



NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every
month
Issue 291
October
2019**

"The idea that however much society progresses, we haven't really become morally better people was a fun thing to use for ideas. We tried not to make it a good or bad thing; music that has a moral standpoint is rarely effective"



YOUNG KNIVES

**Oxford's musical strange ones
bring the barbarity to Ritual Union**

Also in this issue:

SUPERGRASS reform!

CATWEAZLE hits 25

Introducing **MAX BLANSJAAR**
IF NOT NOW, WHEN? reviewed

plus

All your Oxford music news, previews and reviews,
plus seven pages of local gigs for October.

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THE BULLINGDON

OCTOBER 2019 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Tuesday 1st October Hunkpapa Doors: 7pm	Saturday 19th October Ritual Union: Teleman The Comet is Coming + Much More Doors: 7pm	Friday 1st November Rawdio: 5th Birthday Arkaik, Saxxon, Mistik, MC Bassman Doors: 8pm	Sunday 17th November Spontaneous Potter Doors: 7pm
Wednesday 2nd October Plastic Mermaids Doors: 7pm	Wednesday 27th October The Oxford Science & Ideas Festival The Maths of Tattoos Doors: 7pm	Saturday 2nd November The Shapes The Vernons Future Edwin & The Keepers Doors: 7pm	Monday 18th November Jaws Doors: 7pm
Thursday 3rd October Cassels The Saint Pierre Snake Invasion Doors: 7pm	Thursday 24th October The Della Grants Doors: 7pm	Saturday 2nd November Reggaeton Party Doors: 8pm	Thursday 21st November Oxford City Festival Aliens Pink Diamond Revue Doors: 7pm
Friday 4th October Drum and Bass Doors: 10pm	Thursday 24th October Bassface: 24hr Garage Girls & Eva Lazarus Shosh + Lady Ice Eva Lazarus (PA Set) Effi Brooks Doors: 10pm	Monday 4th November Cate Le Bon Doors: 7pm	Friday 22nd November Blackwater Conspiracy Doors: 7pm
Saturday 5th October Skylarkin Soundsystem Mungos HiFi Doors: 10pm	Friday 25th October Dreadzone Doors: 7pm	Friday 8th November Nigel Garage Doors: 8pm	Friday 22nd November Cut the Trap Doors: 10pm
Wednesday 6th October Vice City Fleetwood Mac Night Doors: 10pm	Friday 25th October Straight Outta Cowley Doors: 10pm	Saturday 9th November Simple Dr. Rubenstein Doors: 10pm	Saturday 23rd November Reggae Got Soul Daddy G (Massive Attack) Doors: 10pm
Thursday 10th October David Ford Abe Partridge Doors: 7pm	Saturday 26th October Volume #17 BCEE Phibes, Didz, Lyfie, Mac, Sound Affect Traumatik, Alman, Tanz Doors: 10pm	Sunday 10th November A Night Like This Evade Escape Lonesome Melwood Doors: 7pm	Tuesday 26th November The Oxford City Festival Doors: 7pm
Friday 11th October Ibiza 90s Party Doors: 10pm	Wednesday 20th October Robert Vincent Doors: 7pm	Tuesday 12th November Spector Doors: 7pm	Thursday 28th November The Clause Doors: 7pm
Saturday 12th October Musical Medicine CC:Disco! Doors: 10pm	Wednesday 20th October Haute Mess Doors: 10pm	Wednesday 13th November Lankum Doors: 7pm	Friday 29th November Soul Sista Doors: 10pm
Sunday 13th October Pip Blom Doors: 7pm	Thursday 21st October Jesca Hoop Doors: 7pm	Thursday 14th November Gucci Gang Doors: 10pm	Saturday 30th November Simple Ross from Friends (Live) Doors: 10pm
Friday 18th October The Wurzels Doors: 7pm	Thursday 21st October Graving Trippy Halloween Special Doors: 10pm	Friday 15th November Tracksuit & Trance: N Trance Doors: 10pm	Sunday 1st December Chop Suey Killswitch UK The Iron Road Doors: 7pm

NEWS

Nightshift: PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU

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AGS CONNOLLY releases his third studio album next month. The West Oxfordshire-based country roots singer releases ‘Wrong Again’ on the 1st November, the follow-up to 2017’s ‘Nothin’ Unexpected’.

Ags launches the new record with a headline show at Fat Lil’s in Witney on Thursday 31st October, with support from Roisin McNeill. Talking about the new record Ags told *Nightshift*: “The album was written entirely after ‘Nothin’ Unexpected’ was released and focuses pretty much solely on incidents in my life at that time, as my albums tend to. After making the previous two in Scotland with a producer, I took the reins myself this time and recorded at Woodworm Studios near Bloxham. The musicians involved were mostly London-based but I was also able to use – for the second album in a row – Michael Guerra (The Mavericks) and Eamon McLoughlin (Emmylou Harris), who recorded their parts remotely. I definitely felt the need to get this one right: the last album had a universally positive reaction and continued to gain traction for some time after its release. My hope is that this new effort will reach people that my music hasn’t previously. I think it’s the most complete album I’ve made.” Tickets for the launch show are on sale now, priced £10, from wegottickets.com.

TOWERSEY FESTIVAL is set to leave Oxfordshire after over 50 years. The annual event, currently Oxfordshire’s longest-running live music festival, is moving

to Buckinghamshire from 2020 due to uncertainty over the future of its current home at Thame Showground. The festival, best known as a folk event but which has regularly expanded its remit to include blues, rock and ska acts – including The Selecter, one of this year’s headline acts – will move to the Claydon Estate, near Buckingham, with next year’s line-up already announced, including Kate Rusby, Show of Hands and Steeleye Span, playing over the weekend of the 28th-31st August.

Explaining the move Towersey’s director Joe Heap said: “the instability of the current site has always been a problem. The long-term future of Thame Showground is uncertain but one day there will no doubt be houses here and we need both a great site and longevity. We have been searching for somewhere amazing since we left Towersey itself, a place that would capture our hearts and make a stunning location for your festival.”

Heap added: “We’ve realised how important our community feel and friendly atmosphere is and that making things effortless for festival goers is the beauty of Towersey, so we will be reducing numbers slightly in order to maintain that. We learned a lot when we had to leave the village of Towersey And we don’t plan to reinvent the wheel with the new site. Here’s to the next chapter.”

Joe Heap took over running Towersey from his father Steve, who retired this year, and his contribution to the festival was celebrated with a special concert at this year’s event. Also celebrated this year was the life and music of Roy Bailey, a patron of the festival and who played some 40 of Towersey’s 54 years and who passed away in 2018.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY celebrates its 28th anniversary this month with a full weekend of live music. The long-running monthly music night takes over The Wheatsheaf from the 4th-6th October. Friday night features sets



SUPERGRASS HAVE REFORMED.

The local legends announced their reunion on the 6th September when they played at Glastonbury’s annual Pilton Party. Rumours of a reunion had been circulating since the start of this year as the band worked to prepare a career-spanning box set, ‘Strange Ones 1994-2008’, due for release on the 24th January next year, but official confirmation came when Gaz Coombes tweeted: “Hi everyone, as you may have heard I’m taking a break between albums to join my @SupergrassHQ brothers on stage again for the first time in 10 years! It’s going to be a pretty special feeling playing all those songs again after so long. See you all out there! X” The hashtag Supergrass 2020 hinted at further activity to come and a sold-out show at Oslo in Hackney on September 9th duly followed, while a string of dates for February next year was soon announced, starting in Paris on the 4th. Another set of UK shows was then added as the first dates quickly sold out.

No Oxford show has yet been announced, prompting speculation the band might play a secret hometown warm-up gig ahead of February’s tour, or possibly return to the county with a headline set at next year’s Truck Festival.

Talking to *NME* about the reunion, Gaz said: “We’ve been talking about it for a while. I remember talking to Danny about on the phone maybe a year ago. We knew that 2020 was coming up and that would make it 25 years since the beginning and 10 years since the split. Everything aligned in a way to make it possible. The idea of getting in a room and having a play together again was something we all instinctively agreed would be a cool thing to do. Just to play those songs again and get in a room. That was it, really – it was no more than that. We didn’t want to look far into the distance. We just wanted to play and see what happens. It felt great.”

Reflecting on the “musical differences” that led to the band’s split in 2010, Gaz continued: “We’re all close. It wasn’t an issue of anyone hating the sight of anyone else or full-on crazy arguments. The studio session broke down for a lot of different reasons. Yeah, a lot of them were arguments, but nothing that meant if we met up in a pub that we wouldn’t be able to talk about other stuff. We were working so intensely together at the end that it just wasn’t really firing in the right way. In the following years we were still cool. It’s all good.”

Gaz also talked about the forthcoming box set, which is set to include previously unreleased material alongside their studio albums: “It’s pretty definitive, man. We’ve worked on it a lot. It’s a really band-driven piece as opposed to a retrospective record company release without the band’s knowledge. All of the rarities and uncovered stuff has been found by us rooting through cardboard boxes in our basements and finding mini discs and cassettes. It’s been cool to have a few months to just explore all of that stuff. God knows how we got anything done because there’s insane amounts of nonsense on all of these tapes of us just making weird little songs and jokey things. The box set is going to be pretty comprehensive, man – it’s got everything. I’ve just seen it all laid out and it looks brilliant.”

from Smiley & the Underclass, Pandapocalypse and Screamin’ Irene. Saturday’s gig features The Deadbeat Apostles, The Mighty Redox, Knobblehead and Enjoyable Listens, while Sunday’s session is an afternoon

of free music in the Wheatsheaf’s downstairs bar, featuring sets from Monkeyfists, Mark Atherton & Friends, Tony Batey & Sal Moore and Edwin & The Keepers. Happy birthday Sue, Phil, Ainan and crew, from everyone at *Nightshift*.



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NEWS



BEANIE TAPES launch three new releases for Cassette Store day on Saturday 12th October. The local tape-only label, run by Candy Says, releases ‘Continuous Play’, an album-length compilation of Oxford acts, as well as Max Blansjaar’s second EP, ‘Fantasy Living’, and ‘Rodeo Queen’ by Oxford-California hip hop-pop producer and singer EB. Both Max (pictured) and EB will be playing live at Truck Store for Cassette Day, alongside other acts on the compilation cassette. More info at beanietapes.club.

CATWEAZLE CELEBRATES ITS 25th anniversary this month and the club’s founder and host Matt Sage has been talking to *Nightshift* ahead of their big celebration event at The Isis Farmhouse on the 12th October. Matt began the club back in 1994, initially as an impromptu get-together in a pub backroom. A quarter of a century later it is a staple of the Oxford music scene, a starting point for myriad local stars, and credited by *The Times* as one of Oxford’s must-visit events. “I wasn’t even sure we’d be back the following week,” says Matt, answering *Nightshift*’s question as to whether he imagined the club still going 25 years after its first night. “We started out in what was then the snug at the Victoria Arms in Jericho. Around 30 people showed up, from word of mouth and a couple of posters I’d put up in and around the boater community where I then lived. We all had a wonderful, life-affirming night of songs and stories and poems, and all agreed to come back and do it all again next week. And that rolling agreement has been in effect ever since, although we have moved venue several times along the way.” As you might expect, Catweazle has endured its fair share of challenges over the years, not least with keeping a stable home. “The biggest challenges are always behind the scenes – with venues, mostly, and those charged with running them not really understanding the ethos – or, to my mind, the culturally vital importance of what we are trying to do. In all these years – that’s hundred of sessions, and thousands of performers, I’ve only ever had to drag people off the stage twice. We are open to pretty much anything and everything, I’d say, as long as it’s not overtly abusive. Expression comes in many forms: the more the merrier.” So why has an open night – not even an open mic night as the club doesn’t have one –

OXFORD CITY FESTIVAL returns next month. The festival runs from the 15th November across various venues across the city. Local acts wanting to play should contact organiser Mark O’Brien via the Oxford City Festival Facebook page.

DAISY RODGERS MUSIC celebrates ten years of the club with a series of gigs over the next three months. The indie gig night hosts shows at The Jericho Tavern, The Wheatsheaf and Port Mahon, beginning with Ideal Marriage, 31 Hours and Juniper Nights at the Jericho on Friday 25th October. Acts set to play the other shows include The Black Hats, The August List, Alphabet Backwards, Easter Island Statues, Pandapocalypse and Arthur Sawbridge. DRM host Kevin told *Nightshift*: “2019 is our 10th anniversary, so we are planning three gigs at three of our favourite venues across the city, bringing together some of the favourite bands who have played for us over the last ten years. It’ll be a real celebration of the Oxford new music scene.

We are keeping tickets at our 2009 prices and advance ticketholders will get a chance to vote for a cover song to be played by one of the bands on the night.” Advance tickets for all Daisy Rodgers Music shows are available from wegottickets.com.

MUZOAKADEMY host a series of events in October and November. The all-ages, all-abilities music project, based in Witney, hosts an open day on Saturday 12th October, with visitors able to find out about the services and tuition they offer. The free event runs from 9.45am. The academy then hosts five-day learning courses over October half-term holiday, running from Monday 28th October-Friday 1st November, allowing people to learn to play pretty much any instrument. Courses cost £100 in advance. Finally MusoAkademy hosts a daytime, all-ages Halloween-themed gig at Fat Lil’s on Saturday 2nd November, from 11am-4pm. For more details on all events, visit facebook.com/muzoakademy

DEEP COVER release a new single this month. The local bass label and events collective release ‘5 Scotch Bonnets’ by Cardiff-based rapper MC Magugu and produced by Oxford’s ROMO, featuring a Come Dine With Me-inspired video, shot in Oxford.

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 email all news (and listings) to editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk by the 20th of each month.



survived and thrive for so long when others have come and gone? “I think it meets a fundamental need in those who come for an intimate, safe gathering where we can marvel at one another’s creative ingenuity, inspire and be inspired, to listen, to share and to connect with our fellow humans. It’s a soft space in an often very hard world. For performers, it presents a rare opportunity to really be heard. We purposely don’t use a PA, just a hundred pairs of eyes and ears, and that can actually be pretty intense if you’re on stage! Oh, we also have no stage. But this atmosphere – focus, intention, open-hearted listening – really lends it itself to some frequent tingling of the vertebrae, and is also, no doubt, a strong part of its appeal.” Among the artists who have cut their teeth at Catweazle early on, two of the best known are Foals’ Yannis Phillipakis, and Stornoway. “I vividly remember both of those first sets, and a great many others. Yannis was 15 and, inexplicably, still in his school uniform. He read some of his poems and had such a powerful intensity about both himself and his work. He came pretty regularly for about a year or so. As I recall, the members of Stornoway were already very much part of the scene before they formed the band – they’d been coming individually for

a while – so it was exciting that they’d gotten together to make a band. On their first gig, I remember Oli had a problem with his bass and asked if anyone in the audience happened to have a power drill. Someone did. We all thought it was part of the act which, I guess, it was.” Matt won’t be drawn on his personal highlights of the last 25 years (“There are way too many. Pretty much every week”), preferring to look forward to the anniversary event which, in typical Catweazle fashion, will be a whatever-comes-along affair, open to all-comers. “We’ve got nothing planned; I never know who is going to turn up to perform on any particular week; it’s also a part of what keeps it interesting for me. And this will be no different. I’ve long encouraged people to leave their expectations at the door – they generally only lead to disappointments – and allow themselves instead to be amazed. At our 25th, I’m just looking forward to meeting some friends, both old and new, and to see who’s got what on the night.” And, having seen thousands of hopefuls come and go over the years, what advice would Matt have for anyone thinking of making their performing debut, and why would Catweazle be the best place to make that debut? “Talent is mostly just the sheer, bloody-minded will to wanna put the hours in. Nothing else can make you good at your craft. And to my mind, The Catweazle Club is the most welcoming, inclusive, supportive, intimate environment pretty much anywhere, and you are pretty much guaranteed to have a positive, if not life-changing, experience.” *Catweazle’s 25th anniversary event takes place at The Isis Farmhouse near Iffley Lock on Saturday 12th October, and every Thursday at East Oxford Community Centre*

RITUAL UNION

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Young Knives



“I AM A FIRM BELIEVER THAT mediocrity is the mother of invention and the breeding ground for creativity,” says Young Knives’ Henry Dartnall, responding to Nightshift’s query as to whether he would rather be an ugly genius or beautiful and stupid. “Extremes are horribly limiting; even if you were a beautiful genius, what a curse.”

SO SAYS ONE HALF OF A BAND TO whom the word mediocrity could never, ever be applied. Young Knives’ story has been one of musical highs, sideways steps, adventures and wayward wilfulness, none of which have even skirted the middling ground. From the first time we saw them, down at The Cellar in 2002, we knew we’d encountered something very special: a band unconfined by musical or sartorial barriers. A band dressed in, at the time, horrendously uncool tweed, who would pause a song to drop into a chanted segment from an old Throbbing Gristle number before recommencing the task in hand. A band who could pen some of the catchiest choruses in Christendom while simultaneously making you wonder “what the hell is *that*?”

Over a decade and a half later, Young Knives continue to be one of those groups by which all others should be measured. Their last album, 2013’s ‘Sick Octave’, was their best yet, a musical statement of intent by a band that, having gone through the music industry wringer, came out the other side and found themselves completely creatively free.

SIX YEARS ON, HENRY, ALONG WITH brother Thomas, have a new album recorded and ready for release in 2020, and, after dipping their toes back into the waters of gigging with an experimental set at The Wheatsheaf back in May, are set to play their biggest show in some years when they play the O2 Academy as part of Ritual Union this month. For so long one of the leading lights not just of Oxford music but the wider indie world, Young Knives’ rather more elusive existence since ‘Sick Octave’ makes their return all the more exciting. The show at The Wheatsheaf was both a reminder of what a unique act they are, but also how far, compared to most bands, they are prepared to push things to create the music they want to hear. The new tracks that Henry sends over to *Nightshift*

ahead of the interview bear this out: the spindly, disconcerting ‘Red Cherries’, which mixes jazz, electronic music and noise rock, and the dark, mantric ‘Society For Cutting Up Men’, as well as a short video clip of the track ‘Sheep Tick’, whose grotesque, disturbing visuals match the challenging music. ‘Metal Box’-era PiL, Throbbing Gristle, Suicide and Devo are just some of the touchstones you might detect, while the sound remains indisputably Young Knives.

“SICK OCTAVE’ KEPT US BUSY FOR A while and we did an EP in 2015, but since then we have taken a purposeful step back,” explains Henry of Young Knives’ absence; “we needed a break from the routine. We have still just been making sounds together, but making sure we don’t force the results, letting ideas lose their identity and just sort of living in the noise we make. It’s been a useful few years where we’ve just let new ideas happen with no rush. Beyond music is what it’s been about really, letting other stuff take over, being normal for a bit.”

One very noticeable change in the Young Knives we saw at The Wheatsheaf show was the lack of drummer Oli Askew, with Henry and Oliver using electronic percussion for the most part. Despite not featuring on the new album or live shows, Henry stresses Oli hasn’t left the band as such. “He isn’t able to leave. I’ve certainly never liked the word or the concept of a band. It’s not real, it’s difficult to ‘leave’ something that doesn’t exist; he’s first and foremost our friend and he can’t leave that. He is not hanging out with us at the moment because he doesn’t live in Oxford anymore and it’s hard to get together. Tom and I always liked the idea of a really compact set up, something you can sling in a bag and do a gig, so we used it as an opportunity to work out what that would be and try it out. There’s a freedom in not having a wall of amps and a drum kit. We have played with drummers and percussionists and we will again; it’s just we wanted to try a modular approach to performing, doing different types of gigs. Whatever makes exciting shows and breaks repetition helps keep things new and interesting for us.”

NEW AND INTERESTING ARE KEY words for Young Knives who promoted the Wheatsheaf show as “unhinged and experimental.” The show predictably sold out well in advance; did they learn any lessons from how the set and the new arrangements came out? “It was supposed to be a safe space to try things out with half formed new material and ideas, although inevitable it was seen as a comeback. It was definitely research and development for us and kind of proved to us that the concept of what we are trying to do live works and highlighted the bits that didn’t.”

It must have been good to see the show sell out so far in advance. When a band ‘disappears’ for a long while they can be quickly forgotten. Do you feel you have a particularly loyal or intense fanbase? “I don’t know really; I am reasonably unaware of what kind of fanbase we have. I think that’s good for us to distance ourselves from it, otherwise we might concern ourselves with what the fans might

think about new ideas, that can be really unhelpful. Some performers feed off having the same people show up to their shows, and there are a few people we definitely know that come to lots of shows, but on the whole I think we are always trying to push ourselves and therefore it can divide fans and gives us a bit of fan turnover. We quite like that because it feels like we are doing something right; I don’t like it when things seem to stand still: we’d rather challenge and alienate than have a lovely time showing off to the same group of people, although it also seems that a lot of our fans like us for that very reason so they do keep coming back. It doesn’t mean we go out of our way to piss people off, I just think people don’t need to support us like a football team, which is great because I dislike that kind of culture very much. I’d rather people say ‘I like that one song/album/video, but the rest is terrible’. It’s good for us to put aside concerns about validation and popularity because on the whole it’s out of our control.”

If The Wheatsheaf was for the hardcore fans, Young Knives’ set at Ritual Union will see them exposed to a far bigger and wider audience for the first time in years; how does Henry feel about that?

“Shows are great fun and I really like being part of a big event like that; it’s great to have a big show without all the pressure of carrying the whole thing. Our focus is always on making sure we turn it up and mix up what we do, whatever size the show. We are very aware that punters want value for money and it’s our duty to make shows above average every time, even if you hate the music it should be engaged and done with every ounce of focus and energy. “What Ritual Union has done for Oxford music is undeniable. There are so many good promoters in Oxford at the moment. You’ve got to think creatively to keep scenes alive, and Ritual Union is a great example of a positive approach to a difficult time for music and venues.”

WHILE RITUAL UNION WILL ALLOW fans to reconnect with Young Knives soon enough, they will have to wait a little while longer for the new album but those early snapshots suggest it will be a natural heir to the superb ‘Sick Octave’, which saw Young Knives casting off any loose shackles of commercial expectation, while still managing to create gorgeous, warped pop gems like ‘Maureen’, which ended up topping *Nightshift*’s end of year Top 25 back in 2013. As mentioned, the first time we ever saw the band play, still called Ponyclub back then, down at The Cellar, they dropped into a segment of ‘Subhuman’ by Throbbing Gristle in the middle of ‘Easy Peasy, one of our favourite gig-going moments ever. The Wheatsheaf show and tracks like ‘Red Cherries’ suggest that influence is very much back to the fore; does Henry feel they have the freedom to pursue that kind of musical path now? “Yes, definitely. We have made sure that we work in a way that ignores other people’s opinion and external pressures. There are things we like and inspire us and they tend to be – although not exclusively – on the outside of good taste and beyond what the majority would think of as good music. We have gone further than full circle I think; through the indie pop machine and then beyond what we started out doing, which was covers of interesting things, to actually trying to do that ourselves. I mean ‘gone further’ in that we feel much freer: I think when we started we didn’t somehow think we were allowed to do whatever

we liked. It’s nice to be at that stage now.”

THE CORE CONCEPT OF THE NEW album is inspired by the philosopher John Gray’s book *Straw Dogs* and the idea of human barbarism. What started Henry down that path? “I didn’t read it when it came out because it’s a bit of a student staple; I didn’t like the hype. It’s a great piece of writing and I have always been interested in philosophy; I did it at college and it’s always been there. The book makes the point that however much our society progresses technologically and scientifically and however much our standard of living increases, we haven’t really become morally better people. I thought that was just kind of a fun thing to use for ideas. We tried not to make it a good or bad thing; music that has a moral standpoint is rarely effective, and I don’t really know what my opinion of it is anyway. The clash of the ideas is what makes the thing interesting. If we can’t stop humans trying to destroy each other, how do we come to terms with that? But the songs are about more specific things that are like little set pieces, or images.”

“I don’t think art is ever nihilistic because it is creating something, something with value and meaning.”

YOUNG KNIVES STARTED EXPLORING those ideas for the new record with their ‘Barbaric Experiments’ installation at Modern Art in 2017, which aimed to allow the band to push sonic and visual boundaries in an interactive “art installation” environment; did that pan out as they hoped or expected? Did audience reaction or direct input have an impact on what they created after? “Yes it’s still on the list of things to do. We want to tour with that set up, but we need to get a record out before we can do that in earnest. It’s just a lot of work and we want to make sure it enhances a gig rather than obscures it, which was why we were trying it out at Modern Art. I think people got what we were trying to do but we try not to let what people think change what we do because it just gets too confusing.” Are the ideas of cruelty, violence, and humanity’s basest instincts good source material for writing music?

“I think it veered us towards quite messy, grotesque sounds, sort of a primordial soup feel. The record kind of makes me think of those moments when you suddenly realise what a strange and wild trip our reality is.” Which musicians or writers do you feel have best got to the heart of the human condition? “I don’t think that people who *try* and find the one essence of humanity get that far. I’m not very well versed in any of those areas; I’m aware of the upsurge of modern thinkers on Youtube and podcasts like Sam Harris and Jordan Peterson and it interests me but I do think that having such lofty concerns is not essential for a full life.” Any artists you think have got close to pure nihilism in their music? “Is that a thing artists can do? GG Allin? DNA? Throbbing Gristle? Even then it’s all just enjoyable noise. I’m not really into nihilism and I don’t think art or whatever is ever nihilistic because it is creating something, something with value and meaning. Sure, the value and meaning maybe subjectively perceived by an individual or a group rather than universally valued but that’s the most important kind of value, that’s the kind of value that supports a society. So to be truly nihilistic it

would have to be liked by no-one. There aren’t many examples of that I wouldn’t have thought: a couple of our b-sides maybe.” ‘Society For Cutting up Men’ features the chorus line, “The scum of the earth will rise to the top”. Is that the perfect lyric for our current political situation? “Oh yeah. The song was written before Trump got into power so it wasn’t a reaction to that as such. It isn’t my opinion either, its Valerie Solanas’. Still it works on that level if you want it to. I like it better interpreted as we want the SCUM, the filthy, angry, sexy, passionate, unsafe revolutionaries, to take over, not the bell-ends. But it’s good to have more than one meaning.”

FOR ANYONE WHO HADN’T SEEN Young Knives for a while, or bumped into Henry at a local gig, his appearance at The Wheatsheaf might have come as a bit of a shock; sporting a voluminous beard and bandana as well as a sequinned smock, such electro-weirdo biker chic was a world away from the popular image of the band as tweedy, geeky indie oddballs.

“Biker-chic? Great, is that the new look? Yes I guess it is, I can’t really see it from the outside and I don’t remember much of it but on the whole it’s been a pretty fun time. It doesn’t feel like a journey though, I can’t really feel much of a difference from when I did it in the past, it feels the same to me, just a bit less worrying.”

With a musical journey spanning almost 20 years and involving huge critical acclaim, a Mercury Prize nomination and chart success but also the sort of record label tribulations that would be familiar to so many bands, Young Knives are a now at a place where creatively they couldn’t be happier; they are making the music they want at a pace they find comfortable – no outside pressure or expectation. We wonder then, if Henry could go back in time, what piece of advice he would give to the younger Young Knives at any point in their career. “I wouldn’t interfere, I don’t think. Everything that happened was a thing that happened so it isn’t worth dwelling on. Maybe I would suggest we quit drinking but I doubt it would have gone down very well. Perhaps my advice would be: don’t ever think of it as a career because that’s what kills it. Other people can see it as a career; you should just look at the thing you care about right in front of you now: the gig, the song. Just do that bit the best and ignore the rest. But then there’s being told that and there’s actually knowing that, and I think the knowing comes from having made all the mistakes. “The idea of success has to be defined. My idea of success is genuinely how good I think our output is. I truly believe that. If we were worried about being popular we would have quit when Warner Bros dropped us. That just galvanised us, because I was surprised by how little I gave a shit: my life wasn’t over, I could still play and perform and in a way we were kicked off the treadmill that makes music so boring, although it did take us another album to work it out. I would really struggle to be part of that again; it was stressful and made me anxious, plus it made us worse at what we did, or at least it made me worse at it when I compared my output and performance against my opinion of what is good. I do hope that what we do inspires people to push their taste and acceptance of being force fed easy music.”

Young Knives play Ritual Union on Saturday 19th October.

RELEASED

FOALS

‘Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost Part 2’

(Warner Music)

Foals’ triumphant headline set at Truck Festival in July proved beyond any doubt that the slimmed-down four-piece are now a band for the big stage, and ‘Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost Part 2’ sounds like a statement of intent on that front. Yannis Phillipakis promised it would be heavier than ‘Part 1’ and he wasn’t wrong. This is an album where the guitar is king. Lead tracks like ‘The Runner’ and ‘Black Bull’ are the conclusion of what tracks like ‘Inhaler’ and ‘Providence’ first suggested, with riffs dominating hammer blow funk rhythms, an air of muscle-tensed hysteria ready to burst fully to the surface at any moment. Foals’ road to rock machine status has been gradual, the very definition of evolution, so now they’re at this stage it doesn’t feel like a forced move; this is the level they’ve reached – a point where no band with any sense would want, or be able, to follow them onstage. ‘Part 2’ isn’t precisely the yin to ‘Part 1’s’ yang – the likes of ‘Exits’ and ‘White Onions’ would have fitted securely enough amid this company, while conversely ‘Dreaming Of’ and the romantic, shimmering ‘Into the Surf’, with its echoes of Ryuichi Sakamoto, could have made the opposite journey, but you can see why Foals split the album into two parts. The former was a stretching of limbs, a warming up of ideas and a new sense of direction in the wake of Walter Gervers’ departure; this album has shaken the icicles off the branches and stomped into full bloom. ‘10,000 Feet’ for example is Foals finding their inner Led Zeppelin,



MAX BLANSJAAR

‘Fantasy Living’

(Beanie Tapes)

Such is the attention-deficit mix’n’match nature of Max Blansjaar’s home-baked electro/garage pop it’s easy to see him as an heir to Beck’s wide-ranging, pigeonhole-defying adventures in Audioland, but in the week we lost the strange, gentle maverick talents of Daniel Johnston, Max feels more like the baton-holder for that



while the cloudbusting chorus to ‘The Runner’ is purpose-built to lift stadium and festival crowds to new heights of delirium. What’s has arguably been lost a little along the way is some of the band’s subtleties – those neat, intricate polyrhythms (although the fleet-footed scurry that is ‘Wash Off’ retains a little of that old Afro-funk feel about it) – and the build-then-blast dynamics of the likes of ‘Inhaler’: ‘Black Bull’ is straight in with the haybaling punches when before they might have taken their time to land the killer blow. That said, the ten-minute ‘Neptune’ that closes the album, perfectly marries all those deft dynamics with the sheer power Foals now command – a beast of a song, but a beast with a soft pelt and purr as well as teeth and claws. ‘Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost Part 2’ sounds like Foals’ “‘Top of the world” moment; it’s one they more than deserve and frankly, you can’t see anyone removing them from their plinth. **Dale Kattack**

particular strain of musical waywardness. Like Johnston, Blansjaar creates a sweet, simple melody, one that’s hard to let go off once you’ve got it in your head, and then skews it, twists it, lets it wander off to play with the cat and finally reins it back in time for tea. There’s also that same childlike nature in songs like ‘Going Backwards’ and in particular ‘Parallel Lines’ (opening lines: “I have plants but I let them die / Hated every minute they were in my window / Maybe it’s why I can’t seem to sleep at night”). There’s something of Jeffrey Lewis’ whimsy about ‘Always a Second’, but viewed through the prism of Robyn Hitchcock’s very English take on psychedelia. Best of the lot on this five-song EP, set for release on Cassette Store Day, though, is ‘The Shame I Wear’, skittering Casiotone machine pop that sounds like Eels fronting a Toytown Suicide, but as ever, with a pretty pop melody at its heart ready for coating in whatever garagey gloop Max fancies pulling out of the cupboard.

Daniel Johnston might have gone to a happier place (we hope) but his legacy remains, not in sales figures and gold discs but instead artists like Max Blansjaar, making unpolished, uncommercial pop that come with a natural childlike charm that you just can’t force. **Dale Kattack**

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CASSELS

‘The Perfect Ending’

(Big Scary Monsters)

“I’m very much a pessimist anyway so a part of me does like to wallow in feeling that we’re all fucked.” So said Cassels guitarist/vocalist Jim Beck in an interview back in 2016. Three years on, and that sentiment is borne out by his band’s second full-length LP, a pull-no-punches indictment of humanity as an “upright fleshy parasite” trashing the planet but too preoccupied with upgrading their iPhones to care about the prospect of imminent extinction. Drummer Loz’s percussion at the start of ‘All The St John’s Wort In The World’ even sounds like a ticking timebomb, and the album as a whole is suitably explosive, paying customarily little lip service to convention and veering wildly from spoken word to skull-cracking assault. The gnarly riffage of ‘Melting Butter’ is Royal Blood after a crash course on Shellac, while the savage, violent conclusions to songs like ‘The Queue At The Chemist’s’ prophesy the environmental apocalypse looming ever larger on the horizon.

Jim’s verbose sing-speak isn’t for everyone, but it takes considerable courage to put your neck on the line with your lyrics in the way he does, refusing to hide behind distortion or effects. What’s changed since their last outing, 2017’s *Epithet*, is that he no longer seems so abrasively convinced of the righteousness of his own opinions, as though recently awakened to the truth of Bertrand Russell’s famous comment: “the problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are so certain of themselves, and wiser people so full of doubts.” Opening track ‘A Snowflake In Winter’ sets the tone, Jim’s critical focus trained on himself: “I like to think I’m a deep thinker / And I’m pretty sure I’m a person with conviction / But in reality I know I’m a snowflake in winter / Blown along on the wind of the latest liberal opinion.” The alt-right media might deliberately manipulate people through fake news and economy with the truth, but, he acknowledges, living in a left-wing online echo chamber also results in a distorted perspective. If we are collectively rushing headlong to hell in a handcart – personally, politically, environmentally –then let’s at least be thankful for the fact that it inspired the brothers grim to make this record. **Ben Woolhead**



KRIS T REEDER

‘Time To Fly Part 2’

(ELR XL)

Improvising trombonist Kris T Reeder has, we’re informed online, been “tokenised on the Ethereum blockchain”. It takes us five minutes of searching to work out that this is not satire, just something we have no hope of comprehending. Still, if it had been a wheeze it would have summed up this album, which embodies Vicky ‘People Like Us’ Bennett’s concept of irritainment: art which is defined by its very ornery awkwardness. Take opener ‘78 Free’, built on a chunky 4/4 bass kick which is a sloppily chopped loop, regularly dropping a fraction of a beat, summing up the intriguing tension at the heart of the album, a clash between the jazzy expressiveness of free improv trombone, and cheap clunky electronica. ‘Go On Then’ pits rusty ‘bone tension cues against wildly oscillating synth in a style that might be called Noirstep, but might also be mistaken for someone testing the parameters of a Korg in a shop with an improv masterclass in the corner, and ‘Pain Threshold’ subsumes some relaxed hippo-parping notes in a storm of electronic chirrups and buzzes. There are points where the album feels more sonically balanced, the interplay between Autechral beats and fluent trombone runs in ‘For Deep Experience’ working well, and the title track’s SNES reproduction of a New Orleans second line groove possessing an ineluctable swagger but generally this record is as frustrating as it is enjoyable. So much free improv has become a closed stylistic paddock decades after its inception, this deliberate oddness is actually a good thing, and we encourage all readers with a taste for the leftfield to seek Reeder out. And if you work out what to do with a tokenised blockchain whilst you’re there, be sure to let us know. **David Murphy**

MISERY GUTS

‘Oxford Ardkore’

(Richter Scale)

‘Oxford Ardkore’ is brilliant: five raucous tracks, four of which clock in at around 90 seconds. I’ve not got much to go on with Misery Guts: the tape inlay reveals they’re a four-piece, including Evie (“Screams and Confrontation”) and Joe T (“Big Smasher Martian Prince Energy”, whatever that might mean). As you might expect from the EP’s title, this is hardcore punk with the spirit of 1980s US hardcore running through it: Minor Threat, Negative Approach, Black Flag, and so on.

GRUDGEWOOD

‘Grudgewood EP’

(Self released)

While instrumental bands are hardly novel in Oxford, they tend to come from the left-field – post-rock and electronic music, rather than the middle lane of the Rock Highway. To redress this imbalance are Grudgewood, a band formed by former members of Marconi’s Voodoo, SOW and Junkie Brush, and a group who you imagine look in the mirror every morning and bellow “For those about to rock... we salute you!” Not that his debut EP is simple, by-numbers old school riffage. ‘Full Moon Hangover’ kicks in with AC/DC gusto and gallops freely along for the first half of its duration, but then dips down into something more intricate, if not exactly sedate, before firing the cylinders back up for a rousing finale, with echoes of Muse’s more

BLACK HATS

‘Bad News Telephone’

(Self released)

Black Hats’ first release since 2013 finds the trio looking further into pop’s past than they did in their last flurry of activity, particularly the 1980s and its mix and muddle of fusion sounds. No more so than ‘Sleep Patterns’, which gathers up brassy electro-pop, uptight funk and late-period Duran Duran and layers it all together over a loping reggae groove. That groove is given a bit more welly on ‘Just In Time’, but here mixed up with what might be a mid-80s mod revival vibe, or that place where The Jam began to become The Style Council. A diversion of sorts, but sticking with that 80s feel, comes with ‘All We Ever Wanted’, where The Cure’s airy gothic pop meets Blancmange’s bubbling synth-pop, while The EP’s title track, and highlight, revisits the funk-tinged new wave of XTC and, in particular, Big Audio Dynamite. Somehow all this manages to come together enough to make for a likeable, lively set of songs that sound like they wandered into a previous decade and simply tried on a few styles without thinking too hard if they went together, and for most of the time they make it work, but as an EP it maybe lacks Black Hats’ taut live energy, which takes those style steals and really makes them work out. **Dale Kattack**

However, the exquisitely-messy production sees these tracks swirling in grimy fuzz and distortion, with Evie’s vocals delivering short, not-particularly-sweet blasts of hissing anger. That edge of chaotic, noisy delivery and strong, direct lyrics would have seen Misery Guts slotting in nicely to a Digital Hardcore compilation of the mid-1990s.

The lyrics are focussed enough for even a simpleton like me to get the point. For example, on ‘Feral Socialist’: “Misogynist / Apologist / Transphobe / Snitch / Not My Comrade”. Strong messages, delivered well; fierce music, with a positive edge. A refreshing assault to the ears. **Simon Minter**

bombastic excursions or even Primus at their most level-headed. ‘Blacksnake Root’ is similarly robust but comes with an almost funky edge, courtesy of bassist Snuffy Walden, and if there’s a hint of Tool about it, they never really go *too* far down the prog route with its inherent self-conscious cleverness – although the semi-folky interlude towards the end wouldn’t go amiss on a Jethro Tull record. The EP does seem intended more for fellow musicians to admire than laymen to get lost in at times: technique is very much to the fore, but you feel the tracks would benefit from some kind of visual accompaniment to provide a more solid focal point; ‘Heavy Water Sabotage’ is the heaviest and most visceral piece here and in a live setting you could headbang yourself daft to it, but even cranked up on a decent CD player it feels like it’s a part of a bigger piece, part of a longer musical journey rather than the central plot line. **Ian Chesterton**

THE DEADBEAT

APOSTLES

‘Bring Out Your Deadbeats’

(Self released)

Regularly described in these pages as “where The Grand Ole Oprey meets The Harlem Apollo,” The Deadbeat Apostles have a keen balance of country and soul. If last single, ‘Bigger Man’, showcased the band’s more country side; with this new EP, that soul side comes far more to the fore. And what a rich and fulsome soul it is. With Fender Rhodes taking the lead over the steel guitar, Mike Ginger gives his inner Percy Sledge a good outing, best on ‘Paint a Picture’, smooth yet gravelly, a deliciously rich and earthy voice that benefits from Michelle Mayes’ decorative backing vocals. Maybe less rambunctious than they’re often capable of, much of the EP tends towards the tender, Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett the driving forces, some sweet sax lending an almost lounge vibe to the songs, although ‘Wolf Street’ gets some dirt under its fingernails, with the guitar given more rocking rein, the song a punchier r’n’b piece. The highlight here is EP closer ‘Muddy Creek’, a powerful gospel-blues anthem that finds both Ginger and Mayes pushing their voices to greater heights and it’s the pair’s interaction that is what brings The Deadbeat Apostles so fully to life. Few bands have one vocalist with such strength and versatility; that The Deadbeats have two seems a little unfair on everyone else. **Dale Kattack**



G I G G U I D E

TUESDAY 1st
HUNKPAPA: The Bullingdon – Anthemic folk-rock and indie from the Northern Irish band back at the Bully after their show here in February.
NERVUS + NERVOUS REX + SPANK HAIR + DREAM PHONE: The Wheatsheaf – Freak Scene and Snuggle Dice team up to bring Watford/Brighton’s rising emo/indie-punk stars to town, the band touring new album ‘Tough Crowd’ on Big Scary Monsters, the follow-up to last year’s acclaimed ‘Everything Dies’.

Friday 4th
ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE / FLIGHTS OF HELIOS / THE ELEPHANT TRIP: The Jericho Tavern

The question of who or what Acid Mothers Temple is or are would probably need a dissertation to answer fully, but in short they are a Japanese collective/commune/ band formed by and centred around guitarist Kawabata Makoto back in the mid-90s. Since then they have gone out under myriad names, formed countless coalitions (including, unsurprisingly, Gong) and involved a fluid and expansive line-up that can number up to 30 (including, according to their website, musicians, artists, dancers and farmers). They are also incredibly prolific and the style of music you get can vary wildly depending on which exact incarnation of the band you chance upon. Somewhere in the centre of all this, though is a stated desire to create “the ultimate trip music”, and AMT’s gigs veer towards the psychedelic side of things, taking in elements of drone-rock, space-rock, freeform jazz, world rhythms, krautrock and avant-garde classical music; gigs freerange from doomy choral chants to atonal freakouts, always with a hefty elements of deranged what-the-hell attitude. From Faust to Sun Ra, via Stockhausen and back again, but this time via Hawkwind and a whole lotta heavy metal. Tonight is the band’s first trip to Oxford in almost a decade, though Makoto did turn up at Supernormal a couple of years ago with another collaborative project, and a trip it will be. Suitably psychedelic support from Flights of Helios and The Elephant Trip.



OCTOBER

HARP OPEN NIGHT: The Port Mahon

WEDNESDAY 2nd
PLASTIC MERMAIDS: The Bullingdon – Soft-focus psychedelia from the Isle of Wight’s Plastic Mermaids, out on tour to promote their debut album, ‘Suddenly Everyone Explodes’, their delicate, tremulous, gently euphoric dreampop joining the dots between Flaming Lips, Mercury Rev, Spiritualized and Sigur Ros.
ALAN WEST + STEVE BLACK & ADAM SWEET + AGS CONNOLLY: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Roots Americana and country rock from veteran Devon singer Alan West, plus long-term musical partner Steve Black, alongside local Ameripolitan songsmith Ags Connolly, set to release his third album at the end of the month.
HORNSEY ROAD: The Cornerstone, Didcot – A tribute to The Beatles’ ‘Abbey Road’ album on its 50th anniversary.

THURSDAY 3rd
CASELS + SAINT PIERRE SNAKE INVASION: The Bullingdon – Last month’s *Nightshift* cover stars launch new album, ‘The Perfect Ending’, the duo taking a cynical view of climate change through the prism of taut, angular post-hardcore and math-rock noise. They’re joined at their biggest hometown headline show so far by Bristol’s garage rock/punk tourmates The Saint Pierre Snake Invasion.
THE PIERCE BROTHERS + MILLINGTON: O2 Academy – Melbourne’s relentlessly touring twin brothers head back over to Europe, having risen from busking on the streets of their hometown to becoming figureheads of Australia’s blues, folk and roots scene.

HOLLIS BROWN: The Jericho Tavern – A Welcome return to town for the New York band, steeped in classic 60s and 70s rock and roll, blues, and traditional American country rock, songwriting partners Mike Montali and Jon Bonilla naming themselves after Bob Dylan’s classic ‘The Ballad of Hollis Brown’, his influence is apparent in their music, alongside Neil Young, Tom Petty, The Band and Creedence Clearwater Revival, while they also knock out a respectable version of The Velvet Underground’s ‘Sweet Jane’.
URBAN FOLK QUARTET: The North Wall – Lively folk and roots from the acclaimed quartet, out on another mammoth UK tour, fusing global sounds, from traditional English and Celtic, to Eastern European, Middle Eastern, Afrobeat, Indian, Cuban, bluegrass and funk into their jigs, reels and songs.
NIGEL PRICE: The Wheatsheaf – Breezy swing and blues-tinged jazz from the hard-working guitarist at tonight’s Spin.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre – Celebrating their 25th anniversary this month, Oxford’s longest-running

open night continues to showcase local singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists every Thursday.
THE CHURCHFITTERS: The Unicorn, Abingdon – Energetic folk fusion from the Anglo-Irish-French band, mixing up original songs with updated takes on traditional British folk tunes.

FRIDAY 4th
ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE + FLIGHTS OF HELIOS + THE ELEPHANT TRIP: The Jericho Tavern – Sonic astronauts, prepare for space flight – *see main preview*
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with SMILEY & THE UNDERCLASS + PANDAPOCALYPSE + SCREAMIN’ IRENE: The Wheatsheaf – Klub Kakofanney kick off a weekend of live music to celebrate the club’s 28th anniversary, tonight featuring a rootsy hip hop, reggae, rock and punk mash-up from London’s Smiley & the Underclass alongside big beat electro-pop and indie dance from Pandapocalypse and Aylesbury’s grunge rockers Screamin’ Irene.

COCO & THE BUTTERFIELDS: O2 Academy – Canterbury’s folk-pop-hip hop crew return to town, the band lead by singers Dulcima Showa and Toma Twyman, who met on their local busking circuit, the pair’s duets lending a sense of drama to beatbox-driven Celtic folk and bluegrass-flavoured pop.
GROOVE feat. HARRISON BDP: O2 Academy – House, minimal electro, disco, techno and garage from Cardiff’s master of lo-fi beats at tonight’s Groove night.
DRUM’N’BASS: The Bullingdon – Club night.
MAKE THIS OUR HOME: The Port Mahon – The Epstein host their monthly residency, joined by assorted chums from the folk and Americana scene.
CATFISH: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Rising stars of the British blues scene. Having hit number 1 in the IBBA Blues chart with their debut album ‘So Many Roads’, the Sussex-based quartet repeated the feat with their tribute to BB King, ‘When BB Sings the Blues’, and a slew of nominations at the British Blues Awards.

SATURDAY 5th
ALL TAMARA’S PARTIES: The Jericho Tavern (1-11pm) – All Tamara’s Parties host an all-day feast of live music with an emphasis on female artists, with sets from Death of the Maiden, whose gorgeous, emotionally racked debut, ‘The Girl With the Secret Fire’, is destined one of *Nightshift*’s albums of the year; raucous pop-punkers Self Help, joining the dots between Slaves and Supergrass; exuberant and cynical sunshine popsters Rainbow Reservoir; Bristol’s folk-punk protest trio Drunken Butterfly; soulful acoustic singer Jen Bercova; grungy garage rockers Wolfs; eclectic and ethereal electro/ jazz-pop kittens Catgod; cinematic instrumental post-rockers Ghosts in the Photographs; acoustic jazz-pop singer/songwriter Joely and more. Buy a ticket in advance and get a free ATP festival compilation album.

SKYLARKIN’ SOUND SYSTEM feat. MUNGO’S HI-FI: The Bullingdon – After their sold out show here in January Count Skylarkin’ once again hosts Glasgow’s global reggae and dancehall stars Mungo’s Hi-Fi, the forward-thinking collective, inspired by King Tubby and Prince Jammy producing a slew of original albums over the last decade, including 2015’s ‘Serious Time’, as well as collaborating with the likes of Sugar Minott, Ranking Joe and Major Lazer.
GRACE PETRIE: St. John the Evangelist – Witty, protest folk from singer, comedian and activist Petrie, who released her acclaimed ‘Queer as Folk’ album last year – *MOJO*’s Folk Album of the Year – and has toured with Billy Bragg, Frank Turner and Emmy the Great as well as Josie Long and Robin Ince; she’s back in town after headlining at WOOD Festival back in 2018.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with THE DEADBEAT APOSTLES + THE MIGHTY REDOX + KNOBBLEHEAD + ENJOYABLE

Sunday 6th
RICHARD HAWLEY: O2 Academy

Richard Hawley might not have reached National Treasure status yet but he can’t be far off; even those for whom he isn’t a household name probably know his music better than they know his identity, such is the ease with which he Bard of Sheffield straddles the worlds of Radio 2-friendly balladry, 6Music cool and the soundtrack all manner of cobbled streets and industrial skyline romances. With a crooner’s voice, a poet’s way with words and a heart full of love and darkness, Hawley has spent 40 years becoming an unlikely star, from his early days in Treebound Story, through his years with Pulp and The Longpigs, not to mention stints with Gwen Stefani and All Saints, to a solo performer respected across the spectrum, beloved of Radiohead, Arctic Monkeys and REM. Able to match the timeless voices of Roy Orbison, Matt Monroe and Bobby Darrin, but willing to delve into full-on rock’n’roll, psychedelia and gothic rock (notably on recent album ‘Further’, with its strong echoes of Mark Lanegan), Hawley always feels like he and his music stands outside of time or fashion, his trademark quiff and spectacles only adding to the impression of someone not part of rock’s hurly burly. ‘Further’, his eighth solo album, found him ruminating on aging and death, but also psychedelic drug taking and Emmeline Pankhurst – typically eclectic and individual. It’s his midnight-tinged romanticism that always shones through, as on classic hits like ‘Tonight, The Streets Are Ours’ and ‘For Your Lover, Give Some Time’. Mark our words: he’ll have his face on a postage stamp or banknote one day and it’ll be well deserved.



LISTENS: The Wheatsheaf – Second night of Klub Kakofanney’s 28th birthday weekender, tonight with country-soul stars The Deadbeat Apostles, alongside KK hosts The Mighty Redox, psychedelic travellers Knobblehead and 80s-style poster Enjoyable Listens.
PSYCHEDELIC CARNIVAL: O2 Academy – House, garage and drum&bass at tonight’s Foreverland-hosted club party.
DAN RAWLE: Harcourt Arms – Acoustic folk and pop from the Abingdon singer-songwriter.
PORT ERIN + THE CALLIERS: The Port Mahon – Eclectic, atmospheric cinematic sounds from West Country trio Port Erin, marrying Krautrock, prog, jazz and punk with Bowie and Eno-inspired soundscaping, and out on tour to promote fourth album ‘Ocean Grey’ at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show.
THE ROVING CROWS + BILL BATES: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Lively fiddle-led Celtic folk dance and political songs from the well-travelled Roving Crows at tonight’s Wychwood Folk Club show.

SUNDAY 6th
RICHARD HAWLEY: O2 Academy – The Bard of Sheffield brings the poetry of the streets back to town – *see main preview*
RED RUM CLUB: O2 Academy – Anthemic indie rock from the Liverpool sextet, touring debut album ‘Matador’ after playing at Glastonbury, Isle of Weight and truck this summer.
MISS JUNE + LAZYBONES + GRUB + GRAND PALACE SCAM: The Port Mahon – Surly, grunged-down garage/glam rocking from Auckland’s Miss June out on a European tour to promote their debut album having supported Foo Fighters, Shellac and Idles back home while drawing comparisons to Sonic Youth and Le Tigre along the way. Heavy-duty fuzz-rock in the vein of Royal Blood and Queens of the Stone Age from Brighton’s Lazybones in support, plus local molten gooey garage rock and grunge crew Grub, plus dark-edged alt.rockers Grand Palace Scam.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with MONKEYFISTS + MARK ATHERTON & FRIENDS + TONY BATEY & SAL MOORE + EDWIN & THE KEEPERS: The Wheatsheaf (3.30pm) – Klub Kak round off their birthday weekender with an afternoon of free live music in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms – Weekly open mic session.

MONDAY 7th
OPEN MIC: The Castle – Weekly open night.
LEVERET: Nettlebed Folk Club – A return to Nettlebed for the collaboration between Bellowhead’s Sam Sweeney, BBC Folk Award winner Andy Cutting, and The Full English’s Rob Harbon.

TUESDAY 8th
EASY LIFE: O2 Academy – Jazzy hip hop, slacker rock and laidback bluesy funk-pop from the Leicester crew signed to Island Records and back in Oxford after their show at The Jericho Tavern last year, touring their ‘Spaceships’ mixtape and recent Annie Mac Hottest Record in the World, ‘Houseplants’.

WEDNESDAY 9th
JOHN: The Wheatsheaf – Hard-to-Google noisemakers are coming to get you! – *see main*



Wednesday 9th
JOHN: The Wheatsheaf
In the modern age giving yourself a virtually unsearchable online name is either the height of foolishness or a fuck-you statement of intent. Having witnessed John playing at last year’s Ritual Union we’ll go for the latter option as the south London duo’s suffocating post-hardcore reflected the cramped conditions down at The Library. However hard they try and make it for people to find them, theirs is a noise you should neither want nor try to avoid, and if they’re best encountered up close and personal in venues this size, they deserve the biggest stages available to humanity. They’ve had a taste of bigger things already as they’ve supported the likes of Idles, USA Nails and Pulled Apart By Horses, kindred spirits all, and like fellow noisemakers Squid they’re helping make male punk and hardcore sound vital again after too long in the doldrums. Tracks like recent single ‘High Digger’ are tightly-wound, high-intensity noise rock that’s all sinew, no fat or filler, shirt off, getting the job done hard and fast and doubtless leaving a few bloodstains in its wake. So, given how great they are, why have they lumbered themselves with a bandname it’s so bloody hard to find online? Because they’re both called John, that’s why. Sometimes things are that straightforward and to the point. Like their music. And if you can’t find them, maybe they’ll come and find you. And then you’re in trouble.

preview
VICE CITY: The Bullingdon – Fleetwood Mac special club night.

THURSDAY 10th
DAVID FORD + ABE PARTRIDGE: The Bullingdon – Perma-behatted Eastbourne songsmith and former Easyworld singer David Ford returns to action, touring last year’s ‘Animal Spirits’ album, his mix of intimate, soulful pop and caustic folk-punk having seen him compared to Bob Dylan and Mike Scott as well as go out on tour with Elvis Costello, KT Tunstall and Gomez over the years.
VANISHING TWIN + DESPICABLE ZEE: Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre – Exotic space-age electro wobblers head out on a spooky trip – *see main preview*
BYRON WALLER: The Wheatsheaf – Spin jazz club with the renowned trumpet player.
DELAIRE THE LIAR + WORRY + GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS: The Library – Tightly-wound, emotionally fraught emo from Delaire the Liar at tonight’s Shred or Die show, the London duo touring their new ‘Our House is a Church’ album. Support from local hardcore crew



Thursday 10th

VANISHING TWIN / DESPICABLE ZEE: Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre

London is officially the world’s most cosmopolitan city so it’s no surprise that Vanishing Twin formed there, the quintet all hailing from different countries around the globe. Singer and keyboard player Cathy Lucas, the band’s founder, hails from Belgium and is joined by Japanese bassist Sususumu Mukai; Italian drummer Valentina Magaletti (who has also worked with Bat For Lashes and Neon Neon); French percussionist and flautist Elliot Arntd and token Brit Phil M.F.U., who previously played with Broadcast. Broadcast being a touchstone of Vanishing Twin’s sound, which seems determined to bring toether every strand of psychedelia from around the world, from kosmische to tropicalia, vie electro-pop, jazz, funk and krautrock. On new album ‘The Age of Immunology’, released earlier this year, sleek synth-pop glides into extended flute solos and spaced-out jams, while Lucas’ serene, slightly otherworldly vocals provide the calm centre of the band’s gently celestial sound blizzard. Unsurprisingly the quintet were picked to support Stereolab at their comeback show in June, Lucas’ resemblance to Laetitia Sadier having been regularly noted, while the band’s quietly wayward nature and use of minimal electronics recalls both Pram and Delia Derbyshire. Beautiful, hypnotic stuff. Great local support at tonight’s Divine Schism show from Zahra Tehrani’s Despicable Zee project, her mix of beats, loops, samples and austere electronics bringing a Middle Eastern vibe to her M.I.A.-meets-Cosey Fanni Tutti experimentation.

Worry and cinematic instrumental post-rockers Ghosts in the Photographs.

MARK MORRISS: Truck Store – The Bluetones singer plays a solo set, featuring songs from his new album ‘Look Up’ and Bluetones oldies, as well as a holding a Q&A for fans.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
REVEREND BLACK’S ACOUSTIC CABARET: The Half Moon – Acoustic blues, country, folk and classic rock night with sets from Factory Lights, Waterfahl and Richard Brotherton.

FRIDAY 11th

KING PRAWN + POPES OF CHILLITOWN: O2 Academy – After playing their first Oxford

show for a decade and a half last year, London’s ska-punk-dub-metal warriors return to town, bringing a militant but witty Anglo-Asian voice to punk, much as they did alongside Asian Dub Foundation back in the 90s. Livewire singer Al Rumjen spits out anthems like ‘Racist Copper’ and ‘Not Your Punk’ as the band find an incendiary meeting point between Black Flag, The Specials, Steel Pulse and System of a Down. Still angry, still relevant.

LONDON AFRICAN GOSPEL CHOIR: O2 Academy – The gospel choir reprise their inventive take on Paul Simon’s classic ‘Gracelands’ album, moving the songs more fully into South African traditional folk music, last seen in Oxford at last year’s Common People.
DAY OF THE DEADBEATS 10: Tap Social, Botley – The Deadbeat Apostles host the tenth instalment of their free night of fun, the band launching their new ‘Bring Out Your Deadbeats’ EP, mixing up rich 60s soul and r’n’b with rootsy country rocking. They’re joined by rockabilly stars The Long Insiders, inspired by Dick Dale, Jerry Lee Lewis, The Stray Cats and early Elvis, plus voodoo jazz-blues crew Ragged Charms.
IBIZA 90s PARTY: The Bullingdon – Retro club night.
MASTER OF NONE + ALI HORN + STARBELLY + EMMA HUNTER: The Port Mahon – Dark-hearted electro-rock in the vein of Mark Lanegan, Suicide and Nick Cave from Master of None, with support from elegant, atmospheric soft-rocker Ali Horn, heavyweight goth-glam crew Starbelly and drama-laden baroque/surf pop singer Emma Hunter.
THE MOTIVE: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Indie-grunge from the local outfit.
LADY B: Woodstock Social Club – An evening with the local singer, DJ and drag queen.

SATURDAY 12th

CASSETTE STORE DAY: Truck Store – Alongside a host of new cassette-only releases, local tape label Beanie Tapes bring instore sets from Max Blansjaar and EB to Oxford’s leading indie record shop.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock – A very special 25th anniversary party for Oxford’s legendary open night, founder and host Matt Sage compeering an array of singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists – *see interview feature*
THE DIVINE COMEDY: O2 Academy – Neil Hannon’s wry, literate chamber pop ensemble bring his new album, ‘Office Politics’ to town, the eternal champion of the underdog still a potent pop force two decades after his commercial peak with hits like ‘National Express’, ‘The Frog Princess’ and ‘Something For the Weekend’.
ANTARCTIC MONKEYS: O2 Academy – Tribute to The Arctic Monkeys, and yet also their polar opposite.
SWITCH feat. SASASAS: O2 Academy – The long-running club night welcomes the drum&bass stars back to town.
MUSICAL MEDICINE feat. CC DISCO: The Bullingdon – The funk, disco and disco-house club night brings Melbourne’s renowned DJ CC to town, a mainstay of her home city’s Boiler Room club as well the Aussie festival circuit.
LEWSBERG + GIFT HORSE + BED: Fusion Arts – Divine Schism welcomes Rotterdam’s poetic, Velvet Underground-inspired rockers Lewsberg to town for the first time, as well as an Oxford debut for Glasgow’s French/Scottish duo Gift Horse, and a first live outing for Bed, the new

band formed by ex-Family Machine man Jamie Hyatt.
SCOTT GORDON: Harcourt Arms – Blues-infused Americana from the local band.
NADINE ANDRE + PAUL CAVACIUTI: St. Giles Church – Ragtime and jazz standards from the 20s and 30s, and classics of 19th and 20th Century piano repertoire from husband and wife team Andre and Cavaciuti.
INDIE DISCO: Tap Social, Botley – 80s and 90s vinyl classics, free entry, with DJ Dom Utton.
DAMN GOOD REASON: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Heavy rock covers.
THE RONNIE SCOTT STORY: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Live jazz from the Ronnie Scott Allstars, plus vintage video footage from the legendary club as it celebrates its 60th anniversary.
GAVIN LEONARD: Woodstock Social Club – Country’n’western singer.

SUNDAY 13th

PIP BLOM: The Bullingdon – Rambunctious and ramshackle indie of the old school from Amsterdam’s Pip and people – *see main preview*
THE TWANG: O2 Academy – Birmingham’s baggy indie rock survivors celebrate their fifteenth anniversary with new album, ‘If Confronted, Just Go Mad’, Phil Etheridge bringing a romantic edge to the band’s laddish pop.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms
THE A WATTS: Eynsham Sports & Social Club – Poppy appeal benefit gig from the veteran local 50s and 60s rock’n’roll crew.

MONDAY 14th

KATE TEMPEST: O2 Academy – Politics and people from the premier league poet and performer – *see main preview*
OXFORD CLASSIC JAZZ: Harcourt Arms – Classic jazz and ragtime from the local ensemble, playing Jellyroll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Fats Domino and more.
WILL YOUNG: The New Theatre – Still going, apparently. That’s a long old 15 minutes, innit.
OPEN MIC: The Castle
OPEN MIC: Rose Hill Community Centre – monthly open session.
FRENCH FOLK SESSION: The Port Mahon
CHRIS WHILE & JULIE MATTHEWS: Nettlebed Folk Club – Powerful harmony singing from the Albion Band and St Agnes Fountain duo and leading ladies of English folk, out on tour together again, playing songs from their extensive solo and collaborative catalogues, including 2016’s ‘Shoulder To Shoulder’.

TUESDAY 15th

DUMB + SELF HELP + DREAM PHONE: The Wheatsheaf – Quirky, uptight post-punk funk from Vancouver’s Dumb, mixing up the influence of classic punk-era bands like Devo and The Mekons with Parquet Courts and Pavement. Punk-pop where Supergrass meets Slaves from Self Help in support.
LEIF ERIKSON: The Jericho Tavern – Emotive and introspective yet airy soul-rock from London quintet Leif Erikson, out on tour to promote their new ‘21 Grams of Soul’ EP.
INTRUSION: Cirkus – Oxford’s long-running goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night finds a new lease of life at Cirkus after the closure of The Cellar, keeping it dark on the decks with residents Doktor Joy and Bookhouse.
PIZZA MIC: The Library – Open mic session.

WEDNESDAY 16th

THYLA + OCEAN RUINS + APHRA TAYLOR: The Jericho Tavern – Epic, grunged-tinged shoegaze and dreampop from Brighton’s Thyla, drawing comparisons to Wolf Alice, Cocteau Twins, The Cure and The Sundays, and out on tour to promote new EP ‘What’s On Your Mind’ following supports to Sunflower Bean, Dream Wife and Rolling Blackouts Coastal Fever. Newbury’s epic, atmospheric indie rockers Ocean Ruins and ethereal, emotive acoustic singer-songwriter Aphra Taylor support.
PRESS TO MECO + CHAPTER & VERSE: O2 Academy – Harmony-heavy rock from Crawley’s Press To Mecco, touring their second album ‘Here’s To The Fatigue’ alongside London post-hardcore crew Chapter & Verse.
AIDAN O’ROURKE & KIT DOWNES: Wesley Memorial Church – Multi-award-winning fiddle player Aidan O’Rourke (whose credits include Lau, Kan and Blazin Fiddles) and Mercury-nominated harmonium and piano player Kit Downes team up for an evening of contemporary folk tunes.

Sunday 13th

PIP BLOM: The Bullingdon

Everyone prefers a scruffy, playful mongrel pup to a well-groomed, meticulously poised show dog, right? In an age of perfect pop production and presentation, bands like Pip Blom will always get our love. The Amsterdam quartet – named after and helmed by singer/guitarist Pip Blom – have released a string of great singles over the past year or so, each an ebullient cake slice of perky indie-punk spit and spirit, careworn post-grunge slacker vibes and fuzz-pop euphoria, and all sounding a bit like they might fall aprt at the seams or slide into fluffy chaos at any moment. A bit like Courtney Barnett’s perky kid sister with a copy of seminal indie compilation ‘C86’ under one arm and a kitten under the other. Championed early on by 6Music tastemaker Marc Riley, Pip Blom found themselves playing Glastonbury, Y Not and Truck over the summer, following a lengthy string of UK and European dates, and now they’re back on the road, touring their debut album ‘Boat’. No amount of time spent touring will polish them too much though, and nor would we ever want it to. Lo-fi and rough’n’tumble is where it’s at, and where indie music best thrives. They might never win at the MTV Awards or Crufts, but they’re odds on for waggiest tail.



THURSDAY 17th

NINJA SEX PARTY: O2 Academy – Already sold-out comedy rock and electro-pop from LA duo Dan Avidan and Brian Vecht.
ROBYN HITCHCOCK + EMMA TRICCA: The Jericho Tavern – A welcome return to town for the English psychedelic troubadour’s English psychedelic troubadour and one of the nation’s most oddball national treasures. From his days in The Soft Boys, through the creative highs fronting The Egyptians, to his extensive run of solo recordings, he’s never lost his tight but genial grip on a very peculiar sense of whimsy and humour, in the lineage of Syd Barrett and subsequently an influence on generations of psych-minded songwriters.
BEN CLATWORTHY & JOHN DONALDSON: The Wheatsheaf – Spin jazz club host British born LA based saxophonist Clatwothy, over in the UK and collaborating with piano maestro Donaldson.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
THE SLOCAN RAMBLERS: St Nicholas Church, Baulking – Toronto’s Juno-nominated bluegrass quartet bring their lively, down-home roots ramble to the Shire.

FRIDAY 18th

AMBER RUN + STEREO HONEY: O2 Academy – Having resigned from the cabinet, Amber Run heads off on tour to... oh, have we done this joke before? Have you any idea how tedious it can be compiling the gig guide sometimes. We need our bit of fun, though admittedly it isn’t as funny as that time we said Nathaniel Rateliffe was a boy wizard. Sorry, yes, Amber Run: jolly good stuff. Rock and roll, yes.
FEROCIOUS DOG: O2 Academy – Nottingham’s folk-punk road warriors hit town again after selling out this venue last year and following a tour support to The Levellers. Having become the first unsigned band to sell out their hometown’s 2,000-capacity Rock City venue, they played on the Leftfield stage at Glastonbury and are earning a reputation as one of the most hard working and entertaining live bands in the country, drawing on the punk spirit of The Clash and Celtic folk traditions, they’re in the traditions of bands like The Men They Couldn’t Hang, Tansads and Flogging Molly: angry and uplifting in equal measures.
THE ABBA PARTY: O2 Academy – Club night celebration of the Swedish pop legends.
THE WURZELS: The Bullingdon – Yokelcore fun with the veteran Zumerzet scrumpy’n’western gang, reprising ‘The Combine Harvester’, ‘I Am a Cider Drinker’ and more.
SIMPLE feat. MIDLAND: The Bullingdon – The long running house and techno club night welcomes Harry Agius, aka Midland, to town.
CURSE OF LONO: The Jericho Tavern – London’s award-winning dark-Americana crew head out on tour – *see main preview*
LATIN FOLK SESSION: The Port Mahon
HOPE & SOCIAL: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Uplifting blues, country and soul-rock from Yorkshire’s blue-suited sextet and previous Bunkfest headliners, who’ve been described as The Yorkshire E Street Band, with influences of Dexy’s and The Faces in their old school sound.

SATURDAY 19th

RITUAL UNION: Various venues (midday) – Teaman, She Drew the Gun, The Comet



Monday 14th

KATE TEMPEST: O2 Academy

Kate Tempest’s gig at this venue back in 2014 was one of those nights where you felt genuinely humbled in the face of the talent on stage. Back then she was touring her break-out album ‘Everybody Down’, a pin-sharp song cycle that picked up the characters from housing estate stories and brought them brilliantly to life. Back then Tempest felt like the world’s least likely rap star, a blur of ginger curls and a puppyish grin, but a star she was, forged in the fires of south London open rap sessions and armed with a ferocity and seamless flow that was matched by her seriously heavy, seriously funky band. Subsequent albums – 2016’s ‘Let Them Eat Chaos’ and this year’s ‘The Book of Traps and Lessons’ – have cast her lyrical vision wider, to the violence and hypocrisy of modern politics and the breakdown of society, while still picking out the human stories amid the wreckage; the lines “The drones turned her beautiful boy into a pile of bones / No body to bury, nobody is home,” from ‘Tunnel Vision’ remain some of the most haunting of recent times, and yet Kate manages to find love, warmth and truth in simple humanity. From her early days performing her poetry to handfuls of people in pub backrooms, to being hailed by Chuck D, Billy Bragg and many more and compared to Virginia Woolf and Wu Tang at the same time, Kate Tempest has become a poet for the age, but more: she’s a live performer with few equals.

is Coming, Young Knives and Ibibio Sound Machine head up a full day of musical fun along the Cowley Road – *see main preview*
RITUAL UNION AFTER-PARTY: The Bullingdon – Ten hours of top-class live music not enough for you? Keep the party going with live sets from The Murder Capital and Scalping, plus Low Island DJs into the wee small hours.
DONNINGTON MUSIC FESTIVAL: Donnington Community Centre (2-10pm) – Free community music festival with sets from Franklin’s Tower; The Mark Bosley Band; Delnavaz; The Jesters; The Scott Gordon Band; Firegazer; Tony Batey; Matt Sewell, and Uke-In Be Anything Ya Wanna, plus kids activities.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: Harcourt Arms – Fresh from hosting Klub Kakofanny’s 28th birthday weekender, the veteran local blues, funk, rock, ska, folk and psych band bring good vibes, grooves and a little bit of silliness to the Harcourt.
HIPSHAKIN’ with BIG BOSS MAN: The Jericho Tavern – funk, boogaloo, bongo breaks, soul & Hammond groove.



Friday 18th

CURSE OF LONO / JOHN MURRY: The Jericho Tavern

Darkness on the edge of town is the order of the day tonight as Empty Room Promotions bring London’s rising Americana stars to town alongside troubled songsmith John Murry. Curse of Lono – named after an obscure Hunter S Thompson book – mix up rich, harmony-heavy American roots with gothic rock, a driving, cinematic sound that’s seen them heading out on tour with Chuck Prophet, Steve Earle and Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes among others since they formed back in 2015. Two albums, including last year’s ‘As I Fell’, recorded in Joshua Tree, have cemented their reputation as one of the best British Americana bands and in January this year they won the coveted Bob Harris Emerging Artist Award at the UK Americana Awards. They have as much in common with The Doors as they do the likes of Wilco and after a successful stint at SXSW they’re a band whose darkness is going to be seeing a lot more light in years to come. Dark is a word you could equally apply to John Murry, as he sings about the grief, despair and loss – more often than not self-inflicted – he’s encountered in life, addiction costing him his marriage and job along the way. Redemption has been found through work with Cowboy Junkies’ Michael Timmins and exile in Ireland, but his music remains stark and black-hued, somewhere between Nick Cave and Sparklehorse.

THE INFLATABLES: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Oxford’s veteran ska tribute band keep on skanking.
THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Abba tribute.
MID-LIFE CRISIS: Woodstock Social Club

SUNDAY 20th

HANG MASSIVE: O2 Academy – Rhythmic ambient world sounds from the hang-playing duo.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms
THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Tree, Iffley (4-6.30pm) – Rock and blues classics with the veteran local singer and guitarist and his band.
PETE OXLEY, FRANK HARRISON & MARK HODGSON: The Abingdon Arms, Beckley – Free live jazz from the guitar, keys and bass trio.

MONDAY 21st

THE DISPLAY TEAM + MASIRO: The Port Mahon – Frantic, eclectic math-rock/ska fusion from London’s Display Team, finding a deliciously strange meeting point of The Cardiacs

and Fishbone. Visceral math-core from local crew Masiro in support.
SUPER LEMON DAYS + ARXX + THE OTHER DRAMAS + JEFF: The Library – Fuzzed-out grunge pop from Birmingham’s slacker indie crew Super Lemon days at tonight’s Freak Scene show, the band joined by Brighton’s raucous garage punk duo Arxx, sunshine garage rockers The Other Dramas and grungy rockers Jeff.
OPEN MIC: The Castle
SCANDINAVIAN FOLK SESSION: The Port Mahon
THE PITMEN POETS: Nettlebed Folk Club – And evening of traditional and contemporary folk songs and stories from the North East, with stalwarts of the scene Billy Mitchell, Bob Fox, Benny Graham and Jez Lowe

TUESDAY 22nd

STRIKING MATCHES + TENILLE TOWNES: O2 Academy – Traditional country, rock and blues in the spirit of Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton and Carter-Cash from Nashville duo Sarah Zimmermann and Justin Davis, back over in the UK to promote debut album ‘Nothing But the Silence’.
BARNS COURTNEY: O2 Academy – Swaggering soulful blues in the vein of Cage the Elephant and Rag’n’Bone Man from the Suffolk singer-songwriter whose song ‘Fire’ threw him into the spotlight when it was featured in the film *Burnt* and was subsequently used in myriad games, TV shows and adverts, while he’s gone from sleeping in his girlfriend’s car and sofa surfing to supporting The Who, The Libertines, Ed Sheeran and Tom Odell in recent times. He’s out on tour to promote second album ‘404’.

WEDNESDAY 23rd

THE FALLEN STATE + THE CRUEL KNIVES: O2 Academy – Classic heavy rock in the vein of Stone Sour, Black Stone Cherry and Alter Bridge from Devon’s The Fallen State, out on a headline tour to promote new album ‘A Deadset Endeavour’ following a European tour with Pop Evil.
THE HARD WAY – THE STORY OF HANNAH MITCHELL: Bonavero Institute of Human Rights – Singer and composer Louise Jordan follows up her acclaimed No Petticoats Here show with the story of Hannah Mitchell through song, the working class girl from Derbyshire who rose from campaigner, writer and suffragette to become a councillor and magistrate in the early 20th Century. Tonight’s show is free but with a collection for the EdUKaid’s Heshima project.
GALICIAN FOLK SESSION: The Port Mahon
PUZZLE CREATURE: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Dance/music fusion event from composer Seb Reynolds alongside dance troupe Neon Dance, inspired by artist/architect duo Arakawa and Madeline Gins.

THURSDAY 24th

DAVID ELLIS: Truck Store – The former Razorlight guitarist plays songs from his new solo album ‘Misty Heights’, taking a different musical path into 60s-styled hippy folk-pop in the vein of early T-Rex and Devendra Banhart.
HEADIE ONE: O2 Academy – Tottenham’s drill star Irving Adjei makes his Oxford debut as he tours his new ‘Music x Road’ mixtape, the follow-

up to his acclaimed ‘Drillers x Trappers’ with RV, and his Top 10 hit ‘18 Hunna’ with Dave.
THE DELLA GRANTS: The Bullingdon – Blues, rock and Americana from the Leicester outfit.
BASSFACE: The Bullingdon – UK bass club night.
PETE GOW & THE SIREN STRINGS + HANNAH SCOTT: St. Barnabas Church – Case Hardin frontman Pete Gow brings his new solo album, ‘Here There’s No Sirens’ to town, backed by a band that features local musical maestro Joe Bennett, the singer regarded as one of the best songwriters in UK Americana circles, drawing comparisons to Dylan, Springsteen and Richmond Fontaine for his raw, rootsy style. Support comes from Suffolk singer guitarist and keyboard player Hannah Scott, whose emotive acoustic pop has seen her compared to Stealing Sheep, Amy McDonald and Laura Marling as well as opening for Ed Sheeran and Seth Lakeman.
FLIRTING + STRAIGHT GIRL + KID KIN: The Library – London’s Flirting return to Oxford after their impressive showing at BSM’s Summer in the City festival back in June, mixing anxious emo (in its original incarnation) with exuberant jangle-pop, drawing together elements of Slint, The Sundays and Explosions in the Sky. They’re joined by Leeds’ atmospheric electro artist Straight Girl and local expansive, experimental electronic and post-rock soundscapist Kid Kin.
TOM GREEN: The Wheatsheaf – Trombonist and composer Green returns to the Spin.
CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre
REVEREND BLACK’S ACOUSTIC CABARET: The Half Moon – Acoustic blues, country, folk and classic rock night with sets from Matt Sewell, Jim Driscoll and Richard Brotherton.

FRIDAY 25th

SQUEEZE + HEAVEN 17: The New Theatre – South London’s savvy new wave hitmakers head out on tour to promote most recent album ‘The Knowledge’. Their fifteenth album, it’s the follow-up to 2015’s ‘From Cradle to the Grave’, the first set of new songs written and recorded by Chris Difford and Glen Tilbrook since 1998, written as the soundtrack to the televised serialisation of Danny Baker’s autobiography of the same name. Difford and Tilbrook remain one of pop great songwriting double acts, mixing laddish wit with kitchen sink romance and regret on classic hits like ‘Cool For Cats’, ‘Pulling Mussels Fro the Shell’, ‘Take Me I’m Yours’ and ‘Up the Junction’, heirs to The Kinks’ throne in so many ways. A double dose of 80s hitmaking tonight as they’re joined by Heaven 17, Glenn Gregory and Martin Ware’s synth-soul survivors, reliving hits like ‘Come Live With Me’, ‘Temptation’ and, hopefully, the classic ‘(We Don’t Need) This Fascist Groove Thang’.
THE UNTHANKS: The North Wall – Rachel and Becky Unthank perform a song cycle of Emily Bronte’s poems turned into songs by Adrian McNally to celebrate Bronte’s 200th birthday, the duo’s haunting, atmospheric harmony singing perfect to bring her words to life; sadly it’s long since sold out.
JAKE CLEMONS + BEN McKELVEY + DANNY MELLIN: O2 Academy – E Street Band saxophonist, multi-instrumentalist and bandleader Jake Clemons – nephew of the late, great Clarence – leads his own band on a European tour to promote his solo album ‘Fear & Love’.

DREADZONE: The Bullingdon – Dreadzone return to town with their peculiarly British form of reggae, fusing roots sounds and dub with a folky feel, trance and breakbeats. 26 years old this year, veterans of ten albums (plus a Best of), six Peel sessions and countless tours and festival appearances, their enduring appeal rests in their ability to transform any room, or field, into a reggae party. The trippy, spacious, almost rustic feel of their sound might feel almost archaic compared to what’s come since but it’s following their own path that’s ultimately kept them on top of their game for so long.
STRAIGHT OUTTA COWLEY: The Bullingdon – Hip hop classics, from Jay-Z to Jurassic 5 and Biggie to Buster Rhymes.
IDEAL MARRIAGE + JUNIPER NIGHTS + 31HOURS: The Jericho Tavern – Daisy Rodgers Music kicks off a three-gig stint celebrating its tenth anniversary featuring some of its favourite acts from the past decade, tonight with this month’s *Nightshift* Top Track winners Ideal Marriage, with an airy, almost operatic indie journey, alongside dark-hearted alt.rockers Juniper Nights and fidgety and atmospheric electro-pop crew 31Hours.
TOOLOGY: The Wheatsheaf – Tribute to Tool.
GRAND PALACE SCAM + THE JERICHOs: The Port Mahon – It’s All About the Music showcase night.
ZAPPATIKA: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Zappatastic night with former Frank team-mates Ike Willis, Jeff Hollie and Craig Steward reliving the maverick musician’s music.

SATURDAY 26th

GUNS2ROSES + MOTLEY CRUED: O2 Academy – Double dose of hairy rock tributes.
SWITCH feat. DIMENSION: O2 Academy – London-based electronic and drum&bass producer Robert Etheridge, aka Dimension, is the guest at tonight’s Switch club night.
VOLUME #17 feat. BCEE: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass club night.
GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with PANDAPOPALYPSE + CIVIL VILLAINS + EDWARD FOX: The Wheatsheaf – Top quality mixed bag as is traditional with GTI, tonight featuring a headline set from ebullient electro-dance-pop trio Pandapocalypse, the band formed by folk singer Rachel Ruscombe-Jones and Balkan Wanderers people Claire Heavyside and Stuart Wigby, together mixing up big beat, cheerleader pop, a bit of punk spirit and a swag bag of pop hooks you’ll be trying to shift from your internal jukebox for months to come. Support from London/Brighton outfit Civil Villains, fusing art-pop, math-rock and desert-rock riffage, plus Edward Fox, a new band formed by gothic songsmith D Gwalia and some of Undersmile. Gonna be dark, gonna be brilliant in all likelihood.
THE PEOPLE VERSUS: Harcourt Arms – Atmospheric folk and chamber pop from the local act, set to release their debut EP soon.
DAGGA DOMES + CITIES & MEMORIES + FLAG FEN + AFTER THE THOUGHT: The Port Mahon – a night of experimental electronic music with Dagga Domes, the band formed by former-Jonquil and Trophy Wife man Kit Monteith alongside Jeremy Moors, mixing up analogue electronic pulses with anthemic pop choruses. The pair have most recently been remixing Foals. Stuart Fowkes’ Cities & Memories project brings a world of sounds to the

Saturday 19th

RITUAL UNION: Various venues

Last year’s Ritual Union was pretty much *Nightshift*’s favourite day out last year. From the stunning early sets from Madonnatron and Warmduscher to imperious headline showings from Jane Weaver and Nadine Shah and an after-party set from Fontaines DC, it was one of those celebratory occasions where the whole Oxford gig scene seemed to come together for a big party along Cowley Road, taking in both rooms of the O2 Academy as well as The Bullingdon, Truck Store and The Library.
This year’s festival, organised by Crosstown Concerts, looks like it might well equal that special day, with a line-up that’s already got us drooling slightly in anticipation (sorry, we get excited sometimes).

Among the big names playing are shiny silicon synth-pop hitmakers **TELEMAN**, back after their sold-out show here last year, their propulsive electronic robo-pop drawing inspiration from The Human League and Kraftwerk.
They’re joined by the brightest lights of the current Brit-jazz revolution **THE COMET IS COMING (below)**, a hypnotic mix of free jazz, cacophonous percussion, even dubstep, centred around sax maestro King Shabaka (who also plays with The Sun Ra Arkestra, Melt Yourself Down, Polar Bear and more), and one of the great live bands around at the moment.
They’ll be matched for boundary and border-busting fun by **IBIBIO SOUND MACHINE (above)**, led by the phenomenal Eno Williams whose powerful and versatile voice veers from gospel and r’n’b into punk, while the band fuse afro-funk, jazz, psychedelic grooves, Ghanaian highlife, Nigerian folk and electro-punk into a huge party beast.

On any other day they’d be a shoe-in for star turn of the day, but then you’ve got **PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS**, that towering mountain of molten metal riffage, psychedelic grooving and blackened rock sludge that sounds like a hoedown in Hell hosted by Motorhead, Hawkwind and The Stooges, and who wouldn’t want to be first to the bar at that shindig?
Back after their awesome/terrifying showing at 2017’s inaugural Ritual Union, **BO NINGEN** will similarly bring the shock and awe with their hysterical goblin-core attack,



while Perth’s **PSYCHEDELIC PORN CRUMPETS**’ riff-heavy, hirsute Led Zep-meets-Tame Impala psychedelia, which has seen them tour with King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard, Royal Blood and Black Mountain, provides a holy trinity of tripped-out heaviosity.

Rather sunnier are **SHE DREW THE GUN**, recent stars of Truck Fest, whose bubblegum-fun grunge-tinged surf pop provides a joyful backdrop to singer Louisa Roach’s acerbic political poems, lyrics and between-song chat. Slow Club’s Rebecca Lucy Taylor’s solo project **SELF ESTEEM** similarly allows some sunlight on proceedings with her infectious but experimental electro-pop.

Amid a slew of great local acts spread across the day, **YOUNG KNIVES**’ set should be a high point, the band back in action and set to release their first new material in six years, adventuring ever further into the strange worlds of PiL, Throbbing Gristle and Devo while retaining that characteristic grasp on pure pop melodies. They’re joined by atmospheric electro-pop trio **CANDY SAYS**, expansive psychedelic collective **KNOBBLEHEAD**; spacy groove rockers **PREMIUM LEISURE**; poetic goth-pop crew **THE COOLING PEARLS**; dronemeister **LEE RILEY**; fuzztastic garage-pop wunderkind **MAX BLANSJAAR** and heart-on-sleeve gothic blues starlets **PET SEMATARY**.

All this just scratches the surface of a day that promises a new treat at each turn, and stars of tomorrow like Irish post-punks **THE MURDER CAPITAL**, who play at the Ritual Union after-party at The Bullingdon, alongside **SCALPING** and **LOW ISLAND** DJs, sunkissed posters **THE SOFT CAVALRY**, fronted by Slowdive singer Rachel Goswell, and off-the-wall indie act **PORRIDGE RADIO** will be among the bands you’ll be glad you saw before the rest of the world woke up to them, while **FLAMINGODS** are the kind of band who perfectly capture the spirit of an event like Ritual Union with their mix of Middle and Far Eastern traditions, North African rhythms, Western pop and all manner of folk, jazz, dance and psychedelic sources, their extended songs a mix of mosaics, drones, samples, melody and atonality.

The best day out of 2018? Yep. The best day out of 2019? Don’t bet against it. See you here, there and everywhere.



Sunday 27th

MELT BANANA / SCRAP BRAIN / UNMAN: The Wheatsheaf

If you already know Melt Banana, you already love Melt-Banana and have your ticket for tonight’s show clutched tightly in your sweaty fist, the excitement of knowing you’re going to see them in such a perfectly intimate venue only slightly tempered by the knowledge that you possibly won’t be able to hear anything for at least the next month, your neck might never recover and your jaw will be locked in a rictus grin for some time to come. We’ve been promised a visit from Tokyo’s finest noisemakers a number of times over the years but now it’s actually happening. And it’s going to be FANTASTIC. For those who aren’t familiar, Melt-Banana are musical mayhem personified, a blitzkrieg storm of grindcore, no-wave, hardcore and punk that teeters precariously and thrillingly between all-out ferocity and velocity and wild-eyed invention as Ichirou Agata flails his guitar to the point of no return while Yasuko Onuki yelps, yaps, raps and screams like the vocal demon she surely is. Beloved of some of the world’s greatest extreme musicians, the duo have found themselves sharing stages with the likes of Napalm Death, The Locust, Mr Bungle and The Melvins, who each share a love of taking things to the limit but really, Melt-Banana are unique. And brilliant. Few are capable of supporting such a firestorm but nihilistic noisecore crew Scrap Brain and local wayward sound crazies Unman are more than up to the job. Excited? You bet we are.

Port’s compact confines, remixing and melding field recording from across the globe. There’s also atmospheric electro-soundscaping from former Big Joan people Fleg Fen, and luscious ambient noise from After the Thought.

ABBA MANIA: The New Theatre – Big stage tribute to the pop legends.

RAN KAN KAN: The Old Fire Station – Oxford’s leading Cuban ensemble team up with dance teacher Ariel Rios, for a night of live music from the golden years of Cuban big bands.

CHARLIE WOOD: St. Giles Church – Tribute to Mose Allison as part of the Jazz at St. Giles season.

OSPREY & FRIENDS: The Half Moon

LUCILLE & THE LIGHTNING SOUL TRAIN: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Classic soul, funk and disco.

FBI: Woodstock Social Club

A-WATTS: The George, Littlemore

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

SUNDAY 27th

MELT BANANA + SCRAP BRAIN + UNMAN: The Wheatsheaf – Tokyo’s terrorcore twosome make their long-awaited Oxford debut – shield your sense folks, it’s gonna be severe – *see main preview*

VAN MORRISON: The New Theatre – Lock up your little rays of sunshine, old grumpy guts is back in town.

ADAM & ELVIS + SCREAMIN’ IRENE + EMMA HUNTER + THE JESTERS: The Wheatsheaf (3.30pm) – Klub Kakofanney host a free afternoon of live music in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar.

WESLEY STACE: The Jericho Tavern – The artist previously known as John Wesley Harding reverts to his birth name and tours his extensive career, including his most recent studio album, ‘Self Titled’.

OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms

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

MONDAY 28th

INGLORIOUS: O2 Academy – Classic heavy rock in the vein of Led Zep, Deep Purple, Whitesnake and Guns’n Roses from Inglorious, touring new album ‘Ride to Nowhere’.

PIANO JAZZ: Harcourt Arms

OPEN MIC: The Castle

FAUSTUS: Nettlebed Folk Club – Folk fun from the award-winning trio featuring Bellowhead’s Benji Kirkpatrick and Paul Sartin, alongside Waterson-Carthy collaborator Saul Rose.

TUESDAY 29th

SIXTIES GOLD: The New Theatre – 60s nostalgia night with surviving body parts of Herman’s Hermits, The Merseybeats, Wayne Fontana & the Mindbombs, Marmalade, Love Affair and Skinny Puppy reliving their hits.

WEDNESDAY 30th

ROBERT VINCENT: The Bullingdon – The former Bob Harris Emerging Talent Award winner at the UK Americana Awards, Liverpooldian singer/songwriter heads out on a headline tour following a support to Beth Nielsen Chapman, playing songs from his forthcoming album recorded with Ethan Johns.

ROBERT VINCENT: Truck Store – Intimate instore set from the singer ahead of his Bullingdon show.

MOLLY TUTTLE: St. Barnabas Church – A rare visit to Oxford for California’s leading lady of bluegrass, Molly Tuttle, the first woman to win the International Bluegrass Music Association’s Guitar Player of the Year award, an award she’s won two years running now, the singer, guitarist and banjo player renowned for her flatpicking, clawhammer and cross picking style. She’s over in the UK to promote her new solo album ‘When You’re Ready’.

AGS CONNOLLY + ROISIN McNEILL: Fat Lil’s, Witney – West Oxfordshire’s Ameripolitan star Ags Connolly launches his new album.

THURSDAY 31st

GAMMY LEG PRODUCTIONS with MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS + LIMPET SPACE RACE + OXFORD SOUND

ARCHIVE: The Library – The Gappy Tooth Industries offshoot night makes a return after several years off to recuperate, tonight featuring the appropriately eclectic and off-the-wall talents of Moogiemann, mixing up synth-pop, krautrock, indie whimsy and the odd spot of jazz into his strange tales of obscure historical characters. Acid jazz-inflected synth-folk from local faves Limpet Space Race in support alongside lysergic techno explorations from Oxford Sound Archive.

SKEPSIS: O2 Academy – South London bass man Scott Jenkins returns to town

CAMERON AG: Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre – Cameron launches his new album, ‘One By One’.

NICK MEIER’S WORLD JAZZ: The Wheatsheaf – The virtuoso guitarist brings his globe-spanning jazz to The Spin.

GRAVING TRIPPY: The Bullingdon – Techno and tribal house Halloween club night.

CATWEAZLE CLUB: East Oxford Community Centre

Thursday 31st

JESCA HOOP: The Bullingdon

Two things always tend to get brought up in any article about Jesca Hoop before her music is even mentioned: she’s a former Mormon, and she was previously nanny to Tom Waits’ kids. So, there. Got that out the way now. Both have a bearing on her music though: lyrically she can be scouring about religion, including her former faith (notably regular set highlight ‘The Coming’: “And the coming never came”), and Waits was an important mentor to Hoop early in her career, describing her music as “like swimming in a lake at midnight”. Hoop’s picked up a fair few influential friends along the course of her six-album career: Elbow’s Guy Garvey persuaded her to move from her native California, where she’d been working as a wilderness guide, and the pair have collaborated regularly, while in 2016 she recorded an album of duets with Iron & Wine’s Sam Beam. Her new album ‘Stonechild’ is the follow-up to 2017’s acclaimed ‘Memories Are Now’, released on Subpop, reflecting her folk roots as well as her restless spirit: songs can be sparse, simple and acoustic, or percussion and loop heavy, densely orchestrated and full of ideas. She can be self-consciously kooky at times, musically and lyrically, but more often she can be genuinely otherworldly and strange. Everything she does is understated and precise even while she’s singing about Greek mythology, the Bible, internet age anxiety and love in all its bitter forms.



PLASTIC MERMAIDS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
02.10.19

CASSELS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
03.10.19

RICHARD HAWLEY
O2 Academy
Oxford
SOLD OUT

EASY LIFE
O2 Academy
Oxford
08.10.19

JOHN
The Wheatsheaf
Oxford
09.10.19

LEIF ERIKSON
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
15.10.19

THYLA
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
16.10.19

RITUAL UNION
Cowley Road
Oxford
19.10.19

BARNS COURTNEY
O2 Academy
Oxford
22.10.19

DREADZONE
The Bullingdon
Oxford
25.10.19

JESCA HOOP
The Bullingdon
Oxford
31.10.19

JACK SAVORETTI
New Theatre
Oxford
03.11.19

CATE LE BON
The Bullingdon
Oxford
04.11.19

YONAKA
O2 Academy2
Oxford
11.11.19

SPECTOR
The Bullingdon
Oxford
12.11.19

ALASKALASKA
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
16.11.19

SNOW PATROL
New Theatre
Oxford
SOLD OUT

JAWS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
18.11.19

FONTAINES D.C.
O2 Academy
Oxford
SOLD OUT

PENELOPE ISLES
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
27.11.19

RHYS LEWIS
O2 Academy2
Oxford
28.11.19

BEN OTTEWELL
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
30.11.19

JOHNNY LLOYD
The Bullingdon
Oxford
04.12.19

SOEUR
The Wheatsheaf
Oxford
04.12.19

LOW ISLAND
The Bullingdon
Oxford
06.12.19

RAZORLIGHT
O2 Academy
Oxford
13.12.19

APRE
The Bullingdon
Oxford
21.02.19

JAMIE CULLUM
New Theatre
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16.03.20

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IF NOT NOW, WHEN? East Oxford Community Centre / Fusion Arts

Divine Schism and Idiot King once again join forces to bring us another amazing day of diverse musical treats in perfect weather. Twenty-six bands across three stages; cheap drinks; a vegan burger bar and plenty of space to chill out in the late summer sunshine; there is literally nothing not to like here. Early on **BLESSED TWINS** have a brooding, angular air with rumbling bass and complex drumming. The tension regularly explodes into a wall of confrontational noise but everything is tightly controlled and impressively measured. **LIMPET SPACE RACE** are an absorbing keyboard and drums duo with echoes of Robert Wyatt’s unconventional song structures. They also display a healthy sense of fun, even goading the audience into a little singalong. A short walk to Fusion Arts finds the bulk of sold-out crowd checking out multinational London band **GHUM**. Unashamedly post-punk, they could almost be Joy Division reincarnated as an all-female stadium band, heavy on emotive lyrics but still very much finding their feet. **JUNK WHALE** make a big, raw sound but still feel like a work in progress at times. Ultimately there’s only so many rough, angsty indie bands you can consume in one

CULTDREAMS / PET SEMETARY / JUNK WHALE

The Library
Is the feedback intentional? Who cares? Junk Whale blast out of the gate with reflective and emotive riff evoking the earnestness of Jetplane Landing and Hundred Reasons. As their set moves on they pick up the pace with catchy power-chord hooks like classic Fall Out Boy. The bass is unrelenting and the guitar-vocal interplay is impactful but still sweet and heart-felt. Junk Whale come off as discontented with the world and pushing through the only way they know how with absolutely fantastic rock music; not that we can think of any reasons the youth of today could be disillusioned or frustrated... Anyway, with a brilliant new album just released on several tape formats we can only hope for more and more form them. Last time we saw Pet Semetary it was a solo show of haunting reverberated open wound emotion. That was great but in no way prepare us for the distorted dream-pop assault of this full band show. Every part of

sitting. A bit like doughnuts. All of which should play into **GEORGE CROWLEY**’s hands. His mix of mainly ambient electronics and treated sax starts well as a counterpoint to the musical feast elsewhere but then somehow loses its way. The sax is full-bodied and at times rather beautiful but the basic, rather drab beats fail to combine well enough to create a satisfying experience. **SCHANDE** are probably the most chart-friendly band of the day so far. The breakneck powerchords and catchy melodies hark back to bands like L7 and Mudhoney, which makes for an unexpected and not unwelcome change to the menu

the ensemble works to enhance the impact of Gaby-Elise Monaghan’s piercing-yet beautiful howling laments. The result is like a journey into the dark cave of the soul: echoey and distorted but filled with catharsis. The bitter groove of ‘Tall Boys’, drenched in noise, and set closer ‘Dogs’ are particular highlights, the latter feeling like an organic release of anger, energy and tension: a perfect climax to the set. Tonight’s headliners Cultdreams hail from Brighton, via Antwerp. The two-piece explore expansive noise-punk sounds akin to Fucked Up and Sonic Youth; how they build such an intense and rounded sound between just the two of them we don’t know, but it’s incredible. Their aesthetic is melancholy passed through a mass of punk energy. It’s not just the volume that makes you not miss a bassist but the careful choices in structure and the sheer brutal force of drummer Conor Dawson that makes for more than enough noise. Lead and rhythm, quiet and distorted motifs weave and flow as if they were a three guitarist and, enhanced by Lucinda Livingstone’s dual mode vocals of screaming and She Drew The Gun-esque semi-spoken poetry. *Matt Chapman Jones*

so far. In **KATIE MALCO** it seems we’ve finally found the perfect mix of loud versus quiet and assertive versus diffident. From Fife, via London, what she produces with just voice and acoustic guitar is simply awe-inspiring, and it’s regrettable that she seems to be the only act to pay tribute to the genius of the just-departed Daniel Johnston. Her cover of ‘True Love Will Find You In The End’ seals her place as the finest performance of a very fine day.

Local singer and amazing keyboard player **THEO** brings a welcome breath of soul to proceedings. A powerful and confident songwriter with echoes of Randy Crawford, she seems destined for much greater things, as her upcoming support slot for Shalamar clearly shows. **RATTLE** are the second Nottingham band of the day and possibly the most unusual. Two incredibly tight drummers face each other, producing complex rhythms and vocal interjections that almost recall The Slits’ ‘Earthbeat’, but more minimal, unsettling and hypnotic. Their releases on the excellent Upset The Rhythm label are essential listening. **JACK GOLDSTEIN** uses just his voice and a backing track to create huge washes of sound that conjure up images of a Roman emperor entering an arena. Everything is super-sized and shamelessly emotional, from the major chords to the theatrical voice and touches of The Beach Boys.

And so to worthy headliners **MARTHA**: speedy power pop with catchy hooks and infectious melodies, and the faithful dancing at the front seem to know every word. Durham is a city better known for no-nonsense earthiness than ethereal navel-gazing and in that respect they are worthy ambassadors. They bring a great day to a suitably joyous conclusion. *Art Lagun*

THE LEISURE SOCIETY

The Bullingdon

Floppy fringed and slightly built Nick Hemming barely looks old enough to be allowed in a pub, never mind fronting a band with two Ivor Novello nominations under their belt and who are celebrating the tenth anniversary of their debut album.

Like Nick himself, The Leisure Society are a hard band to pin down. The couple sporting matching patterned knitwear leaning against the crush barrier give you some idea of the civilised nature of their music but the devotion of the fans – and this is one of the most respectful crowds we’ve been in lately – is no less fervent than for any act. There are times tonight where you wonder if you’ve landed in the middle of some 1980s Christian rock festival, but others where the sense of romantic longing in the songs is almost tangible. The music can be insular and sensitive but the humour between songs, particularly from keyboard player Christian Hardy is sharp and infectious.

Opening number ‘You’ve Got the Universe’ finds Hemming unfurling his rich tenor over surging keys and swooning violin and suddenly he seems decades older than he looks,

like a marginally less weary Richard Hawley. Soon enough though, the band are off on a country-rock lope before sweeping skywards in a style reminiscent of The Waterboys’ Big Music. Everything is tightly textured but light to the touch, an easy journey that occasionally becomes becalmed in pop’s middle lane before finding itself again on a gorgeous, melancholy track like ‘Tall Black Cabins’, a rumination on the death of the fishing industry. Then you’ll get a noodly, indulgent jazz interlude that makes way for something almost rockabilly, or even delicately plucked classical guitar, maybe a dip into Buddy Holly’s pristine rock’n’roll, or perhaps a little Latin flourish. It’s all in there but everything slides easily into the rest, so nothing jars.

The more reflective the band get, the better they sound; ‘Forever Shall We Wait’ a particular high point, but the warm, expansive Americana of ‘Another Sunday Psalm’ is equally inviting, and if they’re a band who don’t really fit into any particular scene or genre, The Leisure Society are perhaps an example of how, sometimes, it’s simply just the songs that matter.

Dale Kattack

It's all about the music

5th The Calliers / Port Erin /Great Ape / Danel Ma’ani @ The Port Mahon
11th Master Of None / Ali Horn / Starbelly/ Emma Hunter/ @ The Port Mahon
13th The Sunday Social... various artists @ The Half Moon *3.30pm start*
18th Subject To Change / support @ The Wheatsheaf
18th The Wurzels @ The Bullingdon
20th The Sunday Social ... various artists @ The Wheatsheaf *3.30pm start*
25th Toology / support @ The Wheatsheaf
25th Grand Palace Scam / The Jerichos @ The Port Mahon
26th Osprey & co @ The Half Moon

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THURS 24TH - DAVID ELLIS
Idyllic hippy folk vibes from the Razorlight guitarists solo project, think Devendra meets early Bolan
WED 30TH - ROBERT VINCENT
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MCLUSKY* / WORRY

The Bullingdon

It takes all of 30 seconds into Worry’s set for singer Nathan Ball, sporting an appropriate Gouge Away shirt, to turn a worrying shade of puce and look like he might actually explode. Instead he has a safety valve that involves screaming and bellowing raging invective and his deepest, darkest existential thoughts to the world as behind him his band thunder like a flail tank riding over a packed minefield. There’s no room for niceties in Worry’s sound; it’s all bish, bash, bosh. Mostly bosh, actually. Bosch even, since it can feel like a washing machine just landed on your head at times. If their short and

not so sweet set spares no room for nuance, who needs a scalpel when you have a sledgehammer. Mclusky* have the surgeon’s knife *and* a power drill at their disposal. Partially reformed (here’s Andy Falkous and Jack Egglestone but not Jonathan Chapple, whose place on bass is now taken by The St Pierre Snake Invasion’s Damien Sayell) after a decade-long hiatus, they’ve mellowed not one jot since the days they were the most incendiary band on the gig circuit, one possessed of both needle-sharp caustic wit and spineshaking musical ferocity. That ferocity comes in short, succinct blasts, punctuating those

moments of contemplation like uncontrolled temper tantrums and violent sonic seizures. After opening with the relatively sedate ‘Fuck This Band’, the trio hurtle through a set of sheet-metal hardcore and propulsive industrial *sturm und drang*, all grinding Big Black basslines and feral Birthday Party hysteria, Falkous making his guitar sound like it’s been built from distilled anxiety. Most songs clock in under the two minute mark but get the job done on time: ‘Without MSG I Am Nothing’; ‘The World Loves Us And Is Our Bitch’, and of course a mayhem ‘Lightsabre Cocksucking Blues’, which

provokes a frantic moshpit in the packed crowd. All this is punctuated by the dark, barbed humour that Falkous brings to bear within and between the songs, joking about Eric Clapton, and his own father’s death with an almost unnerving *bon viveur*. ‘Gareth Brown Says’ brings one of the greatest opening lines in rock history (“All your friends are cunts / And your mother is a ballpoint pen thief”) but it’s the closing brace of ‘Whoyouknow’ and ‘To Hell With Good Intentions’ that provide the final, delicious, fatal cuts, leaving a room of old fans and newcomers alike grinning like loons. A musical masterclass in growing old disgracefully. **Dale Kattack**

THE XTRAVERTS / ORDER#227

The Wheatsheaf

The debate as to what constitutes punk will never be resolved. In one corner those who insist anything after about 1979 doesn’t count and in the other those who imagine anything faster and noisier than the most simpering of emo constitutes the real deal. What is indisputable is that both bands here tonight very definitely are punk. The Xtraverts tick all boxes since they were there back in 1977, leading lights of High Wycombe’s lively punk scene, the band’s reputation only reinforced by singer Nigel Martin’s imprisonment after a fight at the legendary Aylesbury Friars. Martin, now a rather more avuncular presence, still leads the band, and tonight’s short and messy but suitably aggressive set suggests they’ve no desire to move on from that 70s heyday, the clarion-call lyrics putting The Xtraverts very much in the “if the kids were united” bracket alongside Sham 69 and The

Angelic Upstarts. It’s yobbish street punk with no concession to the passing of the decades, finishing with ‘Blank Generation’ (no, not that one); on the one hand a bit of a shambles, on the other probably an authentic recreation of prime provincial punk with all its frayed edges. Considerably younger, Order#227 have similarly authentic credentials and execute their set with considerably more proficiency, their touchstones the same, touching on Oi! at times. ‘Collateral Damage’ is The Ruts without the reggae, while ‘Depression’ might be an up-for-a-scrap cousin of Rocket From the Crypt’s ‘On a Rope’. If ‘The Internet is a Paedophile Playground’ treads an uncomfortable line between righteous right-on fury and a *Daily Mail* opinion column, set closer ‘Nobody Gives a Fuck About Nothing No More’ is full-pelt anarcho-punk with a petrol can in one hand and a four pack of super-strength cider in the other. In spirit as well as sound, Order#227 can most definitely wear the badge of authentic punk rock with pride. **Dale Kattack**



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TOWERSEY FESTIVAL Thame Showground

It's sunny and hot for our day trip to Oxfordshire's longest running festival, which has made news by announcing next year it is moving out of the county to Buckinghamshire and are greeted by Towersey favourites the **FRUMPTARN GUGGENBAND**, back for a third successive year. With their punchy brass and percussion repertoire of pop classics played carnival style and in their Day Of The Dead costumes, they're a delightfully weird start to the day. Then it's to the concert stage where **WARD & PARKER**'s folk pop is pleasant but memorable only for John Parker's virtuoso double bass playing and beat boxing. Later Parker again impresses alongside talented guitarist Ben Walker backing Americana singer songwriter **EMILY MAE WINTERS**, though unfortunately we just can't take her singing style.

After ice cream and being entertained, bemused and baffled by **JARDU'S MAGIC OF INDIA**, it's off to the always buzzing dance tent to catch a little of **THE MELROSE QUARTET CEILIDH BAND**. They use vocals as well as instruments for the dances and as the award winning Nancy Kerr is in their line-up some of the vocals are very good indeed. Towersey caters for fans of rock as well as folk and what's in-between, and today that's so even in the dance tent where **RUSTY SHACKLE**, who are very much at the rock end of the folk rock spectrum, score a surprising but deserved success. Oxford's **LOUD MOUNTAINS** are first on the main stage. Their new line up makes them the rockiest and loudest we've heard them, helping their songs about staying up too late and drinking too much go

down a treat in the afternoon heat.

They are followed by the polished **LES POULES À COLIN** who tell us their Quebecois- French songs are dripping with blood and gore. Their dramatic vocals and Rolls Royce harmonies are highly polished and they surprise us by pinning back our ears with an all out rock finale.

Irish rock and soul band **HOTHOUSE FLOWERS**'s charismatic singer Liam Ó Maonlaí looks every inch a rock & roll survivor. Driven on by the rest of the band, and with his voice still sounding fabulous, he's totally in the moment. It's mesmeric and possibly the performance of the day. Not many could follow that but the equally charismatic **SETH LAKEMAN** does. His new band gives more of a full rock sound to older numbers like '1643', as well as to the newer, ethereal

'Gloaming' and the prog influenced 'Fitzimmons Fight'. But it's his explosive fiddle solo that lifts the set to another level.

Over in the much calmer concert stage another of the West Country's finest, Show of Hands' **STEVE KNIGHTLEY**, plays a solo set that is a sort of musical autobiography, ending with his two magnificent songs about the West Country diaspora: 'Cousin Jack' and 'Country Life', which deserve to be better known beyond the folk world. Such is Knightley's personality and musicality we stay longer than intended so only catch the end of **THE SELECTER** on the main stage. With the super stylish Pauline Black and 'Gaps' Hendrickson fronting them, the band are tight and have the arena jumping as they belt out 2 Tone classics 'On My Radio ' 'Too Much Pressure' and 'Message To You Rudi' in quick succession. Then it's back to the concert

tent for something that really is different: musical parodies (Abba's 'Fernando' becoming a bad meal at Nando's) and clever stagecraft from the self styled "greatest band in tank tops", **THE BAR-STEWARD SONS OF VAL DOONICAN**. We've seen them before and expect to laugh less second time round. We're wrong. The last band are

ELEPHANT SESSIONS. Their pounding bass and drums and strobe lighting is folk beats rather than folk rock, and creates a dynamic dance club atmosphere with fiddle player Euan Smille almost matching Seth Lakeman when it comes to shredding it.

Being in the middle of the famously friendly but boisterous main stage crowd as they go for it one last time seems a perfect way to end another great day and night at Towersey. It's time to say thanks and wave goodbye as the festival heads off to Buckinghamshire, and to make a note to find out in time for next year exactly where is Claydon House.

Colin May

the source. As on tonight's set opener 'Humpty Dumpty', which has an instantly appealing riff , goes on an excursion or three before heading back to base and ending with the unmistakable sound of the unfortunate Humpty falling of the wall and cracking. Frank is on impressive form throughout; his languid approach and latent energy is perfect for this music. If Frank is laidback, Curtis Ruiz on bass guitar is horizontal, yet lays down some wicked lines, especially in the second half. With Frank's long time collaborator Kofi Adu also making an impact with deftly understated percussion, Frank's colleagues have a groove which complements and stimulates his stellar musicality and sax playing. It's good to see that the band are having so much fun, and several of the crowd find they can't resist dancing. That tonight's show is in aid of a small South African charity simply adds further to the feelgood factor. No doubt the legends of South African jazz would have joined with the well deserved ovation at the end.

Colin May

MEANS OF PRODUCTION / THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE / MOJAVE

The Port Mahon

A late finish in the football and the vagaries of Oxford's bus service mean we arrive just in time to miss openers Octavia Freud, but given he closes with a radical reworking of Spacemen 3's classic 'Revolution', we make a mental note never to miss him again.

And so it's another one-man electronic act, Mojave, who we catch first, busily flitting among his mess of gadgetry as tripped-out visuals play out behind him, his pleasingly somnambulating instrumentals a soothing mix of Kraftwerk, Banco de Gaia and the sweeter side of Aphex Twin, dirty bass and clickety clack beats underpinning gilded synth lines that at their best come together to create the impression of a train trundling across icebound tundra at midnight.

By contrast The Pink Diamond Revue are a relentless dreadnought ploughing through lysergic waves on Kraken Mare in search of the Plains of Golgotha. Reading's slow-mo acid rock duo are no strangers to Oxford and while musically they've never changed course, it's always fun, metronomic beats backing Tim Lane's reverbed-to-buggery guitar, sounding like

Dick Dale taking Leftfield surfing against a backdrop of vintage cinema reel, or possibly Public Service Broadcasting's evil tattooed rockabilly twin brother: they're an absolutely mesmerising trip. If Means of Production are a trip it's a

downwards one, into the depths of some vast industrial concrete sarcophagus lined with flickering sodium lights. The duo, studiously motionless, as if guiding a derelict spacecraft through the void, hammer out a hypnotic electro-primitivism, harsh-hearted and almost desolate at times in its steely android relentlessness, Tim Day's minimal vocal intonations only serving to make everything even less human. From the austere ebm of 'The Depths' to the motorik relentlessness of 'Siri Take Me Home', they're the musical incarnation of brutalist architecture, all straight lines and beauty in ugliness, 1970s synth music's Ballardian nightmare reincarnated in a cyborg factory at the end of the universe. In short stunning, and quite possibly the most underrated band in Oxford right now.

Sue Foreman

GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS / DEATH OF THE MAIDEN / IDEAL MARRIAGE

The Wheatsheaf

Formed by former members of Lowws, Ideal Marriage share a similar affinity for fidgety groove-pop that carries them close to Wild Beasts territory but Christian Johnstone's almost operatic vocals are what keeps tonight's set on its toes, the singer channelling Thom Yorke at times but elsewhere exorcising more venomous demons or going the full Gilbert and Sullivan; if he doesn't always dovetail with the music he's never less than engaging and brings a sense of drama to the band's languid, spacious sound.

Death of the Maiden's songs generally come packed with enough drama, grief and tragedy to fill an entire box set of *Eastenders* Christmas Specials, or in the case of tonight's set opener 'Tess', several volumes of tragic Victorian literature. The imperious venom in Tamara Parsons-Baker's voice and lyrics brings the most out of the tale of death, redemption and revenge, while Hannah Bruce's epic stadium rock solo lifts the finale to new heights. Such intensity carries on through the obsessive 'This House' and even an initially incongruous diversion into something approaching funk rock allows Tamara to unleash her inner Patti Smith.

The band are more propulsive now than they were on recent album 'The Girl With the Secret Fire', Hannah indulging her axe hero desires, but also capable of carving out almost Ry Cooder-like spaces when the songs demand it and 'Trouble', with its hint of early Aldous Harding, is a dark high point of the set.

After two such outstanding vocal performances it's perhaps for the best that Ghosts in the Photographs are an instrumental act. Tonight launching their epically-proportioned new single 'Taylor Mountain Memorial', they balance delicacy and power astutely, slow-burn crescendos building to wig-out climaxes that owe plenty to Mogwai but also Ride's earliest noise explosions with their blizzards of glissando. Their set plays out to a backdrop of icebound mountain railways which reflects the often glacial nature of their music, but tension, velocity and heaviness pile up as they bulldoze to an excoriating dirge at the death and we come into land at some station in the sky that's definitely not Didcot. We're not sure if it's the altitude or the music, but we feel a little lightheaded.

Dale Kattack

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Part Nine

Hi everyone, this month I want to look at Streaming audio and in particular the formats and technical requirements of some of the more popular streaming sites. Streaming is a means of delivering data in a constant stream to the consumer as opposed to downloading. With streaming you can access the data immediately whereas with downloads you have to wait for the download to complete. All streaming services “data compress” the material with varying degrees of quality.

The largest problem encountered by people using streaming sites is the loudness difference between tracks. Listening to whole albums seems to be a thing of the past with the emphasis now on single tracks, usually in a user's playlist. The trouble is that all of these tracks have an inherently different loudness. This means you have to constantly fiddle with your volume control. Nearly all streaming sites now employ a "normalisation" algorithm to compensate for this. Unfortunately CDs mastered to extremely loud (and un-dynamic) levels are pushed down whilst quieter (more dynamic) tracks are raised up slightly.

What are they "normalised" to? Let's look at Spotify. Launched in 2008 it is the world's most popular streaming site, commanding 36% of all streamed audio content. Figures published in July 2019 state 232 million users.

All Spotify audio is normalised to -14LUFS. LUFS stands for Loudness Units (referenced) to Full Scale. The full spec of LUFS is referenced in the EBU R128 recommendation for broadcast and streamed audio. Loudness is about perception. Loudness normalisation on streaming platforms evens out these perceived differences.

Audio engineers are now required to submit material that adheres to this specification. Submitting highly maximised audio will result in distortion once the site encodes the music for streaming. So you will need to invest in a LUFS meter for your audio systems. Incidentally a LUFS is equivalent to 1dB. Quieter audio will sound significantly better than over-loud audio once the streaming platform has normalised the tracks. The idea is that you can set your preferred listening volume on your device and leave it there.

With the exception of TIDAL, streaming sites will data compress your audio.

Data compression is totally different to audio compression. Audio compression reduces the dynamic range of music. Data compression reduces the number of bits in a file size. Data compression will affect the quality of your sound, sometimes significantly. With an MP3 the data reduction can be as much as 90%. A 3 minute song at 16bit/44.1Khz (CD quality) will be around 30 Mb in size. The equivalent MP3 will be around 3Mb. 90% of the data will vanish. This can sound pretty dreadful at the best of times. With streaming, the data rate can be as low as 96Kbps (kilobytes per second) and as high as 320Kbps. CD on the other hand has a data rate of 1.4Mbps.

Along with MP3 there are many digital audio file formats used in the industry for streaming and distribution. With the exception of FLAC and WAV they are all “Lossy”. Lossy means that data will be lost in favour of smaller file size. MP3s have bit rates from 96Kbps up to 320Kbps. There are two kinds of bit rates, Constant Bit Rate (CBR) which is self explanatory and Variable Bit Rate (VBR). Variable bit rate works thus: very sparse instrumentation can be encoded at a lower bit rate and when the track becomes more instrumentally dense it will be encoded with a higher bit rate. The unwanted artifacts from this data compression are grim at best but then if you insist on listening on a portable telephone ... who gives a fuck. AAC (Advanced Audio Coding) format was developed by a few companies, among them Bell Labs, AT&T and Nokia. It too is lossy and is regarded as *slightly* better than MP3. In fact nearly all the lossy formats are *slightly* better than MP3. How popular is streaming? Well last year 431 billion streams were logged in the USA alone!

Next Month we will meet Ogg Vorbis ... beware.



Ah, there you are, Sedley. Welcome to the East Indies Club bar. Pull up a pew and dispense some largesse. Or LAGER-esse if you prefer. Yes, I know – I usually require what you whippersnappers call Old Man's Beer... but I'm stretching a point (or PINT) as it is hot in here. So, due to massive popular interest, we are relaunching the feature on 'Roads of Rock' in our fayre city. Without further ado, I give you COWLEY MINOGUE, RICK ASTON and BARNs-ANARAMA. *Ok*, it's all gone rather STOCKMORE, AITKEN & WATERPERRY, hasn't it? Not to mention, a bit East-Oxford-Centric. But fear not, we have some treats from the streets of North Oxford too... the likes of PLANTATION DUB FOUNDATION, WARNBOROUGH & PEOPLES, THE KINGSTON ROSES, FAITH NORTHMOOR (think about it, Sedley, think about it...). There is also a special tribute to Oxford's own Radiohead, in the form of KIDLINGTON A and OAKTHORPE COMPUTER. What's that, Newbie? Do I fancy a spin round the (GOLDEN-EAR) RING ROAD? I don't think so, Newbie. But, tell you what [*kindly tone, twinkle in eye*]... you may take out your Mr Men wallet and dispense some 'Radar Love' by buying the next round. Yes, an honour indeed. [*THAT drumbeat and bassline come in... all start swaying and singing 'I've been driving all night, hands wet on the wheel'...*]

*Dr S puts on
Dutch clogs
and starts
knocking
back
pints of
Grolsch]...
Cheers!
Down the
hatch,
yesh?*

**Next month:
Pass the Dutchie on the Left Hand Side**

*Baby: 'Oh God. My parents have put me down
to be the bass-player in Golden Earring...'
Child: 'You should worry. I'm the manager'.*

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

Who is he?

Singer and multi-instrumentalist Max Blansjaar is originally from Amsterdam but moved to Oxford back in 2006. Composing his songs at home on piano he learned guitar from elder sister Silke – drummer in Self Help and Candy Says – and released his debut cassette on Beanie Tapes in 2017. Silke also plays in Max's live band along with Tom Hitch (Easter Island Statues / Mother); gigs include this summer's Truck Festival as well as Oxjam last year. He releases his new EP, 'Fantasy Living', for Beanie Tapes this month and plays at Ritual Union on Saturday 19th October.

What does he sound like?

Lo-fi bedroom fuzz-pop with a sense of childlike glee and simplicity, or, as we said of Max's debut EP: "Ramshackle bedroom vibes, all fuzz and flurry and lopsided tunes held together with gaffer tape and hope, lo-fi indie punk squeezed tight into pocket money-friendly pop tunes with Toytown synth-pop bloopers for company." Fun pop music with sweet and noisy bits, then.

What inspires him?

"The *Paddington* movies, for sure. First of all the sequel is on par, quality-wise, with the first film, which all musicians can learn a thing or two from. And it just has so many quotable lines ("if we're calm and polite, the world will be right"; "everyone's different, which means anyone can fit in").

His career highlight so far is:

“Playing Truck this year. I’ve been going for five years at least, so to play there now felt a bit funny. And people actually turned up to watch us, which was a bonus and a highlight.”

And the lowlight:

“There was one pretty bad gig supporting this Devo tribute band. I’d never heard of Devo and I admitted this on stage. Everyone was very cross with me.”

His favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"Nick Cope. I saw him play at Truck. The way he captures the audience: I don't know how he does it. Also, his actual songs are wildly underrated and kind of linger in your head for days. And how does the guy rehearse? Nothing



can prepare you for an audience of young children. Yet he pulls it right out the bag, every single time. Unbelievable.”

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

“Probably ‘Odelay!’ by Beck: such a glorious mish-mash of styles. It’s one of those albums that you can’t really over-play; which is always good if it’s the only one you’re allowed to keep. Plus the keyboard riff in ‘Where It’s At’ is immortal and puts all other keyboard riffs to shame.”

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

At Ritual Union on Saturday 19th October. Expect me trying to flog my new EP to them. Sorry in advance, but also not, because a boy's gotta pay rent. The show should be fun, too."

His favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

"Favourite thing is everybody letting me play with them, even though I'm so little. Least favourite is not being allowed into a whole load of venues because I'm *too* little. Although it does give me something to be indignant about, which is nice for small talk and interviews and stuff."

You might love him if you love:

Darwin Deez; Graham Coxon; Tune-Yards; Jack Goldstein; Courtney Barnett; Beck.

Hear him here:
maxblansjaar.bandcamp.com

20 YEARS AGO

Can it really be 20 years since **Supergrass** released their third album? Seems so as a look back at October 1999's *Nightshift* reveals a review of the eponymous "difficult third," which found the band "all grown up but still eager little boys in love with rock and roll and now armed with a greater range of styles and emotions than ever before." What odds the reformed crew headlining next year's **Truck Festival**, we wonder?

Back in olden times *Nightshift* had a regular feature called Best of Times, Worst of Times, where we asked a local pop person to pick their best and worst memories, and in October 1999 it was **Radiohead's Ed O'Brien** who chose **Arthur Turner's Lovechild's** show at **The Jericho Tavern** as his inspiring moment ("simply awesome") and **On A Friday's** gig at **The Hollybush** in Osney as a night to forget ("there were five people there and the sound engineer didn't know there was an off switch for the smoke machine"). So, you see, aspiring rock stars, everyone starts off at the bottom with all its inherent pitfalls. Never give up.

In local music news this month **Catweazle Club** were celebrating their fifth birthday. Even back then the club, run by Matt Sage, was hailed as Oxford's longest-running open night. Fast forward to the present day and it's a quarter century celebration this month. Hats off.

Coming to town this month were: **My Life Story**, **The All Seeing I** and **Bert Jansch (The Zodiac)**; **Billy Mahonie**, **Brassy** and **Murry the Hump (The Point)**; **Feeder**, **Gomez** and **Travis (Brookes Union)**, and **Miss Mend (The Jericho Tavern)**.

10 YEARS AGO

By now firmly established as local heroes, **Stornoway** announced plans to become the first non-orchestral band to perform at the historic **Sheldonian Theatre** this month back in 2009 an occasion, one that remains one of the greatest gigs by a local band we can remember. For many gig goers it was their first foray ever into the Christopher Wren-designed building and true to form the band delivered in style, peaking with one of the first ever performances of their classic ‘The Coldharbour Road’.

Stornoway also released a new single, ‘Unfaithful’, this month, a re-recorded version of the lead track from their ‘Good Fish Guide’ EP. “A band who seem to conjure epic, timeless pop songs from the earth with enviable ease,” ran our typically enthusiastic review.

Enthusiasm was high too for the return to town of **Bat For Lashes** at the **O2 Academy**, as well as the likes of **Idlwild**, **The Big Pink** (as part of the inaugural **OX4** event, a precursor to Gathering) and **Noah & the Whale** at the same venue, while over in the demo pages, a bunch of newcomers called **Spring Offensive** were narrowly beaten to Demo of the Month by Banbury's **Scholars**. "In 'Between One and One-Nine-Four', they have an indie disco classic in waiting, guitars twitching and twinkling beneath a vocal that spits out its opening line and carries a sneer with it throughout... who knows how far they might go," ran the review. Stornoway and Spring Offensive – hands up who'd pay a small fortune to see those two reform and back playing in Oxford?

5 YEARS AGO

Back in October 2014 Oxford bid a very sad farewell to one of its great characters and pioneering spirits with the death, aged just 40, of **Dave Norland**. A renowned musician (playing bass in reggae band **Mackating**) sound engineer (at **The Zodiac** and **Academy**) and producer (at **Soundworks**) he also helped found community radio station Destiny 105. But he'll be best known as the man who released the first two **Supergrass** singles and **The Mystics'** debut on his own **Blackbeat Records** label. "He knew how to make things happen," said **Hugo Makepeace** of his friend, "he'd do stuff and then ask permission." Legendary local promoter **Mac** simply said: "he was a top man – the only person ever to drink me under the table."

In rather happier news, this month marked **The August List's** first ever appearance on the cover of *Nightshift*, though Kerraleigh and Martin Child looked far from cheery as they stood knee-deep in a river. Talking about their new release, 'O Hinterland', they recalled getting hitched in North Carolina ("We saw Raymond Fairchild play banjo while a 90-year-old man, who the day before we saw sleeping on a bench, did some Appalachian clog dancing in front of him, we saw some of that old weird America. We saw elk and bears and nature on a grand scale that's both beautiful and dangerous and we find those things infecting our songs and we just run with it.") but also how they weren't keen on certain "country couple" acts ("Nothing makes our hearts sink more than a soppy boy/girl acoustic duo").

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IDEAL MARRIAGE

“‘Errors’ deals with anxiety around new technology’s impact on us, the rise of AI and living forever in a digital world,” explain Ideal Marriage by way of introduction to this new track, and while that description had us hoping it’d be some hellish electro-industrial musical nightmare with a Dalek on lead vocals and the Terminator on bass, we still don’t end up disappointed that it’s instead a rather sweet and uplifting indie pop nugget. Featuring members of former *Nightshift* faves Lowws, Ideal Marriage benefit enormously from having a singer with an airy, wide-ranging voice who sounds a bit like we imagine Thom Yorke might if he saw the best in people and went on country walks to talk to lambs and bunnies while wearing a daisy chain crown instead of dwelling on mass extinction and existential pain. Musically the band sound like a slightly spaced-out stadium pop outfit, one who thought bombast was a bit crass and wouldn’t it be nice if we all went for a hot air balloon ride together, or maybe modern day festival-friendly Foals at their most languid. As the dregs of summer slip silently and morosely into the past, it’s a reminder that there is some hope left in the world, whatever technology has planned for us all.

REBEL STATION

In these virulently polarised times when it feels increasingly like we’re reliving the 1980s all over again (far right Tory government trampling over society’s most vulnerable; intellectually challenged loon in the White House; polarised bigotry on every side of the political spectrum; increasingly bouffant hair-dos) some old-school protest punk seems entirely in order, and here are Rebel Station to provide it in simple, shouty fashion. In their world there is no room for half measures, subtlety or jazzy interludes. Instead it’s wall-to-wall two-chords-and-the-truth, songs like ‘Remedy’, ‘Cold War Bombs’ and ‘Junkie’ recalling New Model Army at their rugged 80 prime, particularly in singer Monkey’s gruff delivery and the band’s chant-along choruses. There’s a hint of Dead Kennedys about them too – aforementioned Monkey has something of Jello Biafra’s caustic quaver in his voice at times – and a general barroom brawl approach to the intricacies of world politics and social issues. They want to change the world, but not one committee meeting at a time. Pints and petrol bombs it is, then. Coming to a GLC-funded free festival soon.

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

FLAT LAGER

In something of a contrast to Rebel Station who have a singer with the simple moniker Monkey, Flat Lager’s frontman is called Owen Passingham-Hughes, but the two bands’ general musical approach isn’t so different, preferring route-one rolling chords and gruff, chest-thumping vocals, Sunday league tactics (hit it to the big lad upfront) and Saturday night rowdiness (eight pints of Export and the odd broken bar stool). Unlike the band’s previous demo offering there’s little by way of funk here, everything tumbles and careers down a steep musical slope, so it gets to the end of the song with admirable/worrying haste, like a parched alcoholic necking a cold pint of, well, lager. The name conjures images of sticky floors, damp ceilings and speed drinking. The music does the same. In these complex and fraught times, such simplicity is something to be admired, right?

SI-RO

“Last March you reviewed a demo of mine and though quite complimentary you expressed a wish for my music to sound darker. I’ve since released an album called ‘Chrome Skyline’ which I think will be more to your taste,” says Simon Rowe of this new extended demo offering. And initially at least he seems to be living up to his promise with some dark synth pulses that wouldn’t sound out of place on the soundtrack to *Escape From New York*. Too soon, though, he’s gone from John Carpenter to Jan Hammer: slightly brassy, shiny electro soundscapes more suited to *Miami Vice* or some other glossy mid-80s TV show. He does rediscover the dark periodically, like on ‘The Skull of Tower Hill’, which might be a raved-up soundtrack to a lost CBBC sci-fi series, but even here he can’t avoid sinking back into MOR noodling. For every moment of promise – the steely android techno squiggle of ‘Equinox Ritual’ for example – there’s some inconsequential flutter like ‘Redwood Canopy’: too bright, too shiny, too clean. At best it’s decent stuff but we’re not sure Simon really knows what proper darkness is. Look here (*Nightshift* holds up a photo of its soul): this is darkness. None more black.

MALORIE

“We have a diverse range of influences,” proclaims Malorie’s Hayden Ramm; “our drummer is a serious metalhead while me and my co-singer are big fans of alt-rock, especially Nirvana and the Chili Peppers.” Right, so that’s heavy rock or... well, heavy rock. On the musical differences front it’s hardly Lou Reed vs John Cale or Bryan Ferry vs Brian Eno. But hey, Malorie are all still in their mid-teens, so there’s plenty of time for one of them to discover Japanese

electro extremism while another realises his true musical love is big band jazz. Which would be bloody great if they did and could still manage to be in the same band as each other. As it is, this isn’t actually that heavy, though the Nirvana influence is probably the more obvious of any mentioned, a slightly grunge take on downbeat pop-punk that sounds more cultured than its slightly awkward construction might suggest. It’s neatly understated, recognising maybe that if they fly off on one everything might fall apart. “Hope you like them. If not we look forward to our funeral,” adds Hayden. Funeral? No great risk of that on this early evidence from the band, and anyway, don’t fret too much; they can do all sorts of stuff with cryogenics these days. There might yet be a future for you.

CHAYNES

While hip hop is both the most popular and universal music genre on the planet, and small provincial towns harbour as much propensity for the nasty stuff in life as the big city, it still feels a little incongruous hearing a young lad from Wantage rhyming about gangsters and beef, but Chaynes here fair spits “Must be serious / I’m not bothered by the fucking shit, period” on ‘Cosa Nostra’, which comes with a sampled intro of an ex mobsters talking about ‘the days’. Chaynes has a few other grudges to unload across these six tracks, mostly delivered in an unwavering hazy flow that’s Rakim by way of The Streets, and washes of warm keys and piano underpinned by sullen trap beats. But he’s at his best when he leaves the beef behind and becomes more contemplative, talking about the doubters rather than the haters, examining his own self doubts. When he mentions bars we assume he’s rapping about music rather than xanax, though it’s not always easy to be sure. Ideally he’d vary the pace a bit: he’s got an easy flow but across the full EP it can feel a little somnambulating, particularly with the music’s hypnagogic vibe, though final track ‘Pain’ does up the overall aggression. Promising stuff from a rapper who perhaps just needs to ditch a few of the genre clichés and bring his own voice and experiences more to the fore.

PAUL LE ROCQ

Talking of genre clichés, there is a strain of musician for whom multityfying soft rock of the kind that should have been dosed with Quietus sometime in the 1970s, is still somehow relevant and something to aspire to, something that people like us will be interested in, even excited by. Paul le Rocq attempts to pique our interest by attaching a selection of pictures that suggest he’s won a variety of awards for best new rock act from radio stations we’ve never heard of. If Radical FM really exists, we wonder if they might want to change their name if they think this cheesy mid-80s Euro-rock is vital and new, instead of sounding like Bon Jovi attempting to beef up Matthew Wilder’s

novelty hit ‘Break My Stride’, replete with obligatory guitar solo and a chorus so overegged it makes Bonnie Tyler sound like Yo la Tengo. Music for people who think Europe’s ‘Final Countdown’ was a bit too edgy and lo-fi. Or maybe just music for fucking idiots. Go on, stick that accolade in your gallery of awards, mate.

TOILET TRACKS

STORY73LLER

“I have some demos here from the appallingly named Story73ller – brainchild of Lee Valentine, who writes all the tunes. Don’t hold back!” So says Sam Tusk, the band’s trombone player and keyboardist, who seems already resigned to the critical kicking they’re about to get and wants to disassociate himself from it all before it begins. And who are we to disappoint people. The opening lines to ‘Bumpin’ and a Grindin’ set the sorry scene: “Where do you think you’re going dressed like that / With your skirt so short and your top so low / I can’t believe my eyes / With your bumps shaking out all over the place / Your breasts so pert / I must confess, you are blessed.” If this was some long lost 80s dancehall track it might be almost forgivable, or at least understandable, but even if it’s intended as a parody it’s so spectacularly wide of whatever mark it thought it was aiming at it’s like shooting for the moon and stabbing yourself in the buttock with a potato peeler. Later there’s talk of “me and the boys playing dominoes and drinking Red Stripe” while ogling the passing ladies who, obviously, he wants to bump and grind with. Bet they’re absolutely gagging for it when faced with such romantic poetry. From here things get far, far worse very quickly. At least that track has a semblance of swagger about it. ‘Hip To The Swing’, a vaguely funky melange of lightweight reggaefied pop, soulful rock, weak tea and gap year anecdotes, is so plodding even the brass section can’t rescue it and it ends up sounding like a jam session in Hades involving Sting, Level 42 and Men at Work. By ‘Magic City’, they’ve sunk to worst-busker-in-town level. Even worse than the one who sits on Cornmarket Street every night singing ‘Stand By Me’ on repeat, because at least he isn’t under the illusion he’s got the funk. Not only is it tortuously overwrought blues-soul fusion bollocks, it has a slap bass solo in the middle. By now *Nightshift* is digging its nails into the desk and weeping. Weeping and pleading for it all to end. Not just this music but the entire universe. We’d rather listen to Jacob Rees Mogg explain his plans for the NHS after Brexit for six solid hours without a vodka break than endure this again. In fact we’re inclined to hunt down the person who inflicted it on us and put him in need of some NHS care but, as we already mentioned, he ran away as soon as he’d dumped it on us.

Send tracks for review to: Nightshift, PO Box 312, Kidlington, OX5 1ZU, or email links to editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk, clearly marked Demos. IMPORTANT: no review without a contact phone number. If you can’t handle criticism, please don’t send us your demo. Same goes for your stupid, over-sensitive mates.

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Fri 20th Sep • 6.30pm

Boyzlife

Fri 20th Sep • 6.30pm

Foreign Beggars

Sat 21st Sep • 11pm

Freshers Rave

Tue 24th Sep

New Hope Club

Thur 26th Sep

Submotion Orchestra

+ So So Sun + Tilly Valentine

Fri 27th Sep • 6.30pm

Bingo Lingo Freshers Special

Fri 27th Sep • 11pm

NOCHE DE TRAVESURAS

ft DJ CHRIS DUKES, DJ AMNESIA, TUROK DJ

Fri 27th Sep • 11pm

Silent Disco Oxford

Sat 28th Sep • 6.30pm

Evil Scarecrow

+ The Grand Mal + Damaged Reich
+ Imminent Annihilation

Sat 28th Sep

An Orchestral Rendition of Snoop Dogg vs Dr Dre

Sat 28th Sep • 11pm

Shortman's Birthday Bash

Sat 28th Sep • 11pm

Switch presents: Wilkinson (DJ Set)

Thur 3rd Oct

Pierce Brothers

+ Millington

Fri 4th Oct • 6.30pm

CoCo and the Butterfields

+ Harry Pane

Fri 4th Oct • 11pm

The Oxford Soul Train

Fri 4th Oct • 11pm

Harrison BDP

ft. Bevis, Ess Gee, Mac White b2b Only Child

Sat 5th Oct • 10pm

Psychedelic Carnival

Sun 6th Oct

Red Rum Club

Sun 6th Oct

Richard Hawley

Tue 8th Oct

Easy Life

+ JGgrey

Fri 11th Oct 6.30pm

The London African Gospel Choir performs Paul Simon's Graceland

Fri 11th Oct • 6.30pm

King Prawn

+ Popes of Chillitown

Fri 11th Oct • 11pm

#6MILLI FRESHERS BLACKOUT

Sat 12th Oct • 6.30pm

Antarctic Monkeys

Sat 12th Oct • 11pm

Switch presents: SASASAS

Sat 12th Oct • 6.30pm

The Divine Comedy

Sun 13th Oct

The Twang

+ RATS

Mon 14th Oct

Kate Tempest

Wed 16th Oct • 6.30pm

PRESS TO MECO

+ Chapter and Verse

Thur 17th Oct • SOLD OUT

Ninja Sex Party

Fri 18th Oct • 6.30pm

Amber Run

+ Stereo Honey

Fri 18th Oct • 11pm

The Abba Party | Live Tribute

Fri 18th Oct • 6.30pm

Ferocious Dog

Sat 19th Oct • 12pm

Ritual Union

Tue 22nd Oct

Barns Courtney

Tue 22nd Oct

Striking Matches

+ Tenille Townes

Wed 23rd Oct • 6.30pm

The Fallen State

+ The Cruel Knives + Broken Empire
+ New Depth

Thur 24th Oct

Headie One

Fri 25th Oct • 6.30pm

Jake Clemons

+ Ben McKelvey

Sat 26th Oct • 4pm

Oxtoberfest

Sat 26th Oct • 6.30pm

Guns 2 Roses

+ MOTLEY CRUED

Sat 26th Oct • 11pm

Switch presents: Dimension

Mon 28th Oct

Inglorious

+ Mercutio

Thur 31st Oct • 10pm

Halloween Special ft Skepsis

Sat 2nd Nov • 6.30pm

The Dualers

+ Kioko + Count Skylarkin
+ Tony Nanton

Sun 3rd Nov

Bear's Den

Sun 3rd Nov

Everyone You Know

Mon 4th Nov

Feeder

Tue 5th Nov

Reel Big Fish

+ [sponge] + Lightyear

Tue 5th Nov

Hang Massive

Thur 7th Nov

Deaf Havana

Thur 7th Nov

Little Comets

Fri 8th Nov • 9pm

The Roaring 2.0s

+ The Electro Swing Circus

Sat 9th Nov • 6.30pm • SOLD OUT

Snarky Puppy

Sat 9th Nov • 6.30pm

Dr Syntax & Pete Cannon

Sat 9th Nov • 11pm

Switch presents: Sammy Virji - Like A Virgin Tour

Mon 11th Nov

Elder Island

Tue 12th Nov

Yonaka

Wed 13th Nov • 6.30pm

Mystery Skulls

Thur 14th Nov

The Smyths...

A celebration of the debut L.P

Fri 15th Nov • 6.30pm

The Treatment

+ Airrace + Lake Acacia

Fri 15th Nov • 11pm

Black Parade

- 00's Emo Anthems

Sat 16th Nov • 6.30pm

Dub Pistols

+ ZAIA + Zen Lewis

Sat 16th Nov • 6.30pm

Professor Green

Sat 16th Nov • 11pm

King Shine Vs Empire

Sat 16th Nov • 11pm

Switch presents

Hybrid Minds

Sun 17th Nov

Black Water County + The Lagan

Mon 18th Nov

Scouting for Girls

Tue 19th Nov

Primal Scream

Thur 21st Nov

A

+ '68 + False Heads

Fri 22nd Nov • 6.30pm

Half Man Half Biscuit

Fri 22nd Nov • 11pm

The Craig Charles

+ Brasc0 + Tony Nanton

+ Count Skylarkin

Sat 23rd Nov • 6.30pm

Biffy McClyro (Tribute)

Tue 26th Nov • SOLD OUT

Fontaines D.C.

Wed 27th Nov • 6.30pm

Electric Six

Thur 28th Nov

Happy Mondays

- Greatest Hits Tour

+ Jon Dasilva

Thur 28th Nov

Rhys Lewis

Fri 29th Nov • 6.30pm

Mad Dog Mcrea

Sat 30th Nov • 6.30pm

Definitely Mightbe

(Oasis tribute)

Sat 30th Nov • 6.30pm

Airbourne

+ Tyler Bryant & The Shakedown

Satu 30th Nov • 11pm

Switch presents

Kanine / Darkzy / Window

Kid / Indika / Lazcru

Sun 1st Dec

The Chats

Thur 5th Dec

Carols at

O2 Academy Oxford

Thur 5th Dec

The High Contrast Band

Fri 6th Dec • 6.30pm

Pearl Jam UK

Fri 6th Dec • 6.30pm

Gentleman's Dub Club

Sat 7th Dec • 6.30pm

Absolute Bowie

- Legacy Tour

Wed 11th Dec • 6.30pm

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