stately

heights and has seen her guesting with Tiger Mendoza recently. They ride a tight line between almost gothic moodiness and outright rock bombast, but for the most part keep their focus and sound like they're born to perform on bigger stages than this.

Brighton's Thyla have a similarly stratospheric sound about them. kicking out a driving powerhouse spangle where epic meets ethereal and achieving an almost elegant musical turbulence. Millie Duthie has a voice that can switch from mellifluous and delicate to intense and questing but always cut-glass clear and combined with the band's sky-searching shimmer and occasional delve into something almost dancey, reminds us of Pumarosa or even early-90s John Peel faves Bang Bang Machine. Perhaps some of the subtleties that have seen them compared to Cocteau Twins are lost in a live setting, but The Jericho Tavern's new PA brings out Thyla's sheer power and it's all too easy to be swept away in its onward rush. Ian Chesterton

DUMB

The Wheatsheaf

Post-punk is having a moment: it's easy to drown in the relentless wave of new bands popping up in the genre. Oxford has seen many of the more high-profile names pass through its venues in the past year: Shame, Fontaines DC, The Murder Capital. Dumb represent the other side of the pond, hailing from the rainy streets of Vancouver.

At the Wheatsheaf, they show that they belong up there with the big dogs. In some ways, they mirror their North Atlantic contemporaries movie high-school jock. Parquet Courts and Pavement, with the scrappy, DIY ethos and dry humour. In others, they channel the angularity of A Certain Ratio. Whatever the influences, they manage to reconcile blistering punk energy with an extensive musical education (contrary to what their name might suggest), seamlessly incorporating elements of noise rock and shoegaze into their own distinctive sound.

Tonight marks the penultimate stop of a UK tour in support of their latest album 'Club Nites'. released in June of this year, the latest offering in an unstoppable onslaught of releases since they formed in the mid-10s. The

creative energy is matched in their live performance. They hurtle through their repertoire, never slowing down, never staying in one place longer than they need to. They're a band that work hard and play hard, with a dogged work ethic balanced by a mischievous flare. Dumb's lyrics show its subjects no mercy: "Why are you talking so much? Put your head in a bag, dude," Rossino shouts on 'My Condolences', like a 90s In this sense, the Wheatsheaf is made for them, although they deserve to fill out larger venues. With no-frills staging, beers on tap and a casual atmosphere, their character is displayed: snarky, but undeniably likeable.

Charlotte Banks

VANISHING TWIN / **DESPICABLE ZEE Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre**

Zahra Tehrani's Despicable Zee project increasingly proves she's one of the most inventive beatmakers around, mixing live drumming with loops, samples and electronics, all with a queasily lopsided vibe that marks her out as Oxford's very own Gazelle Twin. Although Vanishing Twin are clearly influenced by the likes of Stereolab, Silver Apples and The United States of America (the 60s band, not the shit show across the Atlantic), there is an important difference that sets them apart. While the aforementioned bands wear their electronica on their sleeves, Vanishing Twin's sound is more organic. The technological aspects of their music merge with a distinctly human element. The above is apparent from

tonight's setting: at the back of

the stage hangs a wide image of

canopies of trees, and singer Cathy

Lucas herself is dressed in a black-

synthesiser notes emulate the trickle of rain; the ticking of the drums feels like the brushing of bushes: guitar chords are shrieking birds, and Lucas' voice itself is a human being finding its way through this jungle. It is easy to get lost in Vanishing Twin's music. Some of the longer tracks they play tonight seem to lead nowhere in particular, urging us to enjoy them in the present. As a result, the band occasionally verges into the more boring territory; they're at their best with their more melodious songs, such as 'Choose Your Own Adventure'. Vanishing Twin have carved out a unique sound for themselves, both experimental-electronic and appealing to the ear. It is a pleasure to witness their magic tonight and escape into their self-created

and-white panther jumpsuit. But

the music, too, sounds as nature:

Caspar Jacobs

forests.







TIM TURAN'S SESSION NOTES

Streaming Audio (part 2: formats and stuff)

Carrying on from last month I want to look at formats and related topics for streaming audio. Unfortunately for studio owners, audio engineers and musicians music making is an expensive business. That gear you see in the studio costs a lot of money. In the studio we strive to bring you the absolute finest quality audio using very expensive equipment. I know engineers (myself included) that will spend upwards of £5,000 for a single piece of gear, be it a microphone or a fancy valve analogue equaliser to realise your musical dreams to the highest technical quality. The end result for the consumer will often be (these days) a digital stream of substandard audio usually played back on a telephone.

To me the sound of streamed audio is the equivalent of a thumbnail picture. There's a glorious full bandwidth version on the originators platform somewhere but the consumer gets the thumbnail... and then pays for it! There are many companies who have authored file formats that claim to provide high quality audio but in reality simply provide "audio vomit". Here then are the most popular formats available. Downloads are different in that you can obtain full resolution audio that is downloaded. Casual listening is always streamed.

Last month I mentioned OGG VORBIS. Ogg Vorbis actually describes two things. Ogg is a free open container format. A container (or wrapper) is a metafile format which describes how data and metadata coexist in a computer file. Vorbis is a free "open source" software project that produces an audio coding format and a reference CODEC (encoder-decoder). The compression is "Lossy" which means data from the original file will be lost in order to produce smaller files. It was started in 1993 by Chris Montgomery while at MIT. The Xiph. Org Foundation maintains Vorbis and Ogg (the container). The format is known as OGG VORBIS. This file format was developed in response to the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft

Institute's cute little invention: the MP3. MP3 (MPEG-1 or (2) Audio layer III) gets its name from the Moving Picture Experts Group. Like Vorbis it data compresses the audio using psychoacoustic modelling techniques. MP3 uses wait for it - 'Modified Discrete Cosine Transforms' to economically pack the data into the tiniest size available. It manages to cram full bandwidth audio signals into approximately 9% of the original size. The science tells us that we shouldn't

meaningful difference. Our ears unfortunately tell us otherwise. Is there really any musician or sound engineer out there that can't tell the difference ... I truly doubt it.

Really sorry about this but MPEG-4 (part III) audio uses a compression technique known as "TwinVO' - transformdomain weighted interleave vector quantisation. It is used for ultra-low bitrates



around 8Kbit/s. Not too great for audio. I apologise for the tech stuff here; I wanted to keep things light for the layperson or those of casual interest but, fuck it, I went and got technical again ... sorry.

Next up is the FLAC format. It stands for Free Lossless Audio Codec. Now, lossless is immediately appealing to audiophiles. It works on a principle not too dissimilar to a ZIP file. It encodes the audio data and then decodes it back to the original full bandwidth sound we know and love. It was developed in 2000 by those pre-mentioned Xiph. Org Foundation people and therefore has a family link with Ogg Vorbis. It (unlike MP3) is a free open-source algorithm. It has support for tagging and album art.

I had to pay for my MP3 software in the mid 1990s in order to offer this new format to my clients when floppy disks were the removable storage option, (2Mb)

As technology develops I'm sure audio quality in the streaming world will improve greatly in the future. It has to. The £9,000 that a Neumann U47 microphone costs sounds like a £9 microphone when spewed out of Spotify!

Next month: the mysteries of what people call the "dark art" – Mastering.

THE WHEATSHEAF

BRITE SPIRES / SCOTT GORDON / RICHIE STIX

KOMATSU / THE GRAND MAL

THE CRUSHING / NEW DEPTH

ADAM GLASSER

DAVID GORDON

EASTER ISLAND STATUES

BLACK HATS / THE AUGUST LIST

THE OVERLOAD / RESTRUCTURE / MY DIABLO

ARISEN / LEAKY TENT / BLACK TISH II

DODO / THE SATURN FARMHOUSE / BLUEBYRD

MATT CHANDLER BAND

EMMA HUNTER / NEON TEEPEE / THE HOLY FOOLS

OCTAVIA FREUD / MOJAVE / MEANS OF PRODUCTION

MONKEY FIST

MARK COPE / JAMES KIRBY / CAOLA MCMAHON

THE JERICHOS / THE RELATIONSHIPS

Saturday 30th November – **GAPPY FOOTH SANUSTIES** 7:45pm

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Dr SHOTOVER: Strictly Scum Dancing

Ah, there you are, Newbie. Didn't recognise you in your sequins and feathers. Pull up a Fred Astaire and get a round in. But mind the camera crew, the mirror balls and the red, white and blue spotlights. Yes, they're being set up for our special East Indies Club theme night – Strictly Come Smegzit. Talking of which, make mine a pint of Old Remainer, with a Euro umbrella in the top. Merci, monsieur [glug, glug, glug]. Now, over there, across the extra-polished dancefloor, you will see the Strictly judges. Firstly, the excitable little poppy-eyed pixie who keeps jumping up and down to make his point (as sponsored by the Daily Heil) – that's Michael Toad. Then there's the grey balding zombie in the tatty fleece and trainers... that's Dominic Scummings. He's the one who whispers sneery comments about ALL the performances. Funny how it's always dark where he's sitting. To his right is the over-made-up ex-ballerina. Andrea Ledbrain. The less said about her, the better – but don't ask her anything too complicated, know what I mean? Finally, on the far right, Boris 'The Octopus' Nonson - always happy to stand up in his ill-fitting suit and bore on for hours if given half a chance, usually in Latin. His catch-phrase when it's time for the scores? 'Ohhh, crikey. It's an' [makes sheepish face]

'OCTO from the OCTOPUS!' (The female dancers have learned not to get too near him in the dressing rooms, by the way). Otherwise all the judges tend to hold up signs throughout the programme, with slogans such as GET SMEGZIT DONE and WILL OF THE SHEEPLE, not to mention BLITZKRIEG BACKSTOP. Frankly I am going to finish my pint and see what's on the other side. Hopefully Lady Hale and John Bercow attempting to defend what's left of British democracy in a remake of Who Do You Think You Are Kidding, Nigel Hitler? Cheers! Down the hatch. **Next month: Another Eton Mess**



Dominic Scummings: 'Get Smegzit Duna, Preciousss

INTRODUCING....

The Grand Mal

Who are they?

The Grand Mal is a hard rock band featuring twin brothers Ryan and Elliot Cole from Desert Storm (guitar and drums) and Dave-O and Rob Glen, previously of groove-metallers Mother Corona (vocals and bass). The band originally formed to help fill the time when Desert Storm and Mother Corona weren't touring. In 2016 the band put out a three-track EP but due to commitments in the other bands the project was shelved. Fully back in action, the quartet's debut album is released on the 18th October on APF Records

What do they sound like?

Seriously solid, groove-led rocking; riffs come slow, steady and irresistible as the tide, classic 70s heaviosity meets desert rock and stoner blues, recalling Black Sabbath and Kyuss in equal measures. Or, in the words of JD Pinkus from Butthole Surfers and Melvins: "The Grand Mal sound like a mix of Queens Of The Stone-Age and 80s Ozzy!"

What inspires them?

"Good music, such as Black Sabbath; Led Zeppelin; Soundgarden; Kyuss; Monster Magnet; The Doors; Queens of the Stone-Age. Their career highlight is:

"Signing to APF Records and playing a packed out show at Manchesters Bread Shed. Supporting Nashville Pussy at London Underworld was also cool!"

And the lowlight:

"We had a terrible gig in Milton Keynes. During the first song Ryan's guitar kept cutting in and out; it turned out it was the guitar and there was no spare so we had to stop the set. Luckily only ten people were in the room. We just went to the bar and got drunk."



Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"Winnebago Deal!"

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

"Black Sabbath - 'Paranoid'."

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

"Friday 22nd November at The Port Mahon with Belgium's Gnome; ex Suitable Case For Treatment / Domes Of Silence members Bad Blood Recovery and Bristol's Blakrabbit. Expect big catchy riffs, grooves and infectious vocals with a rockin' live show."

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

"Favourite: lots of good music in all different types of genres. Least favourite: too many awesome venues closing down."

You might love them if you love:

Queens Of The Stone-Age; Black Sabbath; Torche; Smashing Pumpkins; Desert Storm; Kyuss; Jane's Addiction.

Hear them here:

facebook.com/thegrandmal

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

November 1999's Nightshift featured a run-down of the best songs by Oxford artists of the 90s. Listed in chronological order, those included in the best of the decade included Ride ('Drive Blind'): Madamadam ('Chinese Q-T'); The Anyways ('Some Kind of Beautiful Nothing'); Death By Crimpers ('Obsessive'); The Nubiles ('I Wanna Be Your Kunte Kinte'); Supergrass ('Caught By The Fuzz'): The Mystics ('Dead'): Radiohead ('Fake Plastic Trees'); Heavenly ('P.U.N.K. Girl'); The Candyskins ('Car Crash'); Dustball ('Senor Nachos'); Unbelievable Truth ('Building'), and Beaker ('Backgarden'), with The Daisies ('Come On'), Arthur Turner's Lovechild? ('Lucy House'), Squid ('Even When I Fall'), The Egg ('Get Some Money Together/Shopping'), Nought ('Ignatious'), The Bigger the God ('If Everyone I Ever Loved Left Me'), Skydrive ('Ulcer') and The Samurai Seven ('Xeroxy Music') also making the

Dustball's musical adventure was coming to an end, though, with the band announcing their split and bowing out with a final show at The Point: singer Jamie Stuart and bassist Tarrant Anderson would later emerge with a new band, Dive Dive. Talking of re-emerging, Ride's Andy Bell was recruited into Oasis this month, following a stint with Gay Dad. Thankfully he's now back with Ride and seems none the worse for those excursions.

10 YEARS AGO

"We try to put on a great show, but there's a line, you know. We played with a band called Scrotum Clamp, who dressed in wigs and bondage gear and ran around the room hitting people with comedy props. That's just crass and awful."

So spake Borderville, making their second appearance on the cover of Nightshift back in November 2009, talking about their debut album, 'Joy Through Work'; "we're firmly in the realms of concept album here," explained singer Joe Swarbrick. "The narrative over the course of the record follows the arc of a relationship, but what that relationship is could be any number of things.' Away from such highbrow talk, The Port Mahon was set to re-launch itself as a live music venue this month after being taken over by Joe Hill, previously singer with local metallers Black Candy. While it initially thrived, the venue closed to music five years ago, but happily returned to action under the stewardship of Nell Wimpenny earlier this year. Also this month Little Fish released their debut single, 'Darling Dear', for Linda Perry's Custard Records, ahead of gigs with Eagles of Death Metal and Juliette Lewis.

Among a host of local gigs, one that sticks out is a bunch of newcomers called Mumford & Sons playing at The Bullingdon. Elsewhere, queercore pioneers Gay For Johnny Depp played The Bullingdon; We Were Promised Jetpacks, The Magic Numbers, Ringo Death Starr and Wavves at The Jericho Tavern, while the mighty N-Dubz were down at the Academy. On second thoughts, sometimes it's best to stay well away from gigs.

5 YEARS AGO

Oxford music lost a genuine character back in

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

November 2014 in the shape of Philip Guy Davis, who had died at the age of 78. The flamboyant promoter, known as Silver Phil, on account of his mane of silver hair and copious amounts of jewellery, had co-run The Famous Monday Blues alongside Tony Jezzard and James Serjeant for many years, taking over from Jonathan Lee, previous landlord of The Brewhouse in Gloucester Green. Philip, who cut his teeth working with Kenny Ball, Tommy Steel and Alexis Korner, brought a stream of international blues acts to Oxford before ill health forced him to take a back seat mere weeks before he passed

In somewhat happier news Truck Festival was nominated for three awards at the UK Festival Awards, including Best Small Festival and Best Toilets. Even more exciting news came in the form of a one-off reunion show from local metal legends Sextodecimo this month. The band, who had been named Oxford's greatest ever metal band in Nightshift's 2010 metal special, played at The Library to coincide with the release of their longlost second album. A packed venue witnessed a suitably uncompromising performance from the band which culminated in the destruction of their drum kit. "here is a band that can condense music into a point of singularity," said the review of the show. None more heavy.

On the local gig front, Kate Tempest, Gerard Way, Royal Blood, La Roux and Little Dragon were all in town, while electronic legends Silver Apples headlined Audioscope at The Jericho Tavern, joined by Stephen Mallinder's Wrangler, and Public Service Broadcasting.



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TRACKS

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TOP TRACKS

EB

Pronounced Ee-bee rather than Ebb we think, EB (real name Emily Beth) is an artists who lives in Oxford and California (we nearly said between Oxford and California, though that would place her in the middle of the Atlantic and there's not much of a music scene there so far as we know) and has been picked up by the good people at Beanie Tapes. This debut offering is a peach. A strange, slightly misshaped peach but indisputably sweet. From its alarm clock and whistling intro, through to the vocal loops and synth hums and strange, almost childlike musical trinketry, it's a somnambulating, slightly trippy slice of inventive home-baked electronica over which EB half speaks, half raps stuff about "quitting my job" and "drinking la criox with my boy" that could be a playful kid sister to Kate Nash or Kate Tempest. With any luck she'll be spending more time on this side of the Pond: this is exactly the kind of quirky musical invention we can always do with more of in Oxford.

ELOOUENT YOUTH

Much as we've learned not to leave a football match until the final whistle, because you just never know what your team might pull out of the bag, we've learned that a bad start to a demo doesn't necessarily mean all is lost. Obviously if you're 5-0 down in injury time you'd be excused for making a quick getaway to avoid the post-match traffic and if you've just sat through twenty minutes of clichériddled sub-Arctic Monkeys bilge, that off switch is all too tempting, but Eloquent Youth here are evidence that good things are worth waiting for. Early offerings like 'Ordinary Dreams' aren't so bad really, but tend towards the Wet Wet Wet school of polished soulful pop, or, with the sparse arrangements and slightly yearning vocals, The Beautiful South: all well crafted but slightly stuck in a Radio 2-friendly rut where safety is key. But as the EP progresses, you hear snatches of hope and a desire to stretch barriers a little appears - marching snares, whistling, handclaps, close harmony singing, a folkier edge creeping and by the end they've fully

from Soundworks studio in Oxford. courtesy of Umair Chaudhry. Visit www.umairchaudhry.co.uk/nightshift blossomed into a hushed, breathless Low

Anthem-like reverie with 'The More I Know'. 2-0 down at half time, Eloquent Youth quietly change formation and net a last-minute winner. It's not over til the skinny guys sing, or something.

OUTER BLUE

From sedate, polished sweetness with Eloquent to rather scrappier sounds from Witney's no less sweet Outer Blue, whose slightly messy indie punk totters rather than rampages along, held aloft by a determination to stay upright and on the straight and narrow and in doing so sounding a bit like Self Help's baby brother wearing a pair of shoes three sizes too big on 'Hurricane Lorraine'. You kind of wish they'd pick up a bit of speed but 'Whites Of Her Eyes' lacks its predecessor's scrappy belligerent charm, a bit of a plod despite a neat strung-out lead guitar line. Thankfully they beef things up significantly for their final push, 'China Rose', whose big, hook-laden stadium rock sound is only slightly tempered by the feeling it's just crash landed from 1986. Bit of a mixed bag all things considered, but if we're going to advise Outer Blue which bits to pick out of the bag and use in future, we'd say scrappy punk fun every time.

JEREMY JOHNSON

Talking of big stadium sounds with a vaguely 80s vibe, Jeremy Johnson here sounds a bit like he's trying to be a oneman U2 at times on his song 'Runaway Train'. If the title has more than a hint of Springsteen about it, that's not too far off the mark either, though vocally Jeremy's more of a crooner, with a limpid, questing voice that adds a soft-hearted warmth to his epic ballad. If the kitchensink production makes the song feel a tad over-egged towards the end, it can't detract too much from its innate charm. A quick glance at the singer's biog sees him claiming "My earliest memories of music are of being sung to sleep by my mum. I don't remember the songs, I just remember feeling warm, content and loved." And with no little skill, Jeremy seems to have captured that soothing warmth in his own songs.

RAT FACE LEWEY

Rat Face Lewey love Nirvana and Blink 182. We know this because... well because it's completely fucking obvious. To the point they might as well have

called themselves Blink Faced Cobain or something. Still, nowt wrong with wearing your influences stapled to your sleeves, chest, face and backside, so long as you've got the chops to carry them off. We guess this ticks a fair few people's boxes as to what constitutes a good time, as the trio thrash and chunder through a chest-beating grunge/pop-punk anthem alongside a video of them cutting shapes in a suitably cramped gig space intercut with some skateboarding acrobatics and it sounds exactly like you imagine it will. Like every other middle-of-the-bill band at Reading Festival between the mid 90s and mid Noughties. Or possibly, dunno, Stiltskin? An alt.rock ready meal for mass consumption. Can we go and listen to EB again please?

BE STILL

If Rat Face Lewey want some tips on taking standard American alt.rock influences and bringing them to life, they'd do worse than drop Be Still a line. Their 'Fairground' alone has more individuality and life about it than many notionally grunge bands manage in a lifetime, a rambunctious mosh-starter that touches on bases as unexpected as New Model Army and Dead Kennedys while at its core staying true to its Weezer/ Green Day/Nirvana roots. If the band fair less well on the more restrained 'No Sacrifices', with its slightly formulaic quiet bits/loud bits dynamic, 'Five Stop Drop' is bolshy and angular while 'Radio Silence' is sneerily, snottily cheery as it bashes and thrashes through its succinct three minutes. It's not rocket science this noisy bastard band stuff, but still some bands get it far righter than others.

MEGASLOTH

With a name like Megasloth and a strapline about coming back from the Pleistocene era, we really thought this lot would be some ageless, granite-carved stoner-blues band. We certainly never expected some wafty, slightly drama-laden synth-pop that sounds like it's apparated in from sometime around 1982, possibly riding piggyback on a New Romantic showpony, but there you go: even after all these years we continue to be surprised. And pleasantly so. The early 80s might as well be the Pleistocene as far as people born in the 1990s go, but there's something a bit debonair about flouncy pirate shirts, too much eyeliner and selfconsciously longing vocals. So we're not going to be shoving them back whence they came for now, though the name will have to go. How about something more appropriate, like Future Unicorns, or

Lufthansa Terminal. Anyone who gets that latter reference will hopefully enjoy this

CHRIS KEYS

Chris Keys' solitary song here is called 'Rest Your Head' and by the time it's finished Nightshift is resting its head on the desk and sobbing gently, contemplating what we might have done with the four and a half minutes we will never, ever get back. Make a cup of weak, sugary tea perhaps, which would at least be in keeping with the song in hand. It's a strained, overly earnest acoustic ballad that takes an awful long time to say virtually nothing beyond a few trite inspirational/ romantic clichés, each line stretched like a slightly perished elastic band and delivered in a cracked voice somewhere between a mumble and a croak. It's described as "a mix of folk, Americana and blues with a groovy upbeat feelgood vibe." In reality it sounds like Stereophonics' Kelly Jones with a hangover and writers block.

TOILET TRACKS

Occasionally the only response we can

claims to be a band but seems to be one

offer to someone's music is, WTAF? Japor

JAPOR

bloke who has obviously spent about ten thousand more hours constructing his website than he has creating what he's attempting pass off as music. Music he describes as "amazing" but which would be more accurately described as "not music". There is experimentation and then there is arsing about without a shadow of a hint of a semblance of any idea of what you're doing. Three tracks here described as "guitar instrumental" or "guitar and drum instrumental" that are nothing more, nothing less than haphazard idle noodling on a detuned instrument and recorded on the cheapest cassette deck available on ebay. Seriously, we like odd. We like weird. We love odd and weird. But this isn't anything. It's the sound of a confused, slightly addled alien picking up a guitar and working out what the hell it might be, like the invading Martian in War of the Worlds puzzling over a bicycle wheel in Tom Cruise's basement. The only thing preventing us from thinking this is a joke is that the guy's obviously spent some time making his website and all the videos on it. We can only imagine what else he could have spent doing with that time. Repeatedly punching himself in the face perhaps. It would at least have been a bit more musical.







Mastered in the studio last month:

JUDDAHS, SUPERGRASS, BURZUM,
THE PRAIRIE CLAMS, MADONNA,
ALCATRAZZ, THE MARK BOSLEY BAND,
NAZARETH, DIMORPHODONS, JEWISH BRITAIN
ON FILM, VALERYAN, THE HAWKMEN, EAN JONES,
ACID REIGN, SIMON CARBERY, LOVENESS
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Fri 18th Oct • 6.30pm

Amber Run + Stereo Honey

Fri 18th Oct • 11pn

The Abba Party | Live **Tribute**

Fri 18th Oct • 6.30

Ferocious Dog

+ Jess Silk + Paul Henshaw

Ritual Union

ft She Drew The Gun, Psychedelic Porn Crumpets, Bo Ningen, Another Sky, Do Nothing, Febueder, Candy Says, Max Blansjaar, Julia Meijer, Knobblehead, Lee Rilev

Tue 22nd Oct

Barns Courtney

Striking Matches

+ Tenille Townes + Dolly Mavies

The Fallen State

+ The Cruel Knives + Broken Empire

+ New Depth

Headie One

Fri 25th Oct • 6.30pr

Jake Clemons

+ Ben McKelvey + Danny Mellin

Oxtoberfest

Sat 26th Oct • 6.30

Guns 2 Roses
+ MOTLEY CRUED

Switch presents: Dimension

Inglorious

+ Mercutio

Friendly Fires

Halloween Special ft Skepsis

NOCHE DE TRAVESURAS - DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

Sat 2nd Nov • 6.30

The Dualers

+ Kioko + Count Skylarkin

+ Tony Nanton

Bear's Den

Sun 3rd Nov

Everyone You Know

Backbone

Mon 4th Nov • SOLD OUT

Feeder

+ Nova Club

Reel Big Fish

+ [spunge] + Lightyear

Hang Massive

Deaf Havana

+ Anavae + Howard Kaye

Little Comets

+ Stay Lunar + Kiama

The Roaring 2.0s

+ The Electro Swing Circus

+ Dutty Moonshine Dj Set + The Jack Calloway dance band

Snarky Puppy + Charlie Hunter + Lucy Woodward

Sat 9th Nov • 6.30pm

Dr Svntax & Pete Cannon

Switch presents: Sammy Virji - Like A Virjin Tour

Elder Island

Tue 12th No

Yonaka

Mystery Skulls

The Smyths...

A celebration of the debut L.P

The Treatment

+ Airrace + Lake Acacia

Silent Disco Oxford -Bigger & Bolder!

Black Parade

- 00's Emo Anthems

Dub Pistols

+ ZAIA + Zen Lewis

Professor Green

Switch presents: Hybrid Minds

Black Water County

+ The Lagan

Mon 18th Nov

Scouting for Girls

+ The Dunwells

Tue 19th No

Primal Scream

Thur 21st Nov

+ '68 + False Heads

Fri 22nd Nov • 6.30r

Half Man Half Biscuit

The Craig Charles **Funk & Soul Club**

+ Brasc0 + Tony Nanton + Count Skylarkin

23rd Nov • 6.3

Bingo Lingo

Biffy McClyro (Tribute)

Switch presents: Jungle Cakes

Fontaines D.C.

Ally Pally

Oxford Uni Darts

Electric Six

Thur 28th No

Happy Mondays

- Greatest Hits Tour

+ Jon Dasilva

Rhys Lewis

Ally Pally Oxford Brookes Uni Darts

Mad Dog Mcrea

+ Flats & Sharps

Definitely Mightbe (Oasis tribute)

<u> Airbourne</u>

+ Tyler Bryant & The Shakedown

Switch presents: Kanine / Darkzy / Window Kid / Indika / Lazcru

Sun 1st De

The Chats Thur 5th De

Carols at **O2 Academy Oxford**

The High Contrast Band

Pearl Jam UK

+ Eddie Vedder Solo Tribute

Gentleman's Dub Club

Absolute Bowie Legacy Tour

The Quireboys

Razorlight

Little Simz

Rhymeskeemz Live -The Christmas Party

A Gospel Christmas With John Fisher & **IDMC Gospel Choir**

Little Brother Eli -Christmas Party

Miz Cracker's

American Woman Fri 28th Feb 2020 • 6.30pm

Vex Red

The Aristocrats Wed 11th Mar 2020 • 6.30pp

The Calling

Fri 13th Mar 2020 •

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+ We Aren't Paramore

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