



NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

**Free every
month
Issue 297
April
2020**

photo: Jason Warner @ Fyrefly Studios



The Deadbeat Apostles

"We want people naked at the front, licking the stage and dancing loons cascading in all directions while we prance around like maniacs"

Kicking up a riot with Oxford's blues'n'soul renegades

Also in this issue:

Coronavirus decimates live music
Introducing **BRUNO MUERTE**

Plus

Oxford music news, reviews and releases;
no previews, no gigs.

OXFORD DUPLICATION CENTRE

CD DUPLICATION SPECIALISTS

CONTACT US
01865 457000

CD DVD Duplication
Card Wallets & Digipacks
Digital Printing
Large Packaging Options
Graphic Design
Fulfillment Services

Short order specialists 25+ to 1000's

all@oxfordduplicationcentre.com
29 Banbury Road Kidlington OX5 1AQ

SUPPORTERS OF THE LOCAL MUSIC SCENE WITH DISCOUNTED SERVICES
Highly recommended by Turan Audio, Evolution Studios, Nightshift Magazine, TAD Studios, Blue Moon, ZURICH, Nick Cope, Tony O'Malley, Lucy Leave, Great Western Tears, The Shapes, The Deadbeat Apostles, Laureltide, Invisible Vegas, Bo Walton, DEO, Peepworld, and many many others.

THE BULLINGDON

APRIL 2020 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Friday 3rd April Porridge Radio Pet Shimmers Lucy Leave Doors: 7pm	Friday 17th April K-Funkz Doors: 8pm	Saturday 9th May Simple DJ Seinfeld Doors: 11pm	Friday 5th June Musical Medicine Detroit Swindle Doors: 11pm
Friday 3rd April OP94 - The Real Good Friday Mike Delinquent (live) Dr.Op, 3 Cubed, Madman Soundz MC Omar, Dean C, High Profile Doors: 8pm	Saturday 10th April Musical Medicine Kitchen Disco Doors: 11pm	Friday 15th May Bambara Holy Motors Doors: 7pm	Saturday 6th June OP94 - The Opera Sweet Female Attitude (Live PA) Shelley Nelson, Jade, Dr.Op, W3vil, First Name Basis B2B The Milkman, MC Omar Doors: 11pm
Saturday 4th April Make Emo Great Again Doors: 8pm	Saturday 25th April New Bass Order - Symmetry Break Enel Gray Jakes SP:MC Doors: 11pm	Friday 15th May The HAU5 Party Doors: 11pm	Friday 12th June Mungos HiFi Doors: 11pm
Thursday 9th April Suns Up Number 38 Flintlock Rifles Waterfools Doors: 7pm	Wednesday 29th April Melt Yourself Down Doors: 7pm	Saturday 16th May Musical Medicine Horse Meat Disco Doors: 11pm	Saturday 13th June Pitch Black Ben Sims Doors: 11pm
Friday 10th April Kanadia Doors: 7pm	Thursday 30th April Simple Mayday Feat. Batu Doors: 11pm	Friday 22nd May Holy Fuck Doors: 7pm	Friday 19th June Simple Courtesey Doors: 11pm
Friday 10th April Pitch Black - Alex Downey Doors: 11pm	Friday 1st May Deadbeat Apostles Wonderland Tiger Mendoza Doors: 7pm	Friday 22nd May Back to the 80s Doors: 11pm	Saturday 20th June Reggaeton Party Doors: 11pm
Saturday 11th April Reggaeton Party Doors: 11pm	Friday 1st May Haute Mess Doors: 11pm	Saturday 22nd May Reggaeton Party Doors: 11pm	Friday 26th June The Total Stone Roses The Spike Island 30th Anniversary 1990 - 2020 Doors: 7pm
Sunday 12th April The Lovely Eggs Dog Daisies Doors: 7pm	Friday 1st May Saved by the 90s Doors: 11pm	Friday 29th May Break Stuff Doors: 11pm	Tuesday 28th July !!! (CHK CHK CHK) Doors: 7pm
Monday 13th April The Foliants Doors: 7pm	Saturday 2nd May Another Sky Doors: 7pm	Saturday 30th May Terraforms Doors: 11pm	Wednesday 2nd September Squid Doors: 7pm
Thursday 18th April Another Sky Doors: 7pm	Friday 8th May OP93 - Tastes Like Chemicals Oxide & Neutrino Dr. Op, Sam Deeley, 3 Cubed, MC Omar Doors: 11pm	Tuesday 2nd June Robert Forster Doors: 7pm	Friday 4th September Pearl Jamm (Pearl Jam Tribute) Doors: 7pm
Friday 17th April Noble Jacks Doors: 7pm		Wednesday 3rd June Dylan LeBlanc Doors: 7pm	



THE BEST IN LIVE STAND-UP COMEDY
EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT
7pm - Tickets: Glee.co.uk or 0871 472 0400

Thursday 23rd April - 7pm
Nick Helm: Phoenix from the Flames

The Bullingdon
162 Cowley Road
Oxford, OX4 1UE

www.thebullingdon.co.uk
info@thebullingdon.co.uk
facebook.com/bullingdonoxford

NEWS

Phone: 01865 372255
email: editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk
Online: nightshiftmag.co.uk



CORONAVIRUS / COVID-19
has had a devastating effect on Oxfordshire's live music scene, one that looks certain to continue for the next couple of months at least.

Following on from Boris Johnson's announcement on March 20th all pubs and venues are closed and thus live music events have been cancelled or postponed until further notice as people are urged to social distance to contain the spread of the virus. Earlier vague government advice to avoid pubs and clubs led venues, promoters, booking agents and artists themselves being forced to decide whether to cancel gigs and tours, fuelling a sense uncertainty.

As *Nightshift* went to press, and with the situation changing daily, a complete shutdown of the live music scene seems inevitable for the foreseeable future. The fallout of this for everyone concerned is likely

to be catastrophic. Live music, particularly at grassroots level, is always financially precarious. Most people working in the live music sector are either self-employed or on zero hour contracts. With little or no income for one, two, maybe more months, who knows what the future might hold for those whose livelihoods depend on gigs.

Among the major events already cancelled as we went to press, were **Cowley Road Carnival**, **Flofest** and **Glofest** in Florence Park in June, and **Witney Music Festival**. The entirety of **Audiograft's** week-long festival of music and art was cancelled at the end of March and co-organisers Oxford Contemporary Music have cancelled all events until at least the end of May. **Cornbury Festival** is likely to be postponed until 2021 with ticket sales grinding to a halt and sponsors unable to commit; organisers hope to retain this year's line-up. **Truck Festival's** organisers remain optimistic the event will take place at the end of July. An official statement said: "First and foremost, we are so grateful to everyone who has already purchased a ticket for the 2020 event, and we wanted to give you an update on where we are with this year's planning.



RECORD STORE DAY has been postponed until June due to safety concerns surrounding the coronavirus pandemic. The annual celebration of indie record shops was due to take place on Saturday 18th April has been put back til the 20th June. Talking to *Nightshift* Gary Smith, who owns Truck Store and its sister shop in Witney, Rapture, said: "We were not surprised by the news, obviously. We are a small business and Record Store Day is a big event for us that helps during the lean months. Given what is going on it would be churlish to complain. Our customers have been

fantastic as always and continue to support us. We are doing our best to keep contact areas clean etc. and staff who need to are self isolating. So at the moment it is business as usual - until it isn't!" In the meantime, keep supporting local record stores. Amazon doesn't need any more of your money.

SUPERNORMAL FESTIVAL has delayed its ticket release until April in the wake of uncertainty about coronavirus. A statement on the festival website said: "Supernormal is currently scheduled for 14th-16th August. We've no idea what the future holds, but with the event still 5 months away it feels only right that we should for now press on in a spirit of optimism. With so much still unknown however, we have decided to postpone the release of tickets. We will reassess the situation in April, so look out



"We are monitoring official guidance from the government and the relevant authorities and following the situation closely. It's over four months until the gates open and we are full steam ahead for the 2020 festival. However, for your own peace of mind, if there are instructions not to go ahead, ticket buyers will receive a refund." Across the board tours are being re-arranged, so hopefully we can have a decent, busy late summer and beyond.

This month's *Nightshift* will be online only for the first time in almost 30 years due to the lack of gigs and with most outlets closed. A decision on whether there will be a May issue at all will be taken as and when things become clearer.

In the meantime, many artists have already begun organising online gigs with live streaming. **Kanadia's** launch gig for their new single 'Buried' will be streamed live, possibly from The Bullingdon, on Friday 10th April. **The Young**

Women's Music Project - currently celebrating their 20th anniversary with a series of events - will be hosting workshops and other events online. Keep up to date with all online events on socials.

Not much more to say at this point, since no one knows for sure what the immediate future holds. Hopefully the local music scene will survive intact, albeit severely battered and bruised. Venues and artists will need even more support than ever.

Keep up to date with any developments regarding gigs and festivals with *Nightshift's* Facebook and Twitter - [@nightshiftmag](https://twitter.com/nightshiftmag). And please let us know of any events your organising during this time. Best of luck everyone.



for an update then." Last year's Supernormal sold out in under a day. Keep up to date at www.supernormalfestival.co.uk.

UB40 are the final act to be announced for this year's **Nocturne Live** concert season at **Blenheim Palace**. The British reggae band, featuring original members Ali and Astro, play on **Sunday 21st June**. They will be joined by **Jimmy Cliff** and **Aswad**.

Nocturne Live 2020's other concerts already announced are: David Gray, Lighthouse Family and Nina Pallot on Thursday 18th June; Simple Minds and Deacon Blue on Friday 19th, and an already sold-out show from Lionel Richie on Saturday 20th.

As with all upcoming events, check for updates regarding cancellation or postponement. Tickets and info at www.nocturnelive.com.

INNER PEACE RECORDS release a new compilation album this month. 'Volume II' is a collection of unreleased songs and remixes from the Oxford/London/LA-based producers, MCs and singers. The album features tracks by Tiece, Rawz, King Khan Shamanic, Tang the Pilgrim and Bafijitsu among others; it's available at www.innerpeacerecords.bandcamp.com

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

The Deadbeat Apostles

photo: Jason Warner @ Fyrefly Studios



“UNDOUBTEDLY, I’D TAKE charge. First things first I’d get the lads to get the beers in. Then I’d check my wig and make-up were ready for battle. And I’d die with my cowgirl boots on.

MICHELLE MAYES, CO-LEAD singer with The Deadbeat Apostles is contemplating her plan of action should a zombie apocalypse (or more likely a virulent plague pandemic) break out at one of her band’s celebrated Day of the Deadbeats shows.

WHEN NIGHTSHIFT ASKED the question, it was before Corvid-19 had spread so widely across the globe, put the UK in virtual lockdown and decimated the country’s live music scene. The Deadbeat Apostles were due to headline their next DOTDB event on May 1st at The Bullingdon with Wonderland and Tiger Mendoza. This show has, unsurprisingly, been postponed til June 17th at The Isis Farmhouse. Fingers crossed. What will still happen hopefully is the band will release their new double A-side single ‘I’m a Man’ / ‘Viva la Evolution’, for which the show was the official launch. As with so many artists right now it’s a big blow, but one the Deadbeats are facing down with characteristic defiance and bonhomie. Here is a band that likes to go through life with a beer in one hand, good times on their mind and a good slap for any killjoys or rightwing parasites that get in their way.

THE DEADBEAT APOSTLES are singer Michelle alongside vocal partner Mike Ginger, guitarist Garry Richardson, drummer Alex Ogg, and bassist Hugh Garrety. The original incarnation of the band came together when the various members met during a screening of the Big Star documentary *Nothing Can Hurt Me* at the Ultimate Picture Palace in 2014 and “found that all present were musicians with similarly unfashionable tastes, so it seemed like a good idea to get together for a play.” That early line-up featured Jake Swinhoe on guitar, singer Ali Jones, and guitarist and lap steel player Carlton Mounsher. They debuted at WOOD Festival in 2015 and have subsequently gone on to earn a reputation as one of the liveliest and most raucous bands in Oxfordshire, playing Cornbury, Truck Festival, Halfway to 75 and Common People as well as hosting and headlining their regular Day of the Deadbeats gatherings, free-entry celebrations of good-time live music, particularly roots and Americana, bringing a sense of unity and community to that scene, with the likes of The August List, The Great Western Tears, Ags Connolly and The Shapes among the acts who have shared their stage – originally at the Isis Farmhouse in Ifley where Michell and Mike live, and more recently Tap Social and The Bullingdon.

DESCRIBED IN AN EARLY *Nightshift* review as “where The

Grand Ol’ Opry meets The Harlem Apollo”, The Deadbeat Apostles were a perfectly pitched meeting point of country, rock’n’roll and soul, the music both earthy and grand beyond its means, led by the towering twin talents of Michelle and Mike – a perfect blend of soul and blues. “Few bands have one vocalist with such strength and versatility; that The Deadbeats have two seems a little unfair on everyone else,” concluded our review of their recent ‘Bring Out Your Deadbeats’ EP. Since their formation the band has lost and gained members; pivotal member and songwriter Jake left last year and the band’s sound has subsequently swung further from country towards soul as evidenced on the new singles. Michelle: “We never set out to be that mix of country and soul,” says Michelle as *Nightshift* talks to her, Mike and Garry in the days before the world changed; “but that’s the music we all love. We knew there was a buzzing Americana scene in Oxford at the time we formed and initially we delved into our country passions as this seemed to be what we were watching at gigs and how we were gelling together. It was the most natural starting point. However, with Mike as our main singer there is no getting away from our main calling, which is soul. In the last year we’ve moved much more towards soul and rock and roll; I think we were starting to get thought of as a country band when we are way more than that, especially with Mike’s

cowboy costumes and amazing hats. Just because we like to wear fabulous cowboy hats doesn’t mean we’re country! Ultimately, we just want to blow people away and get them dancing.” After that initial meeting at the UPP, what were the acts the quintet initially bonded over? Michelle: “The original Deadbeats had a vast amount of shared loves and time spent together was often in discussing our musical journeys. We immediately felt like family. Having known Mike since I was 17 it has been fun to share our discoveries together. I still remember the first time we both heard ‘River Deep, Mountain High’ and those wide eyes looking at each other, both being blown away, or Gram Parson in the International Submarine Band and Flying Burrito Brothers, which we played again and again. It’s a really special bond we value immensely. Meeting Jake at 18 was a great thing for Mike and I as we both had no big brother and this was a guy five or so years older than us, who had Jim Jones as a mate and had roadied for the Thee Hypnotics. He introduced us to a wealth of music we had never of known before. If it wasn’t for him we wouldn’t have gone to the Margo Price gig at the Bully a couple of years back. She’s now one of our favourite current artists.” The roots scene in Oxford has been one of the strongest, broadest and most resilient over the past couple of decades. What have been your experiences of it and why does it remain so steadfast? Michelle: “Living in Ifley village our first intro to it all was through the Halfway to 75 Festival; that’s when we realised there was quite an impressive scene going on. The August List; Great Western Tears; Francis Pugh; Ags Connolly – when Mike and I moved here, following Jake from Wycombe, we were like ‘Holy moly, we’ve hit the jackpot with this city’. It was exactly what we needed and wanted at that point in our lives. Whilst the August List are my favourite I have a very large space in my heart for Ags. I’ve made a tit of myself on a number of occasions gushing over him. Plus he’s well fit.” Mike: “I guess the scene is so steadfast because the music itself is pure. Everything in some way derives from the roots scene; nothing can grow without roots!” Garry: “The internet and the explosion in music sharing has moved the goalposts considerably and people are open to so much more now. I’ve definitely earned my stripes in roots music, having busked in the Sugar

Creek Trio and my many years with Swindlestock and The Great Western Tears. The roots rambles were always well received and felt cool, a back to basics approach and building a music community. The Deadbeats have continued that with Day Of The Deadbeats.” **WHILE THEIR AMERICANA** roots are still there for all to hear, Jake’s departure last year provided both challenges and opportunities as well as a shift in style. Michelle: “It had been in the pipeline for a while. I’ve known Jake for over 20 years and while we were gutted it felt like a new beginning and we do feel we are now writing the best material we have ever done. It’s always sad when anyone leaves – I miss Ali Jones terribly. Her bum Theremin was legendary throughout the lands.” Mike: “It’s been difficult when anyone has moved on but we’ve just had to take stock and deal with it. Garry and myself have been writing a lot more together in the last year and that has really forced the change in sound and direction, so out of a negative we got a huge positive.” Garry: “And I’ve just turned up my guitar amp.”

WHAT HASN’T CHANGED IS the phenomenal chemistry between the two singers. While Michelle is decorative, demonstrative and richly soulful, Mike is earthy, gruff and tender – somewhere between Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett. The pair met 25 years ago and have been soulmates in every sense since. Michelle: “I sang as soon as I had a voice. I was told off constantly by my mother for my continuous singing and called fog horn at school. It’s all I have ever wanted to do. I’ll never forget auditioning for a school play aged 14 and singing ‘There’s No Business like Show Business’. Seeing the look on the teachers’ faces made my day. It was like I was home. It comes from somewhere I honestly can’t describe; it is like a force that I don’t have a control over. Mike is the same. Thank God we can indulge ourselves as fuck knows how else we would release our energy. The first time I met him properly was in a club in Wycombe when we were 17 and we immediately started discussing and quoting the movie *True Romance*. I used to sit in his room at his parents’ and we would sing Oasis and Supergrass songs, all the soundtracks of our youth were murdered, but we were learning how to harmonise and connect. Now he has my name tattooed on his arm and we’ve spent the last 25 years drinking, singing, laughing and prancing around like tits together. It’s always slightly annoying that Mike can do a better Tina Turner than me and when recording is literally a one take wonder.”

NEW SINGLE ‘I’M A MAN’ IS ample evidence of Mike’s raw talent as well as the way he and Michelle complement each other, but it also reveals the emotional depth of their lyrics, a tale of a man lost in the modern world. Is that something he can identify with? Mike: “Definitely. I’ve never really found a comfortable place in society. Music and performing is where I’m most comfortable. It’s always been through music that I’ve been able to be the most honest about the way I feel about life.” Michelle: “Personally, I can’t understand anyone who doesn’t feel lost in this world. I feel like an alien who has landed. I look around and say, this cannot be, these people cannot feel like I do or be the same creation as me. Yet they are it seems. Lost yes, but angry too.” ‘I’m a Man’ feels like an heir to The Four Tops’ ‘What is a Man?’; do you think we’re finally seeing an end to outmoded gender expectations and clichés? Mike: “‘I’m a Man’ is directly asking the question ‘what is it to be a man in modern society?’ The idea that we are one world, one people kinda dismisses out-dated preconceptions of what it is to be ‘a man’. Surely strong, reliable, dependable are just good values of being a decent human being. As Irvine Welsh in *Trainspotting* once said: ‘One day there will be no men, no women, just wankers!’” Michelle: “I think it’s important to note that the very essence of ‘I’m a Man’ is that it deals with everything about gender, self-identification and how this does or doesn’t affect our lives. We hope people realise all the Deadbeats are feminists and this song is about the need to be supportive of everyone and their decisions.” **A MORE OVERTLY POLITICAL** Deadbeats song is ‘Muddy Creek’, which made *Nightshift’s* end of year Top 25. Are the Deadbeats a particularly political band? Mike: “It’s a protest against narcissistic, self-serving, areshole politics, wherever it exists. These are dark times that we are currently living in and we just need to stick together and look after each other. This rightwing ‘I’m all right Jack’ bullshit rhetoric is for the birds, man, and we need to let these wankers know that we will not roll over!” Michelle: “We definitely are a political band. We wanted that song to be our ‘A Change is Gonna Come’: one of my favourite tunes. It’s impossible to not be affected by the turn the country and world has seen in

the last few years; I try not to be too much of a defeatist but I find it more difficult every day. Human nature can be a very sad state of affairs.” What hill would you die on? “I wouldn’t die on a hill; I can’t bear walking upwards. I reckon I might go Hank Williams style in the back of a taxi that’s taken me to the top of the hill. That said, we set out to put on a show – not to be up there with a placard. We looked around and thought, why does no one around us dress up like Bowie anymore or create theatre with their music? We wanted to shout our message but whilst wearing a sequined cape and leopard skin boots.” **AT THE SAME TIME AS** sending out political and social messages, The Deadbeats are very much a good time band. When they perform live they give it their all. It’s fair to say they like a drink or two. Michelle: “I’m the worst for the overindulging prior to being on. I think it’s because I have nothing to carry or set up and tend to keep away from that side of things as it bores

the shit out of me and I am crap at it, which means I am straight to the bar and before you know it its 10pm and I’ve had six pints. My main problem is that when I’ve had a few my inner Jim Morrison comes out, I start thinking I am the Lizard King and can sing really deeply and the band are like, ‘Oh god – Shell’s gone Morrison’. Deep down, really all I wanna be is Jim Morrison at his very, very worst.” Mike: “I certainly like to be slightly oiled before going onstage; around 3-4 pints is the golden number but it’s a tightrope, my friend. One too many and carnage can ensue.” Garry: “Playing drunk does add a sense of danger.” And what of your audience? Michelle: “Oh god, yes! I want people naked at the front, licking the stage. I want urine being chucked around and dancing loons cascading in all directions in front of us whilst we prance around like maniacs inciting a riot. However, this is Oxford – if we get a clap and a cheer we feel like we’re winning.” **DEPENDING ON HOW THE** coronavirus pandemic pans out in the coming month, the next Day of the Deadbeats show will be at The Isis in June. The original intention of the DOTDB events was, as the band explain, to be “a cross between *The Last Waltz* and *The Rock and Roll Circus*”; what is it about *The Last Waltz* in particular that makes it such

an enduring touchstone for music culture? Mike: “It’s got nearly every great artist of the era on the same bill. It shows how greatly respected The Band were to attract all those amazing musicians. It’s fantastic to see them all working together in one place.” Do you think you’ve succeeded in that aim? Michelle: “It’s been everything we have ever wanted it to be. It has introduced us to great music and we’ve made some beautiful friends from it. It is the best decision we ever made and we feel blessed. It’s hard bloody work, mind. Luckily, I am shit at anything practical and if I try and help moving anything it’s usually the wrong thing or to the wrong place. Maybe deep down I do this psychologically so I don’t have to do it. It’s a bit like Mike doing the washing up – do it bad so you’re not asked again.” **THE DOTB SHOWS,** particularly in their early days at The Isis Farmhouse, had a great vibe that managed to capture the best of festival and club gigs. Beyond these The Deadbeats have been festival regulars around the county; is there anything about playing them as opposed to club/pub gigs that brings out the best in the band? Michelle: “The change in space is the biggest change to the feeling of the performance. Not having to worry about being hit in the face by Hugh’s bass, falling backwards on Alex’s drums or Mike’s arm knocking me out as he flings it around like Liberace. That can be a very freeing feeling; it means we can prance around even more than normal I tend to lose myself completely when on stage and having that space can be very liberating. However, the more intimate stages feel better for me despite this; I love to look round and have everyone right there, my boys – a cheeky wink to G bomb, smack on the arse for Hugh, tongue out for Alex or vocal and interaction with Mike – that’s when it’s really special.” Are The Deadbeats a band for dark, drunken nights or summer afternoons? Michelle: “I don’t tend to come alive until at least 3pm. I vowed when I was a teenager that I would never have a job or fixed abode and instead roam the land as a poet; I feel much more at home in the evening. It’s only when it starts to get light and the fear starts setting in that you think, okay, time for bed.” Mike: “We’re probably better suited to dark, drunken nights to be honest. We like to tear it up! Garry: “Very dark, very drunken nights.”

‘I’m a Man’ / ‘Viva la Evolution’ are released on the 1st May. Check facebook.com/deadbeatapostles for news updates and future shows.

RELEASED

THE BOBO

‘Fun. Songs Funeral Songs in Disguise’

(Self released)

The same week this full EP debut from The Bobo arrived the world lost Opal and Mazzy Star guitarist David Roback. Roback was an absolute master of creating space: a hugely underrated commodity in any song but one which allows the magic to happen. In the case of Opal and Mazzy Star that magic came in the form of singers Kendra Smith and Hope Sandoval.

The Bobo knows that space is the place. There’s a haunting sparseness about these five songs, but not a molecule of that empty air is wasted. Take opener ‘Fool’. Musically it’s little more than a John Carpenter-style synth pulse interrupted by some barely-there electronic plasma, but in between these stark, dark towers, The Bobo’s voice wafts and weaves, a wraithlike presence, calling the listener to, where – sanctuary, or the crashing rocks? ‘Dream of You’ is more spacious yet, the filigrees of guitar reminiscent of Robin Guthrie’s masterful restraint on This Mortal Coil’s version of ‘Song to the Siren’, its presence almost peripheral as you concentrate on the soothing/ghostly vocals but absolutely integral to the song’s whole.

PANDAPOPALYPSE

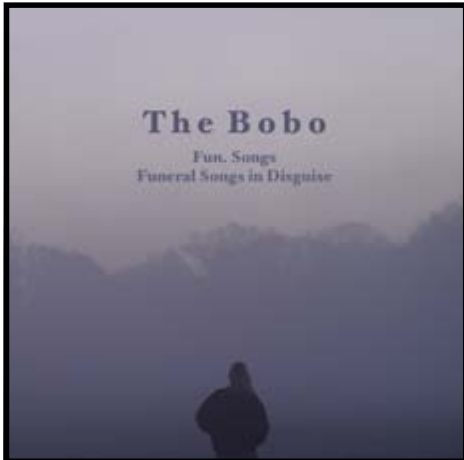
‘Now’

(All Will Be Well)

Let’s not fixate too much on Pandapocalypse’s name - one they might come to regret in the future. It does at least allow them the scope to call this EP ‘Now’, and to use some ‘Apocalypse Now’-type typography on the sleeve.

Four tracks here in the vein of an outer reverberation of the early 2000s morphing of indie, pop, sheer groovin’ fun and a kitchen sink overflowing with myriad influence. Bands like !!! and The Go! Team laid down a framework for somewhat arch rhythmic workouts, overlaid with joyous/known/crazed-sounding vocals and a sense of cheeky daftness. Pandapocalypse cite big beat as a tag for their music; that’s not so evident, except in attitude – a mashing-up of beats, jolliness and silliness.

‘Do You Wanna’ has a chant-along lyrical hook, peppered into bassy indie-pop-funk and electro-tinged chaos that, in the right light, sounds like it could be a lost John Hughes soundtrack outtake. ‘Make Plans’ ups the pace into a sax-ish frenzy, with echoes of the post-punk funk of Pigbag or, if you’re in the right frame of mind, X-Ray Spex. ‘Rhythm Feels Like Home’ could be a low-key Confidence Man album track, albeit one that – like the other three songs here – is slightly hamstrung by a



‘Sprinter (At Last)’, in collaboration with Kid Kin, was *Nightshift*’s Top Track last issue and we revelled in its serenity as the world seemed set to collapse into panic and pandemonium, and yet it’s the most densely packed song here, full of steely, buzzing synths, but the borderline desolate ‘At Last’ is The Bobo at her most stripped back, the guitar taking an even further backseat as she croons sleepily, breathlessly, as if the song itself is fading into the ether. This isn’t an EP of instant pop songs; there are no choruses or hooks, but there is a whole well of carefully orchestrated space, a web of carefully stitched musical silk. We imagine David Roback would have approved.

Dale Kattack

buttoned-up vocal style; one that would benefit from a greater sense of abandon. ‘Take Me Home’ puts everything together to bring the EP to a satisfyingly rich close.

If Pandapocalypse can pull this stuff off live, and if they can perhaps up the chaotic/fun-at-any-cost ante a little, ‘Now’ suggests a band that have tons o’fun to offer.

Simon Minter

KANADIA

‘Buried’

(Self released)

It is tempting, when listening to this new single from Kanadia – their first release since their debut album a year ago – to imagine sparks, venom and blood flying around the recording studio, sounding a bit like a cross between The Manic Street Preachers and Guns’n’Roses, but with a strong hint of Scotland’s punk stars The Skids in the background.

The song is nice and fuzzy around the edges too, with a fantastic, fresh and live sound that’s very crisp. There is a sharp, obnoxious central riff that pokes you hard in the chest; the lyrics are hard to decipher but tasty enough that you immediately hit play once again, to hear what you’ve missed.

Jonathan Robert Muirhead

Sponsored by



VIENNA DITTO

‘Flat Earth’

(Self released)

Musically, this album – the Oxford-Reading duo’s semi-posthumous second – could have been created any time within the last forty years. The “bleak, dystopian vision of the future” was actually recorded four to six years ago, but its release is alarmingly prescient; it makes glorious yet uncomfortable listening. It exemplifies the late monk-author Thomas Merton’s dictum that art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time. It’s a multilayered, complex work, seemingly conceived both lyrically and musically with the intention that engaging with it could help make some sense of what’s currently happening around us – but also, conversely, comfort us in some way. Familiar and unusual contrasts and juxtapositions in both – be they key changes, their trademark spooky half tones or the bipartite nature of tracks like the discordant and syncopated ‘Come Running’, which transforms into a *Blade Runner*-era Hans Zimmer-esque instrumental halfway through – evoke anxiety as well as calm. Quite some feat.

The sound design plays a substantial part of this effect; the use of reverb sometimes makes Hattie Taylor’s vocals sound angelic and ethereal, sometimes as if she’s claustrophobically singing in your ear; sometimes Nigel Firth’s instruments sound uncomfortably close, sometimes distant and distorted. On ‘The Drum’ the accompaniment seems to menacingly envelop and capture the lyrics. There’s less sonic trickery on the plaintive ‘Someone’, a gospel-structured, deceptively earnest torch song, and in the frantic electro-rockabilly of ‘Send That Man to Jail’, the track closest to the spirit of their live performances, but still something sinister lurks.

By being resolute in their identity, with this album Vienna Ditto have, by design or inevitable accident, expertly illustrated the zeitgeist. The process of making it might have broken them, but they’ll be belatedly launching it with a rescheduled show in October (virus allowing); if this really is the last we’ll hear from them, they’ll have departed in triumph.

Kirsten Etheridge



TIGER MENDOZA

‘Gold Nugget Morning’ / ‘Damaged Goods’

(All Will Be Well)

Oxford’s King of Collaborations moves ever further from his (dis)comfort zone with this double A-side vinyl release. On ‘Golden Nugget Morning’ Tiger-in-Chief Ian de Quadros teams up with Deadbeat Apostles singer Mike Ginger, and that band’s erstwhile guitarist Jake Swinhoe for some raucous electro-driven blues – Tiger Mendoza’s more typical atmospheric synths replaced by driving, coruscating Hammond organ and electronic horns. It’s hard to get a handle on on first listen, being so different to even the eclectic fare we’re used to from him, sounding more like someone filled the James Taylor Quartet up with Jack Daniels and took them to a bar to hang out with Joe Cocker and The Black Crowes; it’s brash, raw and properly funky but if it jars slightly on first listen, once you retune your head it’s an effective power play as well as yet another display of Tiger Mendoza’s versatility.

A complete switch in mode and mood for ‘Damaged Goods’, Ian joined once again by long-time collaborator Asher Dust for a track that’s rather more at repose than the pair usually conjure in each other’s company, a swimming bed of dappled electronic chime and guitar shimmer over which Asher repeats the line “All of us are damaged goods” in a manner that suggests he’s more than comfortable with it.

Dale Kattack



JONNY RACE

‘The Day Before It Happened’

(Self released)

Beware the growers. You know, those albums you play through a couple of times and say “ Meh, that’s okay”, and then later, when you come to review it properly find yourself welcoming back like an old friend, and they end up staying over on your couch and eating out of the fridge.

It’s like that with Rufus Wainwright albums and Jonny Race has a lot of Rufus about his style, especially in the poetic, call-of-the-wild wistfulness of opening track ‘The Need To Fly’. His voice on ‘Always Let Me Go’ also reminds us of a dialled-down Marc Almond embracing a cafe society jazziness, and again on title track ‘The Day Before It Happened’, which becomes as pregnant with the unanswered question as its title suggests, before sailing off in a superb wash of sax and ending abruptly.

Elsewhere; ‘Sleep’ has the world weary intonations of Damon Albarn’s Post-Blur period; ‘Are You Ready For Love’ charms with its Duane Eddy guitaring and bossa nova shuffle, while ‘Make You Feel’ is an older 2014 number from his days as front man for his band Echoboomer given a total spring clean and a Febreeze-like squirt of female backing vocals.

‘The Day Before It Happened’ is a fine solo debut, a measured culmination of Jonny’s life

journey so far, from his birth home in Hull, via the Birmingham Music Conservatoire and on to parenthood in Oxfordshire. Sometimes you wish for a bit more heat, a key change, some redder blood maybe, yet when it glides to a finish you sense his diplomatic restraint is probably the album’s emotional strength.

Paul Carrera

LITTLE BROTHER

ELI

‘Giving You Up’

(Self released)

Having grown up exposed to disco by my grandparents it feels a bit strange to see its revival in the cutting edge clubs scene, revitalised by house energy, rather than merely kept alive at kitsch retro nights.

Odder still to find rock bands digging into its vibe, but Little Brother Eli, previously better known as a funk-edged dance-rock act, here go the full Chic on new single ‘Giving You Up’, not least on Adam Stow’s high-wired guitar solo towards the end.

Rock purists took against disco to a venomous degree back in the 1970s so it’s good to see that particular genre wall kicked to the ground and if Little Brother Eli remain rather more on the rock side of the rubble, they know a groove when they hear one and sound dead set on filling dancefloors rather than stamping down on monitors.

Bekti Vassar



GIG GUIDE

APRIL

Following government directives to avoid the spread of coronavirus, all pubs and venues are closed and all live music is cancelled until further notice.

Hopefully normal noisy service will be resumed sooner rather than later.

In the meantime please do what you can to support local independent businesses and grassroots music as much as you can. They need you now more than ever. **Truck Store** and **Rapture** can deliver your new music needs via phone and online ordering, while **Bandcamp** is a great artist-friendly download and ordering service.

Check social media for live streams of gigs, as well as rearranged tours and shows. Let us know about your streaming events via Twitter - @nightshiftmag.

Stay well everyone and hopefully see you again soon.

AT CROSSTOWN CONCERTS OUR JOB IS TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER THROUGH MUSIC, AND WE ARE EXPLORING EVERY AVAILABLE OPTION TO MAKE FUTURE CONCERTS HAPPEN AT A TIME THAT IS SAFE FOR EVERYONE.

RIGHT NOW, THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF OUR CUSTOMERS, ARTISTS AND STAFF IS OUR PRIMARY FOCUS. WE ARE IN CONTACT WITH HEALTH AUTHORITIES AND THE GOVERNMENT AND WILL CONTINUE TO ACT ON THEIR ADVICE.

THE FESTIVAL AND CONCERT SCENE, LIKE MANY INDUSTRIES, IS FACING A CHALLENGING TIME.

NOW, MORE THAN EVER, WE NEED TO HELP EACH OTHER DURING THIS TIME OF UNCERTAINTY.

💜 FILL UP YOUR AUTUMN DIARY!
BOOK SOME TICKETS FOR A GIG IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR.

🧡 SEARCH FOR NEW MUSIC ONLINE.
SHOUT ABOUT YOUR FAVOURITE NEW ACTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

💚 TREAT YOURSELF TO SOME MERCHANDISE.
BUY A HOODIE OR A RECORD DIRECT FROM THE ARTIST.

WE HOPE THAT AT SOME POINT IN THE NEAR FUTURE WE CAN ALL RETURN TO NORMALITY, BRING EACH OTHER TOGETHER AND CELEBRATE WITH SOME AMAZING LIVE MUSIC FROM THE LIKES OF:

ANOTHER SKY BAMBARA JAMIE CULLUM JFDR
LLOYD COLE MELT YOURSELF DOWN NAP EYES PALE WAVES
PAUL WELLER PORRIDGE RADIO ROBERT FORSTER
SQUID THE HOWL AND THE HUM THE LOVELY EGGS
THE NIGHT CAFE WARMDUSCHER WILLIE J HEALEY

UNTIL THAT TIME COMES, PLEASE STAY SAFE, BE KIND, AND LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER



CROSSTOWN
CONCERTS



@CROSSTOWN_LIVE
@CROSSTOWNCONCERTS
CROSSTOWNCONCERTS
CROSSTOWNCONCERTS.COM
INFO@CROSSTOWNCONCERTS.COM
TICKETS FROM SEETICKETS.COM



EMMA HUNTER / THE AUTUMN SAINTS / DANDELIONS

O2 Academy

An early start to tonight’s gig means we only catch the second half of Dandelions’ set but there’s some promise here, capable at their best of conjuring strong melodies that come with a little of The Byrds’ jangle and manage to sound both lovelorn and heroic. The Autumn Saints are that place where rootsy Americana meets grandiose 80s stadium rock, and by god it works. American ex-pat singer and bassist Britt is an animated rock’n’roll preacher on

stage, possessed of a powerful, soulful voice, while next to him heavily-bearded guitarist Dave is a picture of understatement, barely moving but bringing elaborate spangled melodies to play on the songs. There’s an air of U2’s pomp about them at times, though ‘Littlewood State’ is closer to The Gin Blossoms and the trio’s epic emotive sound has a similar sense of dark, atmospheric euphoria to it as cult gothic country legends 16 Horsepower.

Emma Hunter has a simply superb voice. She could perform a capella and slay the room but she takes her voice to unusual places and makes the most of inventive use of a loop pedal to add extra dimensions to songs in a similar way to Kerry Andrews’ You Are Wolf, cleverly bridging the divide between folk music and electronic. Elsewhere Emma and drummer Tom Bruce dive into Angelo Badalamenti’s unnervingly serene soundtracks to David Lynch movies, or kick up a

flamenco flourish before swimming in some midnight surf pop, Emma managing to channel Chris Isaak’s sparse guitarng while singing like a sci-fi jazz siren. She’s as authoritative between songs as she is when singing and playing, her day job as a primary school teacher lending her a deadpan don’t-mess humour. The high point of her set – and the entire evening – is ‘Snake’, from her debut EP, a towering song that manages to be simultaneously languorous and imperious, a song that sounds like it’s all alone on a dusty, deserted highway in the dead of night and marks Emma Hunter out as a genuinely striking talent on the local scene. Dale Kattack

PANDAPOPALYPSE / EB / ENJOYABLE LISTENS

The Port Mahon

Friday the 13th is the day shit got real but tonight’s gig – the launch show for Pandapocalypse’s new, appropriately-titled ‘Pandapocalypse Now’ EP – is the perfect antidote to the doom and gloom of the outside world. Enjoyable Listens’ set is an unmitigated joy: preposterous maybe, daft even, but exactly what pop fun should be. A one-man band featuring a guy called Luke, who looks, dresses and often sounds, like a young Tony Hadley, and his phone. It used to be a duo but Luke tells us in genuinely hilarious fashion, how that fell apart. Occasionally the set threatens to fall apart when his phone fails him or he presses the wrong button, but as he hams everything up, cuts shape like Bowie, sings like a tortured lounge crooner or stentorian new romantic dandy and throws himself into his performance in a manner that puts Future Islands’ Samuel T Herring to shame, his shimmering, 80s-styled electro pop has the entire room grinning from ear to ear. Poet/singer/rapper EB Hill had the same effect on the audience when we saw her at Ritual Union last year and tonight provides further relief from pandemic panic, her sequined one-piece suit more than a match for Enjoyable Listens’ sartorial elegance. Equally whimsical, witty, cynical and

inventive, EB switches from oddball electro-pop-performance poetry on ‘La Criox’ to trap bangers – set highlight ‘Rodeo Queen’ – while exuding good vibes and the feeling that she’s enjoying this even more than we are. “Dance your cares away, worry’s for another day” was a choice quote from Pandapocalypse’s interview in last month’s *Nightshift* and feels even more appropriate tonight. From the off the message seems to be: we might all be holed up at home for a while so best make the most of tonight, from the squelchy synth-pop funbundle of ‘Take Me Home’, to the brilliantine ‘Glitter & Gems’ via motivational stomps like ‘Make Plans’. It’s not often – or ever really – that a band can remind us of Gloria Estefan and Chumbawamba in a single song, but then few bands could end their set with a raucous cover of ‘Ghostbusters’ and make it sound like a clarion call of defiance. They cover ‘Tequila’ too and it’s a perfect choice: a musical antidote to all that worry, and a decent disinfectant when all the handwash has run out. A night to cast out the darkness and remember to enjoy every living moment. Dale Kattack

ISLET Florence Park Community Centre

Along with Vic 20, Chip Taylor, Bellowhead, Jurassic 5 and Fixers (non-wanker version), Islet gave us one of the truly classic Truck Festival sets, over a decade ago. But, whilst that gig was a fractal disco performed by howling cultists, a psychedelic percussive clatter apparently intended to deter (or possibly invoke) demonic intervention, over the years they have slimmed in size, and become more refined. The ritualistic impetus has survived though, as they enter the venue tonight from the back, prancing lightly and tolling sweetly sonorous bells, the effect of which is both fairy wonderland and Kesey mushroom fayre. It’s certainly not the sort of thing you usually witnesses in an old-fashioned community centre, just next to the dartboard. Euphonious though this is, we are glad when they take to the stage and prove they can be more than stoned and twee. In fact, so sharp are they that they are able to salvage a potentially atmosphere-killing technical glitch with some smart improvised patter, and the rest of the performance is no less focussed. Islet clearly have a love for the brief pop song form, no matter

how obliquely they approach it, but despite this they share a trait with many krautrock acts, being simultaneously warm and organic, and sleek and other-worldly. They’re proud to tell us that they’re soon to be supporting Foals but they have more in common with an avuncular Glass Animals. The clipped bass, which could have come from an unknown northern soul album by The Free Design, and the loose grooves on the stand-up drumkit make some of the tunes sound like early Ninja Tunes tracks refashioned from moss and honymous, whereas ethereal moments have more in common with one of Aphex Twin’s selected ambient works. There’s even a strange piece with lovely, liturgical vocals and cheeky synth, as if the Catholic church had created a new ceremony based on The Pepper’s novelty hit ‘Pepperbox’. Indeed the entire show, whilst never being precious, has a wonderfully hieratic feel. Perhaps everyone at the gig is married now. Perhaps we’re all converts, and just don’t yet know what to. Perhaps, at the very least, the next darts league fixture might feel that tiny bit more significant. David Murphy

THE BIG MOON / PRIMA QUEEN O2 Academy

We’d never heard of Prima Queen before tonight, so we’re seriously taken aback, both by the unusually loud cheers that greet them, and the rapturous reception that they receive throughout their set. The band is based around dual vocalists Louise Macphail, a Bristolian, and Kristin McFadden, from Chicago; they and their three bandmates join us dressed in matching Stetsons, which is appropriate as their opener is US-themed second single ‘Brownstone’. To say they are accomplished is an understatement; in all honesty this is the best all round performance we’ve seen so far this year. The dual vocal dynamic is reminiscent of First Aid Kit, but the sound is a lot harder, and it has the big radio friendliness of someone like Tom Petty or REM. Elsewhere they mix sweetness – a fan girl moment ‘fessing up that they are huge Big Moon fans, and innocent tales of kissing in their first single ‘Milk Teeth’ – with the caustic snarl of lyrics like “dirty in your yellow eye”. Some find indeed. The Big Moon have nothing to prove, so they are relaxed (maybe too relaxed, as lead singer Juliette Jackson spills wine and coke into her pedal board mid set). They are

promoting what is an almost perfect pop set in their second album ‘Walking Like We Do’; eight songs tonight are drawn from it, including both sides of recent double-A single ‘Take A Piece’ / ‘Your Light’. Add to that six songs from their more edgy Mercury-nominated debut and you have quite a night. As ever the band do their instrument rotation duties with aplomb, including a flute duet intro to ‘Barcelona’, and elsewhere a trumpet solo. The high points though are the perfect four-way harmonies on ‘Why’, the, as ever, explosive ‘Bonfire’, and an extraordinary cover of Fatboy Slim’s ‘Praise You’: somehow near true to the original. During ‘Cupid’ the floor is bouncing to breaking point. In tough times this is a really feelgood set, something accentuated during ‘Waves’ when Prima Queen re-join the band on stage to sing along word perfect. It’s astonishing how far The Big Moon have come and their strong back catalogue means that they already have a lasting legacy, but it’s exciting to await whatever comes next... they’re about to go interstellar. Mark Taylor

31 JUL – 2 AUG 2020

TRUCK FESTIVAL

HILL FARM OX13 6AB

Bombay Bicycle Club

THE KOOKS

CAT FISH —AND THE— BOTTLEMEN

BLOSSOMS THURSDAY HEADLINER

THE HIVES

DMA'S

PALE WAVES • SUNDARA KARMA • EASY LIFE

LA ROUX • SHAME • THE PIGEON DETECTIVES

AND MANY MORE

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

WWW.TRUCKFESTIVAL.COM



FOFOULAH Tap Social

Fofoulah means “it’s there” in the Wolof language of Senegal, Gambia and Mauritania and the band are very much “there” tonight. Before they come on, we notice Wolof Sabar drums standing prominently at the front of the stage, silent but ready. The rhythms and energy of Kaw Secka’s Sabar and his smaller Tama “talking drum” are at the heart of much of Fofoulah’s music, which from their beginnings in 2011 has also had elements of electronica, dub, rap, improv and afro-beat. (Throughout their set videos of Fela Kuti are projected onto Tap Social’s back wall).

The band’s music has evolved since and currently has an increased emphasis on dub and electronica while, and this is impressive, bringing together musics of West Africa, East London and Bristol, not as a mix but holistically. In their sheer propulsive power they’re similar to The Comet Is Coming. Fofoulah’s engine room is the harnessing together of Kaw Seka’s Sabar and Jonnie Brierly’s heavy electric bass lines; this is punctured by stabbing bursts from Tom Challenger on synth and sax, and Pete Stevenson’s jangly guitar. Superb drummer Dave Smith

– of Robert Plant’s Sensational Shape Shifters – responds to the Wolof rhythms with everything from improv to dance beats. Kaw Secka’s half spoken, half chanted Wolof dub vocals contrast with the band’s other Wolof vocalist Batch Gueye, who is a singer with a rich baratone voice that can soar beautifully like that of African music icon Baaba Maal. He’s written some of the songs and like folk star Seth Lakeman has the knack of making them sound as if they first saw the light of day decades ago. Gueye has the characteristic flat dreads and patchwork shirt of a member of the Senegalese Sufi Baye Fall, and brings a sacred feel

to some of the music including the encore which honours his spiritual leader. Also he dances spectacularly, going into the middle of the crowd to do so. The band have a song paying tribute to photographer Khajida Seye who died in Grenfell Tower and there’s a love song which shows that when they want, they can do mellow and wistful as well as anyone. Fofoulah’s musical mission though is, as Kaw Secka chants, to “Shake it all up”, and they do. It’s a highly sophisticated shaking that also succeeds in sending the crowd into the night exhilarated and elated. It’s been special catching them in such an intimate venue. *Colin May*

BRITE SPIRES / HOAX PARADE / VALIANT EFFORTS The Wheatsheaf

The very nature of Gappy Tooth Industries nights is that they’re a grab bag of music. So when offered a bag of CDs to take a lucky dip at when you arrive at the venue, it’d be rude not to enter into the spirit of the whole evening. Coming away with a copy of ‘Beatles Live at The BBC’, we approve of greatly of this practice, although quite how it’s going to work when people start turning their noses up at CDs is anyone’s guess. Can you lucky dip for streams? You can try, but it’d only be a valiant effort. Which leads nicely into tonight’s first act, Valiant Efforts. With defeat at the very heart of their name, it’d be reasonable to expect a series of nearly-but-not-quite songs. Their first tune is cute with a sweet hook but with lyrics like “I can’t get over you” it would appear that they also have heartbreak in their arsenal. It’s easy to miss this aspect of them however, as all this sorrow is wrapped up light and dainty tunes that remind us of the tweeness of Belle & Sebastian.

Stamping all over the light touches of Valiant Efforts come Hoax Parade. Sounding like the product of a lifetime spent listening to the Velvet Underground, Pavement and The Fall, they are apparently a distillation of early-90s alternative rock, before it all started to go dark and dead. Woozy riffs, jangling guitars and vocals that switch between the barely-arsed and almost (but not quite) angry, it’s all here. Maybe the alt-rock revival starts here. Someone call Malkmus. Completing tonight’s eclectic mix are Brite Spires, who despite lack of light during their set, turn out not to be a goth synth-wave band, but instead a bright and joyful pop experience. Oay, so at times it threatens to all fall apart, and occasionally it’s a little bit flat, but when it all comes together it sounds glorious. There’s one moment during their set where they manage to channel Blondie, Madonna, and er...Vengaboys, which is surprisingly far better than that might sound. *Sam Shepherd*

LIGETI QUARTET, LAURA JURD & SOOSAN LOLAVAR Holywell Music Room

Tonight brings another challenging but richly rewarding presentation from Oxford Contemporary Music in a venue that, typically for OCM, could have been made for the event. The Ligeti Quartet are a young London-based ensemble embracing the avant garde and lesser travelled paths of what can be achieved with two violins, a viola and a cello. They kick off with a piece by John Adams, one of the more accessible modern classical composers, if you’re approaching from a rock or pop direction. To steal a phrase from the latter disciplines, this lot are incredibly tight, but music of this ilk leaves no room for sloppiness: you play it with total precision and commitment or you don’t play it at all. Shortly they are joined by Laura Jurd, the composer and trumpet and synth player whose work in jazz band Dinosaur led to a Mercury Prize nomination in 2017. Here they play two movements of a work written as a commission by Anna Meredith; the first is jarring and seems willfully difficult but the second has a languorous feel that conjures up the feel of late night New York jazz bar. Next up is Soosan Lolavar who plays a duet with Jurd on a santoor. This Iranian instrument is primarily a hammered dulcimer, but she plays it by drawing a loose

string through its tuned strings to produce a sound that is harsh and discordant but nicely offset by the fine trumpet work. Then the quartet join Jurd for another of her compositions, this one brand new, that sees them plucking and strumming their instruments in a rhythmic work that’s reminiscent of Philip Glass, only rather more confrontational. After a bold and confident solo improvisation Jurd plays a final number before leaving the quartet to play Ayanna Witter-Johnson’s ‘Mento Mood’, a more accessible, even tuneful, piece that features more plucked violins and the four slapping their instruments and humming, though it works better when they return to playing more conventionally, especially the rather catchy central motif. To finish, all six players tackle Lolavar’s ‘I am the Spring, You are the Earth’. This time she plays the santoor more conventionally with tiny hammers, though the string parts are more dark and powerful, the whole piece make for some rather uneasy listening. Overall the night is a triumph, even if difficult to explain quite how and why. But sometimes that less travelled path is the right one to follow. *Art Lagun*

TEMPLES / EASTER ISLAND STATUES / SELF HELP O2 Academy

Self Help warm up proceedings with a healthy dose of slacker punk. They cross several sub-genres including US pre-grunge (Sonic Youth / J Mascis); post punk (Mark E Smith / Fat Whites), and punk-folk (Crass), but their set highlight is the psycho-punk speedball that is ‘Get On With It’, an energy rush straight to the grey cells. Easter Island Statues kick off with last year’s single ‘Skeleton Quay’, with its infectiously scratchy, jangly guitar and an up-down tempo reminiscent of Albini-era Wedding Present. They follow up with ‘Street Static’ which has a spaghetti western bounce to it and ends with a generous buzz of feedback. Incredibly we learn tonight is their new drummer’s first show; you’d never have known, he’s tight as hell. There are strong pop sensibilities throughout the rest of the set: think XTC, Gang of Four and Elvis Costello processed through top-end US indie, and the set ends with a tremble of trumpet announcing their triumphant departure: sterling stuff. Temples take to the stage into a cloud of dry ice and an intro tape of canned applause and cheering. You’ve got to admire their sense of irony; it’s clearly a nod to the elephant in the room: the albatross-like nature of their stunning debut album ‘Sun Structures’, which will surely eclipse (sorry) anything that follows. They needn’t worry; tonight’s set draws equally from that debut

and their latest release, ‘Hot Motion’, with just a couple of dips into second long player ‘Volcano’, and the crowd seem to be equally divided between long-term fans wanting to hear their old favourites, and newer – and younger – attendees who seem to know most of the lyrics to the new songs. During recent single ‘Hot Motion’ there is a baffling crowd interaction that the band cannot ignore: all around the venue people are under-lighting their pints with mobile phones; it’s the 2020s equivalent of 80s lighters! Tonight’s highlight is of course ‘Shelter for Life’; you can never grow tired of that riff, truly a song that will remain a classic for years to come. The band know this and emboldened frontman James Bagshaw looks rightly proud of this, not embarrassed by the fact that many have come for this moment alone. The encore brings a sterling twofer of an encore in ‘Sun Structures’ and ‘Mesmerise’, both great songs but enhancing the feeling that Temples are best when they are all about atmosphere. At the end of the day Temples are consistently great live, no doubt, and who knows, if they persist then they may yet still one day lift that millstone with another groundbreaking album; If not then they will have still have left a lasting piece of great art. *Mark Taylor*



Master Rhythm STUDIOS

- Rehearsals
- Drum Rooms
- Drum Hire
- Tuition

Online Calander at:
masterrhythm.co.uk/booking
FB: @masterrhythmoxford
Contact: info@masterrhythm.co.uk
Or call 07765224245



WeGot Tickets

Proud supporters of the Oxford music scene since 2002.

An award-winning, Oxford based ticketing solution for event organisers. For professionals, hobbyists, part-timers and first-timers.

Buy tickets → www.WeGotTickets.com
Ticket your event → clients.WeGotTickets.com



riverman records

I'm a streetwalking
cheetah with a heart
Full of napalm,
I'm a runaway son of the
nuclear A-bomb.

153 Walton St, Jericho, OX1 2JH

Ox3 Audio

Audio & Sound Engineer Hire

Events, Festivals, Bands, Weddings

call or email Spike for a quote

07752 887737

ox3audio@gmail.com



SMART GUITARS

REPAIR ...
RESTORE ...
REBORN

Guitar and amp repairs, custom modifications and accessories

DAVE SMART • 07710 216368
dave@smartguitars.co.uk
www.smartguitars.co.uk

TIM TURAN’S SESSION NOTES

Part Fifteen
“Mastering” (part 5: Using EQ)

Hello to all those still alive. This month I’ll look at the various uses of EQ in mastering. Mastering essentially is the art of getting the optimum sound out of a stereo track. EQ, in my opinion, is the most important tool because you are shaping the tone of the music across the entire audible spectrum. Typically this range is from 20Hz at the bottom end up to 20Khz in the top end. The difference in sonic quality between tracks destined for an album can be huge, even when the tracks are recorded in the same studio by the same engineer with the same band playing the same instruments! Often these days artists are more likely to release single tracks, one at a time online, using streaming or download platforms. The pressure to have a consistent sound across an album simply doesn’t exist with this scenario.

So, where do we begin? It’s the first impression that is the most important when I’m playing a track for the first time. Is it too bright? Is it muddy? Can you hear all the detail present in the mix? Does the bass dominate the whole mix, etc. One of the most common requests I get is to do with vocal levels. In a song, the vocal is God. There is no other element that is more important, period. When mastering you can raise or lower the vocal level in a mix by zoning in on the fundamental pitch. You need to have a very narrow bandwidth (or ‘Q’ factor) and to know what key the song is in. It is then a matter of raising or lowering the gain of the EQ to sit the vocal more comfortably in the mix. This practice is quite tricky to get right and really I should be sending the band away to get a new mix with the vocal levels adjusted to suit the track. This, unfortunately, is not always possible so it will be up to the mastering engineer to save the day.

The key of the song is vital when it comes to choosing the frequencies to work on. EQ’ing a track in the key of A for example means I’ll be using 55Hz (or multiples thereof) in the case of the bass elements of a mix. Each octave is a doubling of the frequency so in the key of A it will be 55Hz, 110Hz, 220Hz and so on all the way up to the top. This is a very powerful

technique when EQ’ing music and it’s something I discovered myself over 30 years ago. You can of course use this technique whilst recording and mixing too.

Balancing the tone of a track is a little more complicated due to the inherent nature of different genres of music. Hip hop and rap tracks for example rely on excessive bass frequencies, as opposed to folk music which tends to focus on the midrange. EQ can be split into different ranges thus: sub bass, bass, lower mid, mid, upper mid and treble. The two extremes of this range are best dealt with by using ‘shelving’ EQ’s. These can be quite gentle but extremely effective in adding general weight to a mix down in the bottom end and air up at the top end. Conversely I also use an HPF (high pass filter) to remove super low frequencies below 20Hz. These super low frequencies are essentially redundant because speakers don’t reproduce them and they eat up a lot of headroom. Once you’ve filtered them out you can work on the audible part of that spectrum much more accurately and with much better results. The same happens up at the top end when you have way too much high frequency content that makes the sound very brittle. Use a LPF (low pass filter) to tame these high frequencies rather than a peak EQ for a much smoother result.

So remember, it is very useful to know the key of the track so you can get straight in on those problem frequencies rather than randomly EQ’ing in the hope that you might chance upon the solution.

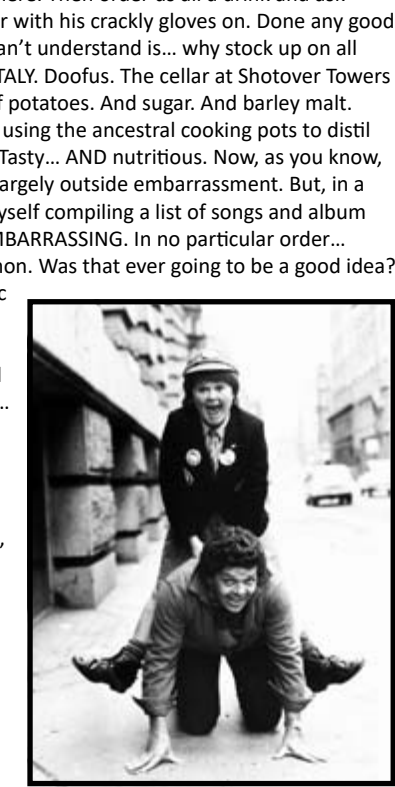
Next time: continuing the EQ journey looking at sonic problem fixes



Dr Shotover: Embarrassment of Glitches

Mmf, mmf-mmfmf-mmfmf [removes WWII gas mask, clears throat]... I SAID: ‘Welcome to the East Indies Club’. Pull up a sanitised pew and sit down there. No, THERE. Right... over... there. Then order us all a drink and ask Bedingfield to pass it along the bar with his crackly gloves on. Done any good panic-buying lately? No? What I can’t understand is... why stock up on all that pasta? Pasta. Comes. From. ITALY. Doofus. The cellar at Shotover Towers by contrast is chocka with sacks of potatoes. And sugar. And barley malt. Then, if the booze runs out, I’ll be using the ancestral cooking pots to distil simmering lakes of potato vodka. Tasty... AND nutritious. Now, as you know, I am a man who exists in a realm largely outside embarrassment. But, in a quiet moment recently, I found myself compiling a list of songs and album titles which are frankly DEEPLY EMBARRASSING. In no particular order... Going Down on Love by John Lennon. Was that ever going to be a good idea? Oh no! Then there’s Post Orgasmic Chill by Skunk Anansie. Brrrr. Puh-LEEZE. And here’s a real leg-cropper... early 70s hard rock band Tucky Buzzard’s album was called... Warm Slash. It was produced by Bill Wyman. Presumably so he could joke with his mates down the pub: ‘I produced a Warm Slash’. Yes, very funny, Bill. Maybe, after Exile on Main Street, you should have just stayed on at Villa Nellcôte taking drugs with Keef, Anita and Gram Parsons. Talking of which... here comes my deal... ahem, personal trainer, Spanish Kevin. Got any... NOSE SANITISER, Kev? What – you’ve RUN OUT? Bah! I wash my hands of you.

Next month: ‘We are, like, living in a dystopian sci-fi novel by Dean Koontz, yeah?’



NOT EMBARRASSING: Promo announced for Krankies-AC/DC collaboration - (I Gotta Fan-Dabi-Dozi) One-Eyed Trouser Snake

INTRODUCING....

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

BRUNO MUERTE

Who are they?

Experimental electronic duo Bruno Muerte are Stefano Maio (*drum machine/synths*) and Roberto Bini (*guitars*). The band formed in 2018; Stefano was already playing in Moogiemán & the Masochists and Roberto had an acoustic duo, Duocane. Everything started when Roberto was invited to play his DIY cigar box guitar at Cowley Road Carnival and asked Stefano to join with another guitar: “we wanted to play Delta blues, but with a drum machine. During the process of writing new music, we started to gain interest in adding new sounds, toys and weird instruments just to see what we could get out of them. We didn’t really have a precise idea – and still don’t – and it was a bit all over the place; we just follow our instinct. What we always thought is it feels like we need to make soundtracks for long trips to nowhere. Who is Bruno Muerte? He’s an alcoholic Italian undertaker. He likes the idea and he has the BM badge on his pyjama.” The duo release a new EP, ‘Parallelism’ this month.

What do they sound like?

Dark, driving electro-rock that manages to marry spaghetti western soundtrack gallop with early 80s synth-pop and acid house; “the pair play with a real sense of exuberance,” ran a recent *Nightshift* review; “a brilliant, carefree set.” Or, in their own words: “spaghetti-techno-western-swamp-electroclash with a slight tendency to simultaneously love and hate 80s soundtracks.”

What inspires them?

“Chemistry; disasters; dreams; flowers; curiosity, and how nature is following very determined patterns (Stefano’s OCD).”

Their career highlight so far is:

“We were very proud when we released our first EP ‘Decay/Control’ on cassette for Cassette Store Day in October 2019; it was very special for us. A little step into the meandering Oxford Music Scene.”

And the lowlight:

“We will have lots of time for that.”



Their favourite Oxfordshire act is:

“Well, that’s tough. If we are allowed to be a bit loose with the definition, we’re gonna say The Pink Diamond Revue – it’s all about the Acid Doll.

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

“We had a long discussion about it but ‘Ummagumma’ by Pink Floyd: a towering monument to rock self-indulgence that totally bent our brains.”

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

“We are releasing an EP on 8 inch vinyl (yes it won’t quite fit on 7 inches) called ‘Parallelism’ and we were asupposed have a release party on 23rd April at the Library, though who knows when it will be now; get ready for our journey and expect phat sounds.”

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

“Oxford’s music scene is incredible; all of us should be very proud of being part of it, and giving our little contribution to make it better. We enjoy going around to see tons of bands of any kind of music. Unfortunately lots of venues are not accessible for everyone, which is a shame.”

People might love them if you love:

Tangerine Dream; Ultravox; Depeche Mode; Ry Cooder; 80s movie soundtracks.

Hear them here:

wearebrunomuerte.bandcamp.com / soundcloud.com/wearebrunomuerte

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

Yet more reminders of the fragility of grassroots music and the ephemeral nature of “success” in the music biz back in April 2000 with the news that this year’s **Oxford Punt** had been cancelled due to lack of suitable venues. The previous year’s event had seen local bands play across seven venues in the city centre but this time around **The Dolly** – yet to become **The Cellar** – was no longer functioning as a live music venue; **The Jericho Tavern** was closed for a major refurbishment, while **Po Na Na** in Magdalen Street had reverted to a club night-only venue and **Jongleurs** had ceased all live music as “it didn’t make enough money”. Sad to think that the situation in the centre of Oxford is now even worse, particularly with the closure of The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre.

Local stars **Medal** – a band who had earned their spurs at an earlier Punt – found themselves dropped by their label **Polydor** this month, despite their debut album, ‘Drop Your Weapon’, earning enthusiastic reviews and selling over 25,000 copies. “The label’s A&R team wanted to keep them,” a spokesperson for the band said, “they were one of the few acts they were excited about; they didn’t get excited about SClub7, but if an album doesn’t go Platinum these days, they let you go.”

Still, the world of live music carried on and **Elastica** were among the acts coming to town this month, at **The Zodiac**, which also hosted **Toploader** and **David Gray**, so maybe there’s a decent argument for closing every venue down.

10 YEARS AGO

April 2010 and fifteen years to the month they released their debut album, **Supergrass** announced they were splitting up, citing “a 17-year-itch.” A final UK tour was announced. One of Oxford’s greatest ever bands was no more. But hey, fast forward to the present day and they’re back and headlining this summer’s Wilderness Festival. Gotta love a happy ending, or new beginning. April 2010’s news pages were dominated by festival line-ups, with **Jackson Browne** and **David Gray** set for the then two-day **Cornbury Festival** alongside Squeeze, Imelda May, Newton Faulkner and Candi Staton, while **Truck** had **Esben & the Witch**, **Ms Dynamite** and **Lau** alongside local favourites **Stornoway**, **Little Fish** and **This Town Needs Guns**.

A plethora of local releases saw **Foals’** classic ‘Spanish Sahara’ see the light of day, while **The Half Rabbits**, **Phantom Theory**, **Gunning For Tamar** and **D Gwalia** also had new records out.

Turn to the back of the back of the month’s *Nightshift* and you’d find, sitting atop the demo pile, an offering by a bunch of as-yet bedroom-bound experimenters called **Glass Animals**. “This was the last demo in the pile and we were just about to give up breathing,” read the review, “so you can thank Glass Animals for our continued existence. In a month when most of the competition makes us want to drink petrol Glass Animals are a welcome breath of fresh air.” Anyone know whatever happened to them?

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

5 YEARS AGO

Talking of happy returns, April 2015 saw the long-hoped-for return to local live action for **Ride**. Having announced their reunion at the end of 2014, the band returned to one of the stages where they first made their name: upstairs at **The O2 Academy**, previously **The Oxford Venue** and **Zodiac**. Highlights of a sold-out show included ‘OX4’ and a cacophonous ‘Drive Blind’ as the band drew almost exclusively from their early EPs and first two albums.

Some legendary names in town this month with funk god **George Clinton** at The O2 Academy, as was dub pioneer **Lee Scratch Perry**, while stadium rock kings **Simple Minds** were at **The New Theatre**, and **The Fureys & Davey Arthur** were at **St. John the Evangelist**.

A big month for local heroes **Stornoway**. The band released their third album ‘Bonxie’ this month and played a low-key in-store set at **Truck Store** on the 18th as part of **Record Store Day**; the quartet were also confirmed for the summer’s **Towersey Festival**, set to play alongside **Bellowhead** and **Joan Armatrading**.

Other local releases came courtesy of **Maiians** (‘Sionara’); **Duotone** (‘Let’s Get Low’); **Ghosts in the Photographs** (‘Our Memories Are Here To Haunt Us’) and **The Balkan Wanderers** (‘The Pride EP’).

The Balkans were also this month’s Introducing act and set to become front cover stars before going their separate ways.

OXFORD'S
INDEPENDENT
MUSIC HUB

ALL THE LATEST RELEASES ON CD, VINYL & DVD

CLASSIC ALBUMS, CULT FAVOURITES, RECOMMENDATIONS
NEW & PRE-OWNED STOCK, LIVE MUSIC IN-STORE, TICKETS

WE'RE MORE THAN JUST A RECORD SHOP!

ALSO HOME TO

MOSTRO
• COFFEE •

PURVEYOURS OF EXQUISITE, INNOVATIVE,
DELICIOUS COFFEE PLUS THE FINEST
TEAS, SOFT DRINKS, CAKE AND MORE

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 101 COWLEY ROAD OX4 1HU

01865 793866 TRUCKMUSICSTORE.CO.UK

CUT OUT THIS COUPON FOR A FREE MOSTRO COFFEE!
1 PER CUSTOMER, PER TRANSACTION. VALID UNTIL 30TH OCTOBER

We reserve the right to remove this offer at any time.

Appletree Studios
Celebrating 30 Years
 Oxfordshires longest running recording studios
www.appletreestudios.com
01844 237916
 Come and see why so many Oxfordshire artists use Appletree

WAREHOUSE STUDIOS
 Recording and rehearsal studios
 3 Rehearsal rooms
25 years of quality recording

Tel: 07876487923
 Email: info@warehousestudios.co.uk
www.warehousestudios.co.uk

EVOLUTION
 RECORDING STUDIOS

We're a new 1000 sq. ft. recording, tracking and mixing facility in Oxford featuring, at our heart, a beautifully refurbished and awesome-sounding Trident Series 80B console.

Experienced Engineers, Session musicians and Producers in-house.

Call us for rates or to arrange a visit. Special rates for local unsigned bands.

Services Include
 Recording and Mixing • Voice-overs • Producing and Programming • Film, TV and Advertising Music • Audio Post-production • Songwriting and Session Musicians

01865 203073
info@evolutionstudios.co.uk
www.evolutionstudios.co.uk

Glasshouse Studios
 Rehearsal and Recording studios
 Four state of the art rehearsal rooms and a professional recording studio.
 For bookings call Jamie on 07917685935
 Glasshouse studios, Cumnor, Oxford • glasshousetudios.org

TRACKS

Sponsored by



TOP TRACKS

DUTCH-SARNIE

“Hey, two demos of the month is embarrassing,” begins Dutch-Sarnie’s letter; “when will we be blessed with a dump on the toilet track list?” You’ll have to wait a bit longer Mr/Ms Sarnie since crazy times call for crazy music. When *Nightshift*’s local Tesco has a stack of *Daily Mails* screaming panicked headlines next to empty shelves that were once home to packets of pasta, the last thing you want to be listening to is dull, earnest songsmithery. No, here’s our favourite anonymous attention-deficit sample-geek with four more tracks of what-actually-is-it mix’n’match music that can switch from hysterical Christian fundamentalists decrying climate change to cheeky S&M phone line chat on a sixpence, hitting a peak with the big, gnarly psych-surf workout of ‘Toxic Tabernacle’, described by Dutch themselves as “The Sonics, Link Wray and MC5 collaborating on a track for a car commercial until news of white supremacist gun atrocities steer things off into another dimension.” Elsewhere the sampladelic sonic adventuring takes a languidly magpie path along cheesy synth melodies and big electronic crescendos via an array of non-sequitur vocal samples, through dysfunctional future factory soundtracks and hypnotic electronica into something almost hymnal at one point and even a quickfire snippet of Nena’s ‘99 Red Balloons’ ahead of a cheeky Ministry reference. In a month when most of the other acts in the review pile seem to be doing their utmost to keep a straight face and do the sensible thing in the face of a world going very slightly insane, Dutch-Sarnie is just going to have to live with the fact they’re by far the best of the batch yet again. Tough luck mate, you brought this on yourself.

SLOW LEARNER

Slow leaner is the work of Pete Lock whose history on the local music scene goes back to the early 1980s at least, so he’s not likely to be the sort of person to go into panic mode at the drop of a pandemic. Luckily he’s not the kind of musician to descend into dull’n’worthy poetic moping either, preferring to continue existing in a semi-mythical 1960s pop fug where Nick Drake contemplation and Byrds-y jangle sit serenely together on a wooded riverbank, lost in almost folksy reverie, just the clutter and clatter of bedroom production encroaching on the idyll. These six songs could perhaps have done with a less-is-more approach. The drums in particularly feel untidy, an

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

unnecessarily imposition on what could be Summers-of-the-60s vibes, Pete’s soft, upper-range vocals needing little more than his guitar and a bit of multi-tracked harmonies to do what they need to do. The nominally funky ‘The Middle Aged Man (On The Flying Trapeze)’ is a tad clunky but when he lets himself wallow in a little unabashed pastoral whimsy Pete plays to his strengths and creates something like a lost Pearls Before Swine or HP Lovecraft piece from the farthest corner of the 1960s’ attic.

GREAT APE

But here come the sensible brigade. Fun’s over, everybody – there are surfaces to disinfect, gatherings to ban, non-perishables to hoard. Great Ape have decided the best response to collective global meltdown is to mope ponderously in a vaguely jazzy soft rock fashion while their singer has a bit of a whine about something or other. Which is a shame really since here’s a band who the first time we reviewed them we imagined were trying to write the perfect, instantly forgettable soundtrack to a bank advert and who responded by punking themselves up a bit and merrily asking us how our Cash ISA was doing. Sounds like they’ve relapsed with interest (some way above the 0.1% base rate at that). ‘At Midnight’ might be just a sketch for a future studio visit like they say but they could have added just a bit of colour if they’re going to put it out for public scrutiny. It arrives, it shuffles about a bit, does some vague, indeterminate waffling with a guitar, frowns, says something earnest but neither poetic nor profound and then, six minutes later, shuffles back out, a musical snuffle and snuffle when we’re expecting a high fever, hacking cough and maybe some copious vomiting. Best try and find those punk pills you took previously Great Ape; dare we suggest a couple of listens to Killing Joke’s ‘I Am the Virus’ before you next pick up your instruments and exhale in our direction.

TOM DALBY

More earnest musical musings here from Tom Dalby, who at least sounds like he has enough gumption to fill a tissue as he sneezes a mix of cheesy 80s Europop and semi-soulful blues-rock into being. Tom Describes his track here, ‘Crossfire’, as “A stormy tale of domestic unrest, soundtracked by a quick-tempered band, featuring soaring sax melodies and crashing guitar riffs,” which suggests a level of urgency the song fails to deliver on, the chunky riff at least attempting to put some meat into proceedings, the sax fighting to give things a bit of edge towards the end but the whole thing feeling like it’s wading laboriously through mud to take flight. It’s not beyond redemption – the chorus at least

– but the exhortation “*Louder! Faster!*” might be appropriate at this juncture. The human race might be on the very edge of extinction old chap; this is no time to be dragging your heels.

MARK HUSSEY

Mark Hussey’s opening track here is called ‘One Note Samba’ and we unclench our jaw slightly, imagining a bit of free-spirited Latin American partying with perhaps a soupçon of punk spirit. Two and a bit minutes of idle guitar noodling and doodling later we’ve put the Caipirinha back in the fridge, ready for another, happier day and find ourselves listening to a classical guitar rendition of the *Thomas the Tank Engine* theme tune, knowing it’ll be lodged there for at least a week now – the earworm that other earworms flee from. Mark continues to gently guide us through his guitar chops from here, a set of instrumental mood pieces whose mood ranges from afternoon nap to forty winks and we kind of drift off after a while – it’s not an entirely unpleasant experience as Mark plucks idly in the background (the man has a PhD in virology so maybe he’s the perfect person to keep us all calm, musically anyway), but we’re snapped out of our trancelike state by an airy take on ‘Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas’, panicking slightly and wondering just how long we’ve been zoned out, whether the pandemic has passed and whether there’s spaghetti in Tesco again. Ah sod it, it’s Christmas – there’s a litre bottle of winter spiced vodka in the cupboard – perfect for internal and external disinfecting, considerably cheaper and very slightly tastier than surgical handrub too.

CHARLIE PEDERSEN

Our first thought when we stick this on is that Coronavirus has actually wiped out the entirety of humanity and Charlie is all that’s left – a solitary, solemn funeral singer, crooning us into the fires at the end of days. Plink plonk, moan moan he goes on a mournful piano ballad called ‘To a First Love’ that’s marginally less fun than two weeks self isolating in a windowless cruise ship cabin and rather more monotonous. Second song in, ‘The Meriwether Pull’, and in a giant life-affirming stylistic leap he’s swapped his piano for an acoustic guitar so it’s more strum strum, moan moan. Oh Christ, why didn’t we die with everyone else? Locked away in our office with just Mark Hussey’s lotus flower-like guitar somnambulations, we outlived the apocalyptic horrors of the outside world and now it’s just us and Charlie Pedersen, plonking tunelessly for what seems like all of eternity – there’s 14 tracks of this grim musical gruel to enjoy – until it hits us: we actually did succumb and this is Hell, or at least Purgatory. No lakes of fire and brimstone, just an endless ocean of tepid piano balladry and sensitive, earnest wistfulness. Is it too late to repent?

Send tracks, downloads or streaming links for review 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 music. Same goes for your stupid, over-sensitive mates.

RIAZ AHMAD

Part of The Oxford Beatles tribute band, Riaz Ahmad should at least be familiar with a decent tune or two, unlike Charlie before him. Initially at least this sounds like a straightforward continuation of that previous abomination as Riaz plucks lightly and airily at his acoustic guitar, his voice quavering very slightly to fully bring out the emotional gravitas of the song. But then in comes a tabla and a sitar and things improve significantly. Thereafter it’s a balancing act between deft fretplay and an easy Eastern vibe, and an adherence to standard folk-pop balladry that struggles to take flight. Even the best song here, ‘Blank Canvas’, feels slightly laboured, like it wants to spread its wings and know it should but struggles for that magic spark. Riaz’s chief strength is his almost Jeff Buckley-ish voice, which you feel could and should be carrying stronger tunes than these. It’s all well played and intricately constructed but melodically it’s lacking and by the time he gets to ‘All At Sea’ we’re starting to think about Jamie Cullum. If God is prepared to forgive us our sins, we’re happy to let Riaz off on that score.

TOILET TRACKS

D47

“I am searching for a Major Deal or a good Promotion because I am unsigned at the moment and I need help so that we can bring my music to the people, probably we can grow together very high,” offers a bloke called Rob here who seems to have mistaken local music mag *Nightshift* for global record label Parlophone. Mere seconds into his first number Rob at least solves one mystery for us – who stockpiled all the loo roll – as he unleashes an almighty “Ooooooooooooo...” that sounds like he’s just offloaded yesterday’s prune and onion casserole in one mighty go. We think it was meant to sound sexy. Like the scantily-clad ladies he has cavorting around him in one of his videos, like he’s a vaguely house-informed reincarnation of Robert Palmer and it’s still 1983 or something. But no, this is modern pop music with all its modern clever gadgetry and fancy electronic bits, plus of course a gaping chasm where anything resembling soul, substance or a halfway memorable tune might be. It makes David Guetta’s blandest offerings sound like prime Giorgio Moroder. Moving very slightly away from his (nominally) dancier tunes Rob turns sequenced crooner, seducing a lady (fully clothed this time) while sounding like the doomed solo project of a b-list boyband member, making Ronan Keating sound like Tony Bennett. “I have over sixty songs” adds Rob helpfully and we guess that if an infinite number of monkeys given an infinite number of typewriters might eventually come up with the works of Shakespeare, if there are enough parallel universes stacked up alongside ours, in one of them at least, one of those songs doesn’t make us want to suffocate under an avalanche of stockpiled loo roll.

QUALITY BACKLINE
£10 PER HOUR
 Inc. TRAMA, TENN, MARK BASS, BLACKSTAR, FENDER, & SHURE gear
Safefire
 STUDIO
 JUST OFF ST CLEMENTS - 884 18A - FREE PARKING
 CONTACT: MIKE 07731 804796
SAFHOUSESTUDIO.CO.UK
[safhousestudio](https://www.facebook.com/safhousestudio) [safhousestudio](https://www.instagram.com/safhousestudio) [SafeSafhouse](https://twitter.com/SafeSafhouse)

Shonk
Recording Studio
 Full Backline Available
 Great Sounding Live Room with Natural Light
 Special Rates For Local Bands
www.theshonk.com
shonkstudio@gmail.com - 01865 203 922

TURAN AUDIO.co.uk
 Professional, independent audio mastering
 Mastered in the studio last month;
MILES PRING, HERBIE HANCOCK, LVRA, RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS, EAN JONES, MCCARTHY, DAVID BOWIE, SHADE EMPIRE, ANTHRAX, APHRA TAYLOR, THE PRAIRIE CLAMS, THE LAST INKLINGS, VOIVOD, ACCEPT, PEARL JAM, BAD COMPANY, SEAN POWER, KANADIA, THE DEADBEAT APOSTLES, JEFFERSON DUKE, NICK COPE, YOUNG KNIVES, SAVAK, ENSHRINE.
01865 716466 tim@turanaudio.co.uk

COURTYARD
RECORDING STUDIO
 2 Tracking Rooms. Superb Control Room with: NEVE 5106 32 Channel Console. ProTools HD3 MTR 90 2" 24 Track Tape Machine. Vintage EMT Plate Reverb Loads of Brilliant Outboard Gear Loads of Great Mics, Vintage and Modern Old School Akai/Roland Synth Modules Upright Piano, Fender Rhodes, Amps and great vibes. Residential recording studio in Sutton Courtenay.
www.courtyardrecordingstudio.co.uk
 In-house producer: Ian Davenport www.ian-davenport.co.uk
Email: kate@cyard.com
Phone: Kate on 01235 845800

TAD
 STUDIOS
 • 3 High-Tech Newly Renovated Recording / Rehearsal Rooms
 • Professional Recording for Bands and Artists
 • Full Backline and PA System in Every Room
 • SSL / Warm Audio / Thermionic Culture Recording Gear
 • Mapex Kits, Fender / Marshall / Ashdown Amps
 • Doorstep Parking, Discounts Available For Block Bookings
www.tadstudios.co.uk / Email: contact@tadaudio.ltd
 Call 01865 600740 for Recording Enquiries
 Text 07877 645410 to Book a Rehearsal
 Built by Musicians, for Musicians

academyevents presents



ROAD TO WEMBLEY 2020 *four*

THE DUALERS - SATURDAY 28TH NOVEMBER



PLUS GUESTS

FRIDAY 11th SEPTEMBER

©₂ ACADEMY OXFORD

DOORS: 6.30pm | CURFEW: 10pm

TICKETMASTER.CO.UK | THEDUALERS.COM