



NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month
Issue 295
February
2020

"Flights of Helios is like
Theseus' Ship; eventually
it'll just be AI soul-avatars
infinitely droning in D Dorian."

Flights of Helios

Oxford's crazy psychedelic
diamonds shine on

Also in this issue:

Introducing Joely

Dido & Van Morrison play Cornbury

Jono Willis remembered

plus

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

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THE BULLINGDON

FEBRUARY 2020 GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Saturday 1st February Simple: Haai Doors: 10pm	Friday 21st February Tracksuit and Trance Doors: 10pm	Saturday 14th March Musical Medicine Kamma & Masalo Doors: 10pm	Friday 3rd April OP-95 – 2020 vision Burt Cope Joca De:Formed MCs Doors: 10pm
Tuesday 4th February Lisa O'Neill Doors: 7pm	Saturday 22nd February Skylarkin Soundsystem Special Doors: 10pm	Sunday 15th March Selfworth & Reclaimer Doors: 7pm	Saturday 4th April Make Emo Great Again Doors: 10pm
Wednesday 5th February Smoke Faries Doors: 7pm	Sunday 23rd February Miscreant Dreameater Indica Blues Doors: 7pm	Tuesday 17th March Cabin Boy Jumped Ship Red Method The Uncharted Doors: 7pm	Friday 10th April Kanadia Doors: 7pm
Thursday 6th February Animal House Self Help Doors: 7pm	Wednesday 26th February Lawrence Fox Doors: 7pm	Thursday 19th March Warmduscher Doors: 7pm	Friday 10th April Pitch Black Doors: 10pm
Friday 7th February OxPhwoard Doors: 7pm	Friday 28th February Soul Sista Doors: 10pm	Friday 20th March Rusty Shackie Doors: 7pm	Saturday 11th April Reggaeton Party Doors: 10pm
Friday 7th February Straight Outta Cowley Doors: 10pm	Saturday 29th February Rawdio Doors: 10pm	Friday 20th March Bangerz and Lash Doors: 10pm	Sunday 12th April The Lovely Eggs Mark Wynn Dog Daisies Doors: 7pm
Saturday 8th February Musical Medicine Mafalda Doors: 10pm	Thursday 5th March So Fetch Doors: 10pm	Tuesday 24th March Elephant Sessions Doors: 7pm	Friday 17th April K-Funkz Doors: 10pm
Wednesday 12th February Brasc0 Rough Edge Brass Band Wakay Wakay Quartet Doors: 8pm	Friday 6th March Ryders Creed Molly Karloff Black Tree Vulture Doors: 7pm	Wednesday 25th March Billy Walton Band Doors: 7pm	Saturday 18th April Musical Medicine Kitchen Disco Doors: 10pm
Friday 14th February Cut the Trap Doors: 10pm	Friday 6th March Drum and Bass Doors: 10pm	Friday 27th March Squid [Sold out] Doors: 7pm	Friday 24th April OxPhwoard Doors: 7pm
Saturday 15th February Reggaeton Party Doors: 10pm	Saturday 7th March Simple DJ Stingray Doors: 10pm	Friday 27th March Cut the Trap Doors: 10pm	Friday 14th April Soul Sista Doors: 10pm
Wednesday 19th February Working Mens Club Doors: 7pm	Tuesday 18th March Jesse Malin Band Doors: 7pm	Saturday 28th March Volume #19 Doors: 10pm	Wednesday 28th April Melt Yourself Down Doors: 7pm
Thursday 20th February Jack Hutchinson Doors: 7pm	Friday 15th March The Raving Trippy Presents The 2020 Vision Doors: 10pm	Thursday 2nd April Wille and the Bandits Doors: 7pm	
Friday 21st February Apré Doors: 10pm			



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Thursday 13th February – 7pm
Tom Stade – You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet
Sunday 1st March – 7pm
Rob Auton – The Time Show

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NEWS

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AUDIOGRAFT returns to Oxford next month. The annual celebration of experimental music and sound art, hosted by Oxford Contemporary Music in conjunction with curators the Sonic Art Research Unit at Oxford Brookes University, runs from the **17th-22nd March** with installations and concerts at OVADA, Modern Art Oxford and The Holywell Music Room.

The OVADA warehouse hosts installations by Ainé O'Dwyer; Susana Gómez Larañga; Shirley Pegna; Thomas Martin Nutt; John Grzinich, and Ben Gwilliam, while Modern Art plays host to Paul Whitty; Lucia Hinojosa; Kathryn Tovey; James Green, and Jacek Smolicki. Live performances at The Holywell include shows by Paul Whitty; Austin Sherlaw-Johnson; Catherine Laws; Tim Parkinson; James Saunders; Irene Kurka, and Parkinson & Saunders. All Audiograft events are pay-what-you can.

More details at ocmevents.org.

SUPERNORMAL returns over the weekend of the **14th-16th August** at **Braziers Park**. The celebration of leftfield and underground music and arts takes place at its usual home at Braziers Park in Ipsden. Widely regarded as one of the best and most challenging festivals in the UK, last year's event, featuring Hen Ogledd, Dalek and Sealionwoman, sold out within hours of tickets going on sale. For more information , visit supernormalfestival.co.uk.

THE YOUNG WOMEN'S MUSIC PROJECT celebrates its 20th anniversary this month. The community project hosts a special gig night on the 29th February at The Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre with sets from Jenny Moore's Mystic Business, Slagheap, Julia-Sophie, Tiece and Team Drum, plus YWMP DJs. More info on the project and their calendar of gigs, workshops, talks and film screenings at ywmp.org.uk

TRUCK STORE celebrates its ninth birthday this month. The independent record shop on Cowley Road hosts a day of live music and DJs on Saturday 8th February. Check facebook.com/truckstoreoxford for more details.

THE EPSTEIN give their album 'Burn the Branches' a full digital release this month. The album, originally given a limited physical release in 2016, was the local alt.folk band's third. It is available online from the 14th February on Pindrop Records.

The band relaunch the record on the 7th February when they host their monthly Make This Our Home residency at The Port Mahon, with special guests The August List.

THE BULLINGDON hosts a new fortnightly music quiz from this month. The quiz, hosted in the front cocktail bar, takes place every other Sunday with prizes including free gig and club tickets. The first quiz in February is the 9th and then the 23rd.



DIDO AND VAN MORRISON are the first names announced for this year's **Cornbury Festival**.

Both acts will perform on Friday 10th July at **Great Tew Country Park** as organisers plan to announce each day's headline acts separately.

Talking about the announcement, Cornbury director Hugh Phillimore said: "We're very excited to be announcing two huge stars from the beginning – Van's my desert island artist – and it's a huge privilege for Cornbury to be one of Dido's few summer appearances. This year we're doing things a bit differently keeping a few surprises up our sleeve by announcing our other artists one day at a time over the next few months."

Cornbury Festival runs over the weekend of the **10th-12th July**. Weekend camping tickets are on sale now, priced £215, with concessions and day tickets available. Visit www.cornburyfestival.com for full ticket details.

BEAUTIFUL FREAKS RADIO hits its 17th season with another schedule full of interviews with Oxford bands and musicians. The most recent BF show saw host Caspar Jacobs interviewing **Lucy Leave** ahead of their album launch, and on the 27th January he chats with **Robot Swans** about their recently released EP. On the 9th March former Daisies, Medal and Family Machine frontman Jamie Hyatt's new project **Bedd** are the studio guests. Beautiful Freaks goes out every Monday from 7 to 8pm on Oxide Radio, or browse through their archive at beautifulfreaks.co.uk/radio.

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](https://twitter.com/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.



in his eye and could light up any gathering. Whenever you saw him it was like you had only seen him the day before, even if it had been much longer, conversation would flow seamlessly. The two years I spent on the road with him and The Bigger The God are filled with wonderful memories and many funny stories, but he also had a serious, caring side and was able to advise on many subjects – often over a pub table!"

John McManus, who played with Jono in Edwin & the Keepers said: "We're heartbroken to have lost Jono. He was a subtle and inventive guitarist that we'd have listened to all day and his songwriting was becoming invaluable to us. There's a massive hole stage-right, and in our lives. He was scabrously funny, sharp as hell, generous, and absolutely one of the good ones."

JONO WILLIS 1975-2019

Tributes have been paid to musician Jono Willis who passed away just before Christmas. He was 44. Guitarist Jono's life on the local scene began back in the early 1990s when he played in the band Plum. He went on to front The Jono Willis Retrospective and later played in The Factory Lights; *Nightshift* Demo of the Month winners Stolby, and most recently Edwin & the Keepers. He also worked with Oxford stars The Bigger The God and The Daisies on tour.

Jamie Hyatt who played alongside Jono's brother Mark in The Daisies and Medal said: "Jono was my good friend for over 30 years. We lived together in different houses during our journey into adulthood. He was a funny, clever, passionate

human and a great musician with a quick turn of phrase. I have so many excellent memories of him: messing about in comedy sketches at the youth centre; singing our hearts out in my old Escort van; getting held up by a gunman whilst flyposting; writing silly songs; running naked through Freeland woods; playing gigs; watching gigs; playing badminton – and never ever beating him – praying to the god of football in 2005, and most recently when we were chit-chatting at our weekly pottery club.

"Jono was someone I was looking forward to getting old with and I wish I'd told him how important he was when he was around."

Factory Lights bandmate Ant Kelly added: "He was a very good friend

of mine and was the original guitarist in the Factory Lights. He was unique and talented fella. The riff he played on 'The Old School Wall' is so simple, yet hauntingly beautiful and will remain with me forever."

Mark Taylor knew Jono for over 25 years and worked with him during his time touring with The Bigger the God; he said of his old friend: "Jono was vibrant, cheeky and immensely funny. He always had a sparkle

Flights of Helios



“GIVEN THE STATE OF national and international politics at the moment, it’s almost more reassuring just to assume that aliens must be already living among us and will guide us to some form of sanity with their higher levels of intelligence and sophistication so we avoid further catastrophe.”

SO SAYS BEN ULPH, guitarist and newest recruit on the psychedelic musical spacecraft that is Flights of Helios. We’re talking about aliens because, like any truly great psychedelic band, Flights of Helios take you on a trip: one to far-off, unexplored worlds. Long the leading lights of Oxford’s psych/drone/experimental scene, Flights have always been about exploration: from their expansive, questing music, which has morphed and mutated over the years from what the band previously dubbed “grief-core” to its current expansive, tripped-out sound, to their choices of venues and musical projects and partners. These have included churches, boats and cinemas to live soundtracks to ancient animations, Shakespearean songbooks and philosophy professors.

FLIGHTS OF HELIOS HAVE shed and gained crew members along their journey, but the line-up we meet today is: Chris Beard (vocals/bass guitar); Phil Hanaway-Oakley (vocals/bass guitar/ukulele); Harriet Butler (keyboards/flute/

vocals); James Currie (drums); James Maund (guitars) – known in the band as Kraz, Krazi or even Krazi Man Boolah to somehow differentiate him from the other James; Sian Lloyd-Pratchett (violin/ vocals) and Ben Ulph (guitars). The band are also sometimes joined by percussionist Chris Hills, while they’ve been known to invite entire jazz horn ensembles onstage with them for improvised sets, as at Truck Festival one year. The band formed in 2011, out of drone/improv act Braindead Collective and featured original keyboard maestro Seb Reynolds. What, we wonder, was the initial Flights of Helios mission intent? “The transition from the Braindeads’ drone-jazz improv to Helios was guided by Seb, who had a clear vision,” recalls Chris, one of, if not *the* tallest, people in Oxford music and previously frontman of Harry Angel and These Are Our Demands. “Seb’s original mission from our first press release was: ‘creating new and challenging music, but with a big heart of emotion still beating at the core: no cold abstraction or superficiality.’ There was an emphasis on not attempting to please the audience and so deliver some eye-opening brutality alongside moments of beauty. Though we haven’t put out as much music as we’d like to have, I think we’ve met that mission quite well. For every example of a more or less conventional hook there’s something weird or broken-

sounding, like a piercing drone or a slowdown to a crawl or a funhouse mirror lyric. And it all comes from the heart, messed up as that may be.” “Braindead Collective also gave us the confidence to collaborate and to just go for it,” continues Phil whose own musical history goes back to local stars Sexy Breakfast and Borderville. “We were very lucky to work with Viv Albertine; Bleeding Heart Narrative; Sam Lee and many more as we transitioned into Flights of Helios.”

AS MENTIONED, MEMBERS have come and gone since Flights took shape almost a decade ago, notably Seb, who left to pursue his Thai-inspired music projects, but the ship sailed on and the current incarnation is the best yet, as so brilliantly displayed at recent shows at Oddball Festival and supporting Japan’s Acid Mothers Temple. Has it always been a democratic project or is there a captain? Phil: “Helios is more like Theseus’ Ship; eventually it’ll just be AI soul-avatars infinitely droning in D Dorian.” Ben: “From the time I’ve been playing in the band, it feels like a benevolent dictatorship: Phil is up on deck, lashed to the wheel, trying to steer the ship through a storm of ever-changing line ups, arrangements of songs, different projects, whilst Chris is a calm force of order and quiet direction. Kraz; Sian; Harriet; James and Chris all know exactly where to place the

right note, and no more than is necessary; everyone’s essential to the way the band sounds.” Harriet: “There is always lively and engaged discussion when we are creating and arranging. Chris, Phil and Krazi provide a constant current, bringing things into the picture and taking us on different journeys. You could say that all three steer the ship. Like the holy trinity they are at once captain, first mate and helmsman. You never know where we might end up next or just how many keyboards Phil will acquire, but it’s all well worth the voyaging. Phil would like to find the Golden Fleece one day.”

AFTER A SUCCESSION OF singles, Flights eventually released their full debut album, ‘Endings’, in 2018. Why did a full album take so long to come out? Chris: “‘Endings’ was definitely a culmination of Helios Version 1 and we learned a lot along the way. Every recording session at Strawhouse Studios with Richard Neuberg was a joy; he’s part mystic, part scientist and plays a wicked saw. But mixing it took a long time as the band all had input and regularly got lost in the weeds. Alongside this both Seb and Phil had serious illness in their family and the whole ‘grief-wave’ moniker became too real for comfort. So when Phil’s academic wife Cleo pointed us toward the *Prince Achmed* film score project, we knew it was a distraction but it sounded fun so we switched lanes to that for a while.”

The *Adventures of Prince Achmed* film score project involved Flights of Helios performing a live soundtrack to what is regarded as the oldest animated film in the world, made in Germany in 1926. After a successful run of shows back in 2014 and 2015 Flights revived their performance last year at the Ultimate Picture Palace. The band will also be touring the show later this year. What first attracted them to that particular film and how do they prepare and perform something like that; is it all rehearsed or is much of it improvised? Ben: “There’s a lot of intense listening and trying to watch the film whilst also looking at each other, at the same time as reading prompts from pieces of paper and looking at my hands hoping they’re in the right place on the guitar! The elements of improvisation really came into their own during the performance at the UPP; that extra edge of being in

front of an audience can kick things onto a different level.” Phil: “While some of it comes and goes on the night, there are basic themes and motifs that have evolved and blossomed over time... which can be clearly seen on Excel.” Sian: “Which I don’t understand and I improvise anyway!” Chris: “Phil mapped it all out on a colour coded spreadsheet. I was deeply impressed, even if first time we met to start work he turned up with a black and white print out for everyone. That was less useful.” Phil: “I hear that Desert Storm are going to release their next album as a PowerPoint.” Harriet: “It took some time for the penny to drop that the colour coding on the spreadsheet represented the changing colours of the film’s background! Working from a general outline of the film we began to ground ourselves in key centres and motifs for particular scenes and characters. Gradually, as we spent more time with the film, a story arc began to emerge which lent colour, dynamics and more detailed instrumentation, as well as a good bit of noodling. Phil also seems to have a knack for picking up absolute bargains in charity shops - the bells really added something to our usual set up. Not forgetting the Novation Bass Station and Chris Hills’ percussion! Performing it to an audience at UPP was an absolute delight.” Phil: “I just want to point out that I did not find Chris Hills in a charity shop.”

‘ENDINGS’ WAS FOLLOWED up by the single ‘Magpie’, which was inspired by Alan Moore’s essay *Unearthing* – an unusual piece even by his high standards. Chris: “I stumbled upon the audio version on Amazon, probably prompted by Stewart Lee’s championing of Alan. From the off I loved Moore’s musings on the flexible nature of reality and the power of language to warp perspective and even make magic appear real. My favourite part is the section describing a mushroom trip where he’s convinced they’ve accidentally opened a portal to higher dimension and something monstrous leans in; it’s not unlike the ‘The power of god compels you’ scene in *The Exorcist*. There’s something in his performance which is tangibly freaked-out. It transpires that Mike Patton and Stuart Braithwaite worked on the backing music, which completes the picture. In yet another musical adventure off the beaten path, Flights are working with Oxford University philosophy professor Paul Lodge on his ‘Cantat Ergo Sumus’ project. Phil: “Paul’s been writing and

performing music on the side for thirty years or so. ‘Cantat Ergo Sumus’ is an ongoing project that combines his interests in philosophy and music. The title is a play on Descartes’ famous ‘cogito ergo sum’, meaning ‘I think therefore I am’. ‘Cantat Ergo Sumus’ means ‘It is singing therefore we are’, where the ‘It’ is the mysterious source which brings us to life through its gift of song. “Paul has written a set of nine songs which are a mix of musical settings of poems by famous philosophers, and songs that play with themes from the writings of others. His aim is to take philosophy to people in a novel way and hopefully to get them interested in finding out more. We got to know him about a year ago and arranged three of them with him for a performance at the Old Fire Station in June 2019. That led to a successful grant application and the University is now funding us to work

“I just want to point out that I did not find Chris Hills in a charity shop.”

up the remaining songs. We’re going to record them in the coming months and roll out at shows later in the year.

AS WELL AS EXPLORING strange new worlds in music, Flights are forever keen to play in churches and museums; what appeals about such places and do they think they are particularly suited to more grandiose venues? Chris: “It’s all in the reverberation, both the physical sonic environment which fits with our love of whisper/ scream dynamics, and the ideas, stories and history that surround us in these venues. Being allowed in to play these hallowed spaces fires something at the back of our minds and makes us raise our game. Myths and a sense of some kind of spiritual otherworld have gradually revealed themselves as important touchstones for the band, especially as the folk influence has taken root.” From boat trips down the Thames – one of the band’s earlier unusual venue adventures – to concerts of Shakespearean-era folk songs, to soundtracking 100-year-old animations: what draws Flights of Helios to unusual or experimental projects? What challenges have each of them brought and which have been the most and least satisfying and what future adventures would they like to undertake? Phil: “I find all of these projects satisfying. Though we did do a gig at the Jericho once where we were meant to have our faces painted as post-apocalypse skeletons and Seb turned up with one pack of kids face crayons to go between five of us. We had a 1970s art house movie being

projected above us and we were on stage and I was looking around and Kwazi looked like Kung Fu Panda and Currie had a bloke having his bum scrubbed with a broom shining above his head and I just thought, ‘this is a low and we shouldn’t do things like this unless we’re really sure’. Recently we soundtracked a Hulk Hogan versus Andre the Giant wrestling match, ‘The Slam Heard Around The World’, with Pete from Lucy Leave on second drum kit; that was amazing. “Looking forward I’ve been recording quite a few domino rallies for something. I would really like to write a hip-hop album based around penguins. Also work with computer game designers. Ideally work with a computer that thinks and feels, maybe even loves. Working with a machine, a feeling living machine and then writing an album with this creature tapping into its motherboard, its soul and releasing one of the greatest

human / AI albums ever written.” Harriet: “Every new project feels as if we are exploring the bounds of our known universe as a band. We seem to behave like a black hole on occasion: pulling in people to play with or finding ourselves drawn to others. Each time we play something changes; the look and feel of us expands and evolves. We feel like a dynamic ecosystem with a salty core underlying it all. To feel the freedom to bring our experimental muscles to each event is very pleasing.”

ONE NEAR FUTURE PROJECT that is certain is a new EP, set for release in April. Phil: “We’ve got an EP or three in the bank. We were lucky to have Andrew Warne of Julia Meijer’s band and Dagga Domes play on all of them. I recorded the foundation of one EP called ‘Gulo Gulo’ using an 808 drum machine and then the rest of the band have come round and added new layers. Tim Day from Means of Production drops round and makes things better when it all goes wrong. We’ve also got an EP to finish with producer Jimmy Hetherington which is where ‘Beast’ came from. Mike Bannard of Aviary/ Safehouse studios is just finishing off our version of folk standard ‘A Sailor’s Life’, which is going to be epic. So lots to be heard from us in 2020.” Chris: “Major life events took their toll on recording again last year but we’re back on it now. Bucolic banger ‘Tree and Fly’ is the first song finished and is out as a single in February with a video from experimental artist Naomi Morris,

plus a live version from The Jericho Tavern. We’ve also reworked our debut single ‘Star’ with the new line-up and it’s emerged sounding like something from the *Firefly* soundtrack, SF nerd heaven. As for what will come out in April we’ll likely choose the best of what’s finished and find a way to make it vaguely coherent. Some of our favourite albums are pretty random so there’s nothing to fear there.” Whatever shape the new EPs take, one thing we’ve noticed is how much trippier Flights’ sound is live now compared to around the release of the album two years back. James M/Krazi: “I think when we started we had a fairly trippy and formless style but I think when writing songs for the album the idea was to perform them as they were recorded. We have three new members since the conception of the album. I thinks it’s now necessary to jam and improvise as much as possible; by doing that we’re getting to ‘know each other musically’. This has definitely trickled into the writing of new material so hopefully we’ll stay this way for a while.” Ben: “There’s a lot of freedom in terms of how the sound evolves as a consequence of who’s in the room; in the few months I’ve been playing each gig has sounded different, and I think everyone enjoys having space to try new things out, even with songs that have been around a while. The process of playing together with new people – getting used to each other and listening carefully – will inevitably have an effect on the sound.” Chris: “Agreed, in a sense things have come full circle: the Braindead Collective mentality has seeped back in, to the point where we’re fine and dandy zoning out in front of people again.”

A BUSY YEAR AHEAD FOR the band then, and doubtless plenty of strange and fascinating diversions along the way. Before we leave them though, going back to talk of aliens, if Flights of Helios had a band spaceship where would they go and why? Chris: “I’d find out who’s in charge of this whole universe business and ask them to bloody well explain themselves.” What would you say to aliens if you met them? Phil: “They’re all gonna be AIs, so I’d say: 01000001 01101100 01110010 01101001 01100111 01101000 01110100 00111111 00100000 – that’s ‘Alright?’ in binary.”

Flights of Helios play an acoustic set at The Library on the 20th February. Hear them at [flightsofhelios.bandcamp.com](#)

RELEASED

LUCY LEAVE

‘Everyone Is Doing So Well’

(Divine Schism)
“We’re different, you can tell by looking at our thumbs!”. It sounds like a slogan from a rejected SEGA ad campaign, but it’s the outro refrain of one of the many excellent tracks on Lucy leave’s second album (if refrain is the right word for what sounds like three downhearted *Sesame Street* characters intoning a disappointing mindfulness mantra out of time with each other). In a way, ‘Thumbs’ typifies the album, by taking a nice neat, compact pop tune – in this case a chunky bass-led Sebadoh saunter – and pushing it off balance. Whether it’s a sudden scribble of Frith/Kaiser guitar notes, an awkward falsetto croon, overblown freak-out recorder flurries or an inscrutable lyric (“alluvial fiasco!”), each track seems to contain one element which at first appears designed to commit musical sabotage but which turns out to make perfect sense after a few listens. From the opener, ‘Talking Heads’ – which doesn’t sound like Talking Heads at all, more like Aerial M playing Yo La Tengo – to the closer ‘Grandma 2’, a self-effacing Blur song which ends by quoting a 20s novelty jazz tune, listening to ‘Everyone Is Doing So Well’ is like

MOTH DROP

‘The Only Way Out Is In’

(Self released)

Bands writing soundtracks to imagined films is a cliché of the modern age but while he never states it as an intention, Moth Drop makes a far better fist of conjuring the atmosphere of a sci-fi movie better than so many of those who set out to do so. Moth Drop is the solo work of Brendan Morgan, one third of garage rockers Grub. His debut offering, based on Philip K Dick’s mind-bending novel *VALIS*, earned him a Demo of the Month, while his first full album in 2018 drew comparisons to William Orbit, The Orb and Plaid amongst others. That retro-futurist vibe permeates these eight instrumental tracks, capturing the nervous adventurousness of take-off (‘Countdown’); the serenity of space ships in flight (‘Acid Rain’) and the starlight twinkle of the firmament (‘You Knew’). From glitchy, progressive edm, through almost dubby ambient trance to a sense of oddly familiar otherworldliness (in particular the gently hypnotic ‘Plastic Forever’), ‘The Only Way Out Is In’ doesn’t break new frontiers in maybe the way pioneering astronauts might, but at its best (the title track for instance) it does take you on a trip, expansive kosmiche drones and wows anchored subtly by future factory electronic beats. Just occasionally (‘Truffles’ for example) it fails to achieve lift off but the



tripping up and stumbling headlong through the town, never quite falling, never regaining equilibrium, confused yet strangely exultant. As with previous Lucy Leave releases, there will be those who find this record unnecessarily oblique, too understatedly asymmetrical, and conclude that the band is scrappy and can’t play – news update: they can play like motherfuckers – but for those of us who would edit the fuzzball abandon of ‘Gymnastics Club’ into the prom scene of every John Hughes movie, this album is mysterious, ludic and quite, quite wonderful. We love it. You can tell. Look at our raised thumbs.

David Murphy

overall effect is to have you increasingly prone in your seat imagining slow-motion footage of sleek, shiny starliners gliding across a giant screen, and right now we’ll take that over the reality of catastrophic bush fires and Middle East missile strikes any time.

Ian Chesterton

SELF HELP

‘Milkshake’

(Self released)
After topping *Nightshift*’s end of year Top 25 in 2018 with ebullient pop-punk scurry ‘Get On With It’, Self Help had a quiet time of it in 2019 bar a few low-key gigs, so it’s good to see them emerge from their semi hermitic existence with this new single, one they describe as “sort of a punk song about neo-Nazis but in a disco format.” Given it’s titled ‘Milkshake’ we guess they’re imagining poor wee Tommy Robinson drenched in the finest vanilla McFlurry. Not that they’re laughing: this is music with a scowl. The vocals come with a belligerent scowl and the bass line is full-on Paddington hard stare. Rather than a disco banger it’s a militant punk dirge in the vein of Cabbage or maybe Shame’s darker moments, though there’s some great ping-ponging synthy laser fire to add to Self Help’s musical armoury. Milkshakes or lasers – either are perfectly suitable for firing at Nazis. Give it a go, why dontcha.

Dale Kattack

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ROBOT SWANS

‘rachis’

(Self released)
Whether it’s true or not, the backstory that Robot Swans provide alongside this four-track EP is compelling stuff. Apparently (or allegedly, if you’re feeling cynical), many of the synths and drum machines used on these songs were built by the band, and the lyrics for ‘(katie awakes as a) bad dog’ and ‘the wasps of julius leifeld’ are, respectively, delivered “through a series of increasingly complex dog commands” and “written by a toddler”. Top marks for thrift and inventiveness, at least. Earlier Robot Swans releases combined classic cutie/post-C86 indie-pop factors like coy, timid vocals and simplistic, pleasing melodies with electronically-produced rhythms and sounds. As with much of the deeply-underground indie-pop of the 90s and 2000s, this often resulted in frustrating music that was worryingly on a road leading towards ineptitude, with a tendency *away* from anything too slick or engineered. Perhaps due to the band’s new home-made electronic instrumentation, or their self-directed aim to break from convention, and to experiment more, these four songs are more enjoyable listens. At their core they are still nursery-rhyme-like sing-songs delivered in a shiftless, self-absorbed way; but when mixed with some bizarre aspects (and, indeed, song titles), it’s a sometimes joyous combination. ‘everything’s just fine driad’ is the most traditional track, sounding like a latter-period Sarah Records release – a mellow Even As We Speak, perhaps. ‘(katie awakes as a) bad dog’ wraps the aforementioned canine lyrics in an almost drone-centred meditation of repeated melody. ‘the wasps of julius leifeld’ (named for the singer Laura’s niece) is abstract and meandering, like Boards Of Canada covering The Field Mice. ‘greyscale’ wraps things up with a return to the normal-esque style of the first track on the EP. Good work, Robot Swans. Some self-examination and forced experimentation has done wonders.

Simon Minter



MEGZZ

‘Feel My Love’

(Self released)
It takes a particular kind of confidence to launch your debut, self-released EP with a headline show at the O2 Academy, but maybe Megzz here has something to be confident about. Megan Buckley, to give her her full name, has a voice that’s pure with a limpid quality that can’t be forced, and she never does force it. If there are very occasional moments of melisma, she mostly keeps the vocals on a tight rein, the better to let them breath some soul into these half dozen tender, jazzy r’n’b numbers that pitch in pleasingly somewhere between Jorja Smith and Pip Millett. Best of the bunch is ‘Comfort Zone’ with its languid dubby vibe and if Megzz doesn’t push too hard against her own personal comfort zone across the EP, it makes for a warm, cohesive set of songs.

Bekti Vassar

HALF DECENT

‘Sleep Paralysis’

(Quickfix)
The modestly titled Half Decent has done it again. Considering the amount of time people spend in bed, there are precious few decent tracks dealing with sleep issues (Faithless’s ‘Insomnia’ being a notable exception, but that was more for its colossal keyboard hook than the subject matter).

Inspired by his own struggles with a psychophysical condition affecting one in every five people, latest HD release ‘Sleep Paralysis’ keeps the quality consistently high for this local lyrical powerhouse. The production has a great sense of space – a sparse beat around which ghostlike brass and guitar lines coil and swirl dreamily. A phat bass loop pins it down while Chris regales the listener with his travails: “a real rest is as big a dream as global human rights”; as a bit of an insomniac myself, this all too relatable.

This track sticks in the head, catchy Oxford hip hop being a rare bird. Admitting the influence of The Streets, Half Decent shares with Mike Skinner the ability to bring the listener into his world; it is patently not a world of blunts, bling, cars, guns and beefs, but Actual Real Life. B-side ‘We Won’t Forget’ is a strident call to humanistic mindfulness. Standard.

Leo Bowder

MOSA

‘I Sold You & You Sold Me’

(FourTwenny)
Mosa’s previous EP – last year’s debut ‘Dawned’ – found David Ashbourne bridging the gap between his old, bluesy outfit Samuel Zasada and his new more electronic sound. This follow-up dispenses almost entirely with his previous musical life and throws itself more fully into electronic soundscaping. Maybe not “throw”, more glide, on the EP’s title track,



as strings circle upward from dark, synthy beginnings, like a sun rising over a decaying post-industrial landscape. While that track is instrumental bar some almost Trent Reznor-like whispering, ‘Foaming At the Mouth’ brings back Ashbourne’s plaintive low-register growl – not exactly gothic but a reminder of the darker shade of blues he made his name with, but tempered by a lightness of touch musically. That balance of light and dark is even more acute on ‘Matter in Motion’, elegant, plangent cello swimming behind what sounds like a child’s musical box, the same sparse arpeggio repeated throughout until violin opens a curtain onto daylight, the haunted feel only slightly dissipated, the track becoming bolder, more rhythmic, a well crafted mood shift that suggest a future in film scores or Scandi noir soundtracking could be his if he wants it.

Dale Kattack

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Friday 7th

SINK YA TEETH: Modern Art Oxford

Following on from their superb showing at Fusion Arts at the end of last year, Norwich post-punk/electro-pop duo Sink Ya Teeth are back in Oxford – and this time it’s for free! Maria Uzor and Gemma Cullingford have teamed up with Oxford Young Women’s Music Project for a show as part of Modern Art Oxford’s Female February celebration, which includes an exhibition from Johanna Unzueta. Sink Ya Teeth’s sound is a funky, disco-friendly update on those sublime bands like ECG, Liquid Liquid, Bush Tetras and The Delta 5 that came up in the wake of punk, ignored rock’s cast-in-stone rules and cut a swathe of fresh air and sounds through the scene. Following tours with A Certain Ratio, they released their debut album in 2018, earning across the board praise and frankly they’re one of the best bands we’ve heard in the past few years, from woozily dubbed-out debut single ‘If You See Me’, to the slinkily propulsive crystalline Moroder disco-pop of ‘Glass’. The pair recorded a DIY video to new single ‘The Hot House’ at that Fusion show, featuring phone footage from audience members and a *Nightshift* cameo. It’s a precursor for their second album, released at the end of this month and is set to propel Sink Ya Teeth’s stock yet higher, so see them in a great small venue while you still can.

glitchy, dissonant soundscapes and warmly lysergic warped pop via tape cut-ups, analogue keyboards, loops and homemade instruments at tonight’s Divine Schism show. They’re joined by electro and math-rock maestro Kid Kin and new local electronic music star in town The Bobo.

THURSDAY 13th

PAUL CARELLA + JASON MANNs: The Jericho Tavern
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre
REVEREND BLACK’S ACOUSTIC CABARET: The Half Moon – Acoustic blues, country, folk and classic rock night with sets from Bone Machine, Sam Pope and Richard Brotherton.

FRIDAY 14th

OH WONDER: O2 Academy – Soft-focus, breathy synth-pop and r’n’b from the London duo, touring third album ‘No One Else Can Wear Your Crown’, the follow-up to 2017’s Top 10 hit

‘Ultralife’.

OH WONDER: Truck Store – Instore set ahead of their O2 show.
GET LOOSE + BONE MACHINE + MILA TODD: The Wheatsheaf – Blues rock from Get Loose at tonight’s It’s All About the Music showcase, alongside Pixies tribute band Bone Machine and a solo set from Ciphers singer Mila Todd.
DODO + PUPPET MECHANIC + SATURN FARMHOUSE + IONA COBURN: The Bullingdon – It’s All About the Music showcase with accordion-led folk-punk outfit Dodo; downbeat indie in the vein of Tindersticks and Radiohead from Puppet Mechanic and tripped-out electro-pop from Iona Coburn.
CUT THE TRAP: The Bullingdon – Hip hop and trap club night.
ROBIN ASPLAND: The Wheatsheaf – Spin jazz club.
SKYLARKIN’ SOUNDSYSEM VALENTINE’S SPECIAL: Tap Social, Botley – Count Skylarkin’ returns to town for an all-vinyl Valentine’s Day dose of ska, rocksteady, reggae, dancehall and, of course, lovers rock.
SAM LEWIS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Soulful country roots in the vein of Townes van Zandt, Black Keys and Loudon Wainwright from Nashville singer-songwriter Sam Lewis at tonight’s Glovebox show, the singer touring his new ‘Waiting on You’ album.

SATURDAY 15th

SORRY: The Jericho Tavern – Eclectic garage/grunge/punk/pop sounds from the rising London crew – *see main preview*
REGGAETON PARTY: The Bullingdon – Puerto Rican melange of hip hop and Latin American and Caribbean dance club night.
THE MOONRAKERS: Wesley Memorial Church – Original folk songs and reimagined traditional tunes from the local outfit, mixing up English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh traditions as they launch their new album ‘Ebb & Flow’.
THE CORSAIRS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Rockabilly, punk and ska from the veteran local trio.
MURRAY TORKILDSEN: Newlands Inn, Eynsham – New wave, country and blues-inspired songs and market town soul and wit from Harlow’s Torkildsen, former frontman with John Peel faves The Sweeney and tourmate with John Otway.
A-WATTS: East Hanney British Legion

SUNDAY 16th

KLUB KAKOFANNEY: The Wheatsheaf (3.30pm) – Free afternoon of live music in the Sheaf’s downstairs bar with sets from Mark Atherton & Friends; Puppet Mechanic; Tony Batey & Sal Moore, and Matt Sewell.
GRAWL!X + JUNK WHALE: The Library – Atmospheric dream-pop and airy electronica from Derby multi-instrumentalist James Machin, aka Grawl!x at tonight’s Divine Schism show, with support from local fuzz-pop/emo faves Junk Whale.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
THE LATIN BREW CREW: Abingdon Arms, Beckley (6.30pm) – Free live jazz with Pete Oxley (guitar), Keith Fairbairn (percussion), Frank Harrison (piano) and Mark Hodgson (bass)

MONDAY 17th

STEVE KNIGHTLEY: Nettlebed Folk Club – A return to the Intimate setting of Nettlebed’s legendary folk club for Show of Hands frontman Knightley.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Castle

TUESDAY 18th

WEDNESDAY 19th

WORKING MEN’S CLUB: The Bullingdon – The spirit of post-punk Manchester crosses the Pennines – *see main preview*
METAL TO THE MASSES: The Wheatsheaf – First round heat of the battle of the bands to win a place at this summer’s Bloodstock, tonight with Arimea, Doomtrodon and Burned For Heresy.

THURSDAY 20th

JACK J HUTCHINSON BAND: The Bullingdon – Classic southern rock and blues in the vein of The Allman Brothers and Lynyrd

Saturday 15th

SORRY:

The Jericho Tavern

Formed and fronted by childhood chums Asha Lorenz and Louis O’Bryan, Sorry sound like a band growing up before your eyes and ears. Like curious kids, they’ve tried stuff on for size and discarded it if it didn’t fit, keeping what they like and moving on to add new discoveries to their musical arsenal. So, from their scrappy early mixtapes, they’ve explored uptight, angular post-grunge; woozy indie spangle; dysfunctional, off-kilter art-pop; pensive Pixies-inspired rock; trip hop and a fair bit of Sonic Youth-y noise. They’ve variously sounded chaotic, half-formed and brilliant and as they approach the release of their first full album, ‘925’, later in spring, they sound as good as they ever have with wonderfully sleazy recent single ‘Right Round the Clock’ having seemingly pillaged the heart and soul of Tears For Fears’ ‘Mad World’ before popping round to Kim Gordon’s house and asking her to chop it up and put it in a pie, with b-side ‘Rock’n’Roll Star’ sounding like a drunken jazz-skronk comedown after a sleazy garage rock night of debauchery. At this rate of change and improvement, what the album, or tonight’s show, will sound like, is uncertain, but the certainty is it’ll be great.



Skynyrd from hirsute axe hero Jack J at tonight’s Haven Club show, the man back in town fronting his own band after recent visits alongside Troy Redfern and Mike Ross.
SPINNER FALL + FLIGHTS OF HELIOS: The Library – Post-punk and 80s DC hardcore-inspired rockers Spinner Fall headline, plus an acoustic set from this month’s cover stars.
JULIAN NICHOLAS: The Wheatsheaf – Spin jazz club.
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre

FRIDAY 21st

APRE: The Bullingdon – Electro-pop from the London duo.
TRACKSUITS & TRANCE: The Bullingdon – Retro trance and techno club hits.
GRAND PALACE SCAM + THE JERICHOs: O2 Academy – dark-edged alt.rockers Grand Palace Scam headline tonight’s It’s All About the Music showcase, alongside indie rockers The Jerichos.
THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE + STARBELLY + CHEAP PETROL: The Wheatsheaf – Acid trance-meets-surf rock and psychedelia from the mighty Pink Diamond Revue at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show, with support from gothic shoegaze crew Starbelly.
BOSSAPHONIK with ME & MY FRIENDS: Cowley Workers Social Club – The world jazz dance club night welcomes Afro-folk group Me & My Friends to town, fusing cello and clarinet-laden folk tunes backed with reggae and West African grooves. Host Dan Ofer spins Latin jazz, Afrobeat, Balkan beats, nu-jazz and more.
THE HOOLIE BAND: The Jericho Tavern – Funk and disco ceilidh, bringing Chic, The Bee Gees and more into the folk dance world.
A BAND CALLED MALICE: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribute to The Jam.

SATURDAY 22nd

SKYLARKIN SOUNDSYSTEM: The Bullingdon – Ska, dancehall, rocksteady, reggae and more from Count Skylarkin’.
GRUDGEWOOD + SEMPER VERA: O2 Academy – High-velocity, riff-heavy tech-rock from Grudgewood, taking inspiration from Tool, Van Halen and Primus at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show.
JODY & THE JERMS: The Wheatsheaf – Indie pop in the vein of Best Coast, Summer Camp and Blondie from the local newcomers.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: James Street Tavern
ROADKILL: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Reunion gig for the local rockers.

SUNDAY 23rd

MISCREANT + DREAMEATER + THE HOPE BURDEN + INDICA BLUES: The Bullingdon – Quadruple portions of

heavy at tonight’s Dancing Man show with Nottingham’s dark, groove-metallers Miscreant touring their ‘Living Death’ EP, with support from metalcore crew Dreameater, taking inspiration from Bury Tomorrow and Loathe; epic post-metal in the vein of Isis, Wolves in the Throne Room and Deafheaven from Metal to the Masses winners The Hope Burden, and psych-stoner rock crew Indica Blues.
SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Half Moon (3pm) – Free afternoon of live music with Firegazer, Superloose and more.
BLUES JAM: Fat Lil’s, Witney (3pm) – Monthly open jam session.
OPEN MIC SESSION: The Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Tree, Iffley (4-6.30pm) – Classic blues and rock covers from the veteran guitarist and chums.

MONDAY 24th

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

TUESDAY 25th

WEDNESDAY 26th

JAMES D WALKER + JAKE FINN + JAKE INGRAM TAYLOR: The Wheatsheaf – It’s All About the Music showcase.
LAURENCE FOX: The Bullingdon – Gravelly soul-blues from *Lewis* and *Victoria* actor Fox, last seen playing the role of a car crash on *Question Time*, now touring his new album ‘A Grief Observed’.
FOFOULAH: Tap Social, Botley – a joint promotion from OCM and Upcycled Sounds, bringing London sextet Fofoulah to Oxford for the first time, the band drawing on Senegalese and Gambian Wolof music traditions, fusing Sabar rhythms with dub, electronic music, Afro-rock, Shamanic chants and Wolof dance.

THURSDAY 27th

GAMMY LEG PRODUCTIONS with MASIRO + VUKOVAR + MASTER OF NONE: The Library – Gappy Tooth Industries’ monthly offshoot/bastard child/evil sibling Gammy Leg Productions showcases local talent in the form of virulently brilliant instrumental math-core crew Masiro alongside dark, brutalist electronic/post-punk hellscapists Vukovar, inspired by Berlin-period Bowie, Coil, Thom Yorke and Joy Division. Completing a black-hearted triple bill are



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9th The Sunday Social feat. Mojo Demon / Atizan Blues Trio / Larry Reddington / Cat Shakers / Fancy Wootton @ The Half Moon 3pm free entry
14th Dodo / Puppet Mechanic / Saturn Farmhouse / Iona Coburn / Sarah Derrick @ The Bullingdon 7pm
14th Get Loose / Mogmatic / Bone Machine / Mila Todd @ The Wheatsheaf 7.30pm
21st Gran Palace Scam / The Jerichos @ The o2 Oxford 7pm
21st The Pink Diamond Revue / Starbelly / Cheap Petrol @The Wheatsheaf
22nd Grudgewood / Semper Vera @ o2 Oxford 7pm
23rd The Sunday Social feat. Firegazer / Superloose & more @ The Half Moon 3pm free entry
26th James D Walker / Jake Finn / Jake Ingram Taylor @ The Wheatsheaf 7.30pm
29th Sreamin’Irene & more @ the bullingdon 7pm
29th The Shapes / Emma Hunter / The Autumn Saints / Dandelions/ @ The o2 Oxford 7pm
29th Osprey & Co + special guests @ The Half Moon 9pm



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drama-laden electro-goth rockers Master of None, taking influences from Mark Lanegan, Nick Cave and The National.
CATWEAZLE: East Oxford Community Centre
REVEREND BLACK’S ACOUSTIC CABARET: The Half Moon – Acoustic blues, country, folk and classic rock night with sets from The Scott Gordon Band, Raymond Burke and Richard Brotherton.

FRIDAY 28th
HOT 8 BRASS BAND: O2 Academy – Return of New Orleans’ genre-blending jazzateers – *see main preview*
VEX RED: O2 Academy – Celebrating 25 years since their formation and a decade since they reformed, Aldershot’s electro-rockers head out on tour, promoting new EP ‘Give Me The Dark’.
THE PEOPLE VERSUS: The Bullingdon – Sweet-natured, hymnal chamber pop with a hint of folk and bluegrass from the local newcomers.

Wednesday 19th
WORKING MEN’S CLUB: The Bullingdon
Named in tribute to that fast disappearing cornerstone of working class British culture, Working Men’s Club have stayed true to those roots lyrically, determinedly taking aim at what singer Sydney Minsky-Sargeant calls “rightwing shits” on their song ‘Cook a Coffee’ (Andrew Neil in particular might want to turn the radio down if it gets airplay). Musically the band might hail from the east of the Pennines but it’s over on the west side where their musical roots really lie, the band’s sonorous gothic-motorik post-punk fully in the lineage of Manchester legends Joy Division, New Order, The Fall and A Certain Ratio; recent single ‘Teeth’, with its funky tribal beats and electro pulse, could easily have been a late-70s Manc anthem. It was released on Heavenly, with whom they signed in the wake of debut ‘Bad Blood’ and saw them joined by members of Moonlandingz and Drengé. Last time round in Oxford Working Men’s Club played a superb set to a packed room at Ritual Union, widely hailed as one of the day’s best shows. They learned from some of the best of course, having gone out on tour with Fat White Family, but with their debut album due soon, the students are fast becoming the masters.



SOUL SISTA: The Bullingdon – Classic Motown, funk, soul and disco at tonight’s club night.
METAL TO THE MASSES: The Wheatsheaf – First round heat of the battle of the bands to win a place at this summer’s Bloodstock, tonight with Bring the Onslaught, Denial of Humanity and Knoww.
TOOLOGY: The Jericho Tavern – Local Tool tribute.
JOE HICKS AND LIMPET SPACE RACE: Old Fire Station – The Listening Room hosts singer-songwriter Joe Hicks, blending pop, blues and folk influences, combining intricate guitar composition with classic pop songcraft. Local outfit Limpet Space Race support, the experimental duo mishmashing pop, jazz, prog and electronics.
PLEASURE AND THE 9th SENSE BEAUTY: Old Fire Station Loft – a specially commissioned piece by Oxford Improvisers, with Sonic Pleasure, Paul Twine and The Mark Browne Trio.
RADIO GAGA: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Queen tribute.

SATURDAY 29th
THE SHAPES + EMMA HUNTER + DANDELIONS: O2 Academy – Recent *Nightshift* Introducing artist Emma Hunter brings dark drama and flamboyance to the stage with a flamenco-fuelled mix of surf pop, trip hop, spaghetti western soundtracks and 50s pop and a fantastic voice that recalls Anna Calvi and Sharon Van Etten. She’s joined by roustabout rock romantics The Shapes with their infectious blend of blue-eyed soul, 60s r’n’b, pop balladry and folky punk.
GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with BRITE SPIRES + HOAX PARADE + THE VALIANT EFFORTS: The Wheatsheaf – Another eclectic mix of up’n’coming talent from GTI, this time round with spangly electro-pop crew Brite Spires alongside fuzzy indie janglers Hoax Parade and delicate pop from former Earnest Cox people The Valiant Efforts.
PSYCHEDELIC SUNRISE with MANDRAKE HANDSHAKE + THE ELEPHANT TRIP: The Jericho Tavern – Double dose of local psychedelic live music with a headline set from expansive ensemble Mandrake Handshake, taking a spaceward trip inspired by The Brian Jonestown Massacre, Jefferson Airplane and Ride, plus dark, Doors and Hendrix-inspired rocking from The Elephant Trip, launching new singles ‘Devil At The River’ and ‘Surf Flamenco’. Plus psych DJ sets between and after the bands.
YOUNG WOMEN’S MUSIC PROJECT 20th ANNIVERSARY SHOW: Oxford Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre – Celebrating twenty years of providing tuition, empowerment and safe spaces for young women, YWMP hosts a special anniversary show, featuring sets from London-based Jenny Moore’s Mystic Business, mixing rhythm-led incantations and harmony-heavy chant pop; Bristol’s raucous post-punk quartet Slagheap; a first solo Oxford show from



Friday 28th
THE HOT 8 BRASS BAND: O2 Academy
Formed in 1995, New Orleans’ Hot 8 Brass Band earned their reputation playing the jazz clubs and festivals of their native city, as well as local jazz funerals, but it was in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina that they achieved worldwide recognition, featuring in Spike Lee’s documentary *When the Levee Broke: A Requiem in Four Parts*. As a result they became the first American act signed to Tru Thoughts, their fusion of New Orleans marching brass and jazz with hip hop and funk spicing up a traditional style. Their endurance and increasing success, though, hasn’t been without tragedy. No fewer than three of the group have suffered violent deaths: trumpet Jacob Johnson shot dead aged just 17; 22-year-old trombonist Joseph Williams gunned down by the police and drummer Dinerral Shavers killed in a gang shooting when his stepson was the intended target. Such tragedies might have brought an end to lesser groups but they have endured and flourished, taking their messages – the brass backing up commentaries of injustice and violence in New Orleans – to ever wider audiences, including a great showing at last summer’s Truck Festival. Along the way they’ve added their own interpretations of The Specials’ ‘Ghost Town’, Joy Division’s ‘Love Will Tear Us Apart’ and Basement Jaxx’s ‘Bingo Bango’ to their set. What better way to get brassed off.

Candy Says’ Julia-Sophie; soulful r’n’b from Tiece, and drum tattoos from Team Drum, as well as YWMP DJs.
SCREAMIN’ IRENE: The Bullingdon – It’s All About the Music showcase with Aylesbury’s grunge rockers Screamin’ Irene and more.
OSPREY & CO: The Half Moon – Funky blues from local stalwart Os and chums.
ILLEGAL EAGLES: The New Theatre – Oh, good.
HOSPITALITY: O2 Academy
RAWDIO: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass and jungle club night.
IOTA + DOM PRAGG: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Harmony-heavy folk and folk-rock from IOTA at tonight’s Wychwood Folk Club, the trio made up of folk scene luminaries Sally Barker, Anna Ryder and Marion Fleetwood.

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.

LISA O’NEILL
The Bullingdon
Oxford
04.02.20

SORRY
The Jericho Tavern
Oxford
15.02.20

WORKING MEN’S CLUB
The Bullingdon
Oxford
19.02.20

APRE
The Bullingdon
Oxford
21.02.20

KIEFER SUTHERLAND
O2 Academy
Oxford
02.03.20

THE BIG MOON
O2 Academy2
Oxford
03.03.20

JAMIE CULLUM
New Theatre
Oxford
16.03.20

WARMDUSCHER
The Bullingdon
Oxford
19.03.20

THE CAT EMPIRE
O2 Academy
Oxford
SOLD OUT

PALACE
O2 Academy
Oxford
21.03.20

SQUID
The Bullingdon
Oxford
SOLD OUT

LLOYD COLE
SJE Arts Centre
Oxford
02.04.20

PORRIDGE RADIO
The Bullingdon
Oxford
03.04.20

THE NIGHT CAFE
O2 Academy2
Oxford
SOLD OUT

THE LOVELY EGGS
The Bullingdon
Oxford
12.04.20

FAR CASPIAN
The Jercicho Tavern
Oxford
28.04.20

MELT YOURSELF DOWN
The Bullingdon
Oxford
29.04.20

PAUL WELLER
The New Theatre
Oxford
SOLD OUT

BAMBARA
The Bullingdon
Oxford
15.05.20

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GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS / GRUDGEWOOD / CIPHERS / MY CROOKED TEETH

The Wheatsheaf

Gappy Tooth Industries’ monthly gig nights are like a musical version of one of those ocean floor hot air vents, slowly but surely pouring warmth and life into the world and tonight’s end of year showcase of the club’s favourite acts of the year is a good snapshot of the variety available on Oxford’s grassroots scene. My Crooked Teeth is a gentle introduction to the night, Jack Olchawski playing solo tonight, sat on a stool onstage and bringing some personable campfire warmth to this December evening. Without his usual live band his songs’ innate soulfulness comes to the fore; it’s a country rock confessional

with Jack’s sometimes bold and expressive, sometimes delicate voice revealing the romantic heart of songs like ‘Something Real’. Ciphers are a man down tonight – no Kid Kin on guitar – but they’re not letting that hold them back and if the start of the set wanders a little, once they ramp up the drama and let Mila Todd’s voice go to town, they hit those heights we know they’re capable of, gothic broodiness and shoegaze shimmer adding a moody shroud to more soulful rock and, in Mila’s Tanya Donnelly moments, just the right amount of mania. If Ciphers bring the mood lighting, Grudgewood bring the riffs. Lots and

lots of riffs. The trio’s instrumental prog-leaning heavy rock is clever, often convoluted, but rarely less than thrilling. Technical music can leave us cold and the musicianship on display here is frankly staggering at times – Tool meets Van Halen via Primus in a funky prog-metal fry-up – but Grudgewood are exhilarating as a spectacle. Yes they can be very slightly indulgent at times and yes they makes us feel pretty much every other musician in the room feel slightly inadequate, but sometimes you just have to stand back and enjoy a musical masterclass. As far as instrumental bands go,

Ghosts in the Photographs are the polar opposite. Polar being an appropriate word given the frozen soundscapes they conjure. Where Grudgewood are high-tech weaponry shock and awe, GITP are all about tectonic sonic world building, but in their very different way they’re equally visceral. Their extended tracks all heavily layered guitar textures, wide open spaces, dense blizzards and rising crescendos that achieve an elegant kind of ferocity, explosive torrents of glissando that carry you up to towering mountain peaks before dissipating with gentle abruptness to leave you slightly wide eyed amid the snowdrifts. No actual snow so far this Christmas but in Ghosts in the Photograph’s musical world, every day is a winter masterclass.

Dale Kattack

percussion, and come across as confident and proficient as ever. The new LP gets a thorough airing, its upbeat, catchy and neatly crafted songs fitting into their existing canon perfectly. Jamie MacColl’s guitar lines remain nicely understated, coming as he does from an impressive musical heritage: his dad Neill was in 80s indie band The Bible and he’s the nephew of Kirsty MacColl and grandson of folk legend and Iffley resident Peggy Seeger. ‘People People’ features powerful backing vocals from Liz and shows their knack of producing memorable tunes stamped with an instantly recognisable mark. Yet there’s also an annoying lurking element beneath proceedings; another new song ‘Do You Feel Loved?’ quickly descends into schmaltz, tugging at the emotions in rather a crude and tiresome manner. Lyrics can be insubstantial and pull at the heartstrings in rather a crude manner, while Jack Steadman’s vocal style lacks versatility and can come across as over-emoting and feeling a bit sorry for himself. But when they hit their mark with a glorious ‘Shuffle’ we can forgive them for everything, and the crowd lap up every note.

Art Lagun

THE SHAPES / WONDERLAND / THE OTHER DRAMAS

The Bullingdon

T’was the week before Christmas and all through the lands, people were partying, not least these three bands. The Shapes’ annual pre-Christmas show at The Bully feels as traditional as carols and holly these days and once the band have cranked out their cover of ‘A Fairytale of New York’, you know it’s well and truly the festive season.

Before that though we have The Other Dramas, who always feel more summer than winter, not least when Maria Ilett is singing ‘The Future is a Holiday’ and we’re just days away from endless adverts for Mediterranean cruises. The duo’s fuzzy, occasionally glammed-up garage pop might be purpose built for darkened basement bars but in their hearts they’re already on the beach, and once they kick out ‘Mermaid Song’, we can almost smell the suntan lotion over the mince pies and mulled wine.

Strangely enough, for a band always lumbered with the ‘goth’ tag, Wonderland always had something of the sunshine about them. Tonight’s set features just two songs from their original 90s incarnation and if ‘Falling’ is still a gorgeous highlight, the lysergic spangled folk-pop of ‘Big Universe’, and in particular the bruising ‘We Never Fall’ with its

Nine Inch Nails-go-Indian raga vibe, suggest they’re making the best music of their lives and even if the band were playing shows over 20 years ago they sound like one of the brightest new acts around. The Shapes, of course, are reliable old hands on the scene: never cool as such but always a treat: a band for whom entertainment has always been key.

The arrival of a three-piece brass and reed section has bolstered their sound hugely and tonight is the best we’ve seen them – and we’ve seen them a lot. Ant Kelly has amassed one of the most enviable song arsenals in Oxford, from the romantic longing of ‘Passing of the Years’, to the dance-the-regret-down folk-punk of ‘Til They Put Me In The Ground’, his hangdog balladeering given full-bodied soul sheen by Alix Champ’s backing vocals. Dexy’s, Van Morrison, The Beautiful South and The Pogues get chunked in the mixer and told to get dancing; The Archies’ ‘Sugar Sugar’ gets a fun outing and then we’re waltzing into the winter night to ‘Fairytale of New York’.

By the time you read this review it’ll be nearly February; Christmas is long gone but there’s plenty of dark nights left til spring. We need The Shapes as much as ever.

Dale Kattack

PODCASTS

The Wheatsheaf

The dust has yet to settle on the ruins of Trust Fund but former frontman Ellis Jones has already returned with new zeal. Having quietly called time on the project in which he cut his teeth, this new venture takes an entirely different approach. Whereas Trust Fund was charmingly DIY and chaotic, with band members rotating faster than *Love Island* contestants, Jones left his native Bristol for the sunny shores of Oslo and for Podcasts found a more steady group of musical collaborators.

The result is more intricate and less intimate. They might only be starting out together, but already Podcasts have built up a solid foundation of well-crafted pop-rock songs, a testament to their experience. Yet, if it weren’t for the distinctive wit underscoring everything Jones does, these songs might easily get lost in a sea of similar attempts at post-punk. While at times you can catch subtle flavours of surf rock

and country, musically there is not much that might make the music stand out. But already the observational humour, coupled with an infectious sense of fun and a palpable chemistry between the collaborators, makes for a great Friday night out. This is clearly a band that takes itself seriously but has mastered that rare art of nonetheless creating music that doesn’t take itself too seriously. Making The Wheatsheaf the first of three stops on their inaugural tour - called the ‘Stanstead Airport Duty Free’ tour - they smash through the setlist with at breakneck speed. Tonight they headline a mighty quadruple bill, including local acts Jeff and GRUB, and by the time 9:50 rolls around the crowd have been well warmed up and receive them eagerly. It’s a great start for a band with great promise. Podcasts prove that they deserve the title of your new favourite ungoogleable band.

Charlotte Banks





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DELE SOSIMI'S AFROBEAT ORCHESTRA

Cowley Workers' Social Club

It's a coup for Bossaphonik having Dele Sosimi and his full band play what's only the second gig in their new venue.

At 16 Dele joined uber-legend Fela Kuti's Egypt 80, and since has become Afrobeat ambassador to the UK. No wonder then there is a sizable crowd inside.

Dele is a dignified figure at the keyboards

and on vocals. He's often nearly motionless, yet he's charismatic and charming, leading his seven-piece Afrobeat Orchestra through a mix of popular Afrobeat tunes and newer numbers. His greatest gift is as an arranger; while often he has the beat pounding through the soles of our feet to the delight of the dancers, sometimes it's cleverly understated, as when the hypnotic

repeated 'churp churp' sound of the wood block leads the dance.

It helps if you're surrounded by good musicians, and Dele appears to have made sure he is, particularly the brass section; in unison they rattle our filings but their soloing is even more impressive. The trombonist has his moments and the sinuous trumpet solos are quality and keep coming, each one different but seeming even better than the one before. But it's the playing of the rarely sighted bass saxophone that astonishes most; we speculate that to get through a gig you probably have to work out regularly to be able to lift the monster and then have extraordinary lung power as your superpower. Perhaps this is why this instrument isn't seen out and about that often. Dele's man not only makes it growl and thunder but also coaxes it into purring and reaching sweet sounds further up the register than we'd expect it to go. Dele's arrangements give plenty of space for the brass players and other band members to impress individually. Another aspect of what we are coming to realise is Dele's generosity in his calling to the stage local musicians who've done a pre-gig workshop with him. The locals do not let either him or themselves down.

Sosimie and his band play without a break for well over two hours (more of his generosity) with one of our favourites being the social commentary of 'Money Get Power'. When he does call time it's with an atmospheric train song; we can hear the wheels turning and the whistle blowing before he announces that "this train terminates here, all change please." Really, the whole gig's been a fantastic ride.

Colin May

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Despite the Hunting Act 2004, organised hunts around the country are still chasing and killing wild animals such as foxes and hares.

The police have said that it's not a priority to enforce the law and have left the hunts to continue their blood sport with little fear of prosecution. When hunts are caught red-handed, they claim it was an 'accident' that an animal was chased and torn apart by their hounds.

The Hunting Act needs to be strengthened and enforced. However it is now under threat from the hunting fraternity who want to revoke it. Knowing that they don't have the support of parliament, they are seeking to weaken it by creating even more loopholes. Hunts must be held accountable for their cruel and reckless actions.

Until the law is tightened and properly enforced, hunt saboteurs are needed out in the fields to directly intervene to protect hunted animals.

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TIM TURAN’S SESSION NOTES

Part Thirteen

Mastering, part 3: Compressors & Limiters

This month I want to look at two of the most powerful processors in the mastering chain: compressors and limiters. They are usually combined into one piece of outboard gear in most studios but as software processors they are separated in to individual plug-ins. They are in fact two distinctly different things and are used to control dynamic range. Simply put, dynamic range is the difference between the quietest and loudest signal levels. Control of these levels is essential. You can use them creatively or, as we shall find out later, destructively. When tracking in the studio compressors are used to prevent overload of the signal path due to the nature of transients. Transients are those huge bursts of acoustic energy that happen over a very short space in time at the front of a waveform. Examples of these are snare and bass drum hits along with hard edged guitar chords and brass instruments. Compressors are also used creatively to sculpt a particular sound or to add some cohesiveness to the mix, or ‘glue’ as some engineers are prone to say.

The typical controls on a compressor after the input level are ‘threshold’. This is the point that the compressor starts working. Any sound that goes beyond the threshold will be compressed. Next up is attack; this determines how fast the compressor will respond to the signal once the threshold has been breached. If you want to tame those huge snare hits you will set this to a very short time, usually measured in single milliseconds, sometimes microseconds. Next up is the ratio. This can seem a bit confusing at first but the ratio determines the output in relation to the input. For example a 4:1 ratio will mean that for a 4db change at the input only a 1db change will occur at the output. Most compressors will have a variable ratio setting that will go up to 20:1 or even ∞(infinity) : 1. Next control is the release: the time it takes for the compressor to return to its starting point once the signal has fallen below the threshold. You can set this to be very quick or quite slow. Finally you have the make-up gain. When you compress signals you will end up with a quieter result and the make-up gain will restore that level. Limiting (as the name suggests) limits peaks absolutely, to ensure no clipping or distortion of the signal. This is the ∞ : 1 setting of the ratio control.

So, how do these processes work in the mastering world? For a start, when

mastering you are dealing with a finished stereo mix of a track not individual instruments. I always use *very* gentle compression settings when mastering audio. The idea is to impart some analogue valve warmth to the sound given that most material has been digitally recorded and mixed on DAWs (digital audio workstations). In some cases, mainly with hip hop, r&b and rap, I will make the compressor ‘pump’ to the beat using the attack and release times in relation to the tempo. Again it’s a subtle process. The unsble process begins with the dreaded limiter. This device in its software form is used by pretty much everyone as a ‘loudness’ machine. The more you pull down the threshold the louder the sound will be. This is how the loudness wars began in the mid 90s. The sonic damage these limiters can cause is excruciating. In a lot of cases I receive audio for mastering that has been limited to within an inch of its life. The first thing I have to do before I can do any useful work is turn the level down. The waveforms look like pieces of LEGO when viewed on the screen. There is *no* dynamic range and everything is at one punishing level. The true use of a limiter (there’s a clue in the name here) is to limit the peaks so there is no digital clipping. Thankfully there is the new LUFS (loudness units full scale) requirement for streaming platforms that ensure audio is mastered to sensible levels, typically -14db.

So please don’t submit ‘crushed’ mixes for mastering. As Bob Katz says in his mastering book: “It’s not how loud you make it, it’s how you make it loud”.

Next month I’ll look at the fascinating world of equalisation or as it’s commonly known: EQ.



Dr SHOTOVER: Discount Dracula

Ah, there you are, Master Harker. Welcome to the Beast Indies Club. Enter freely and at your own peril... let Igor take your travel cloak and boots, while Hans hands you a candle and some sandals. Pull up a coffin, and get a round of ‘claret’ in for the assembled guys and ghouls. Now, how was your journey here? Usual route, was it? Over the Austerity Mountains via the picturesque Smegzit Pass...? (Yes, you really know things have come to a pretty pass when you get to Smegzit). Then you of course clambered into a dark, dirty and badly-sprung carriage which took you through the Blue Forest of Toryvania. I gather it was Coachman ‘Grunt’ Shapps who drove you here. Strangely chatty for a Hammer menial, isn’t he? Totally inane under-informed blether, mind you – all of it. What was that distant howling? Oh, just the Children of the Night – or the Young Tories, as we call them. Have another drink, my dear sir. A schnapps with Shapps, perhaps? Quite soon we shall be seeing the Master of the Castle. Boris? BORIS? [Laughs]... No, Boris is the fat blond talent-free butler. The real Dark Lord is Count Dregula, aka Dominic Scummings. You will get used to him sashaying around in his cape and half-mast Transylvanian trackie bottoms. Yes, he really looks a fright.

Personally I can’t wait for some torch-bearing, crucifix-wielding, stake-sharpening villagers to come up the drive. Till then... cheers! Down the (punctured) hatch. Next month: A Word from Totally Unbiased Journalist ‘Laury the Tory’ Kuenssberg



‘What’s that? My ARSE is showing? Oh, I didn’t know BORIS was in the room’

INTRODUCING....

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

JOELY

Who is she?

Joely, 19, is a singer and guitarist from Oxford. She began performing solo aged 10. While studying music at college, she met the people who would later form her band. After a few singles, she released her debut six-track EP ‘Joely’ early last year, launching the EP with a headline show at the O2 Academy. She has subsequently played BBC Introducing stages over the summer at BBC Countryfile Live, Witney Music Festival and The Big Feastival. Her new single ‘Get Up & Go’ came out last month.

What does she sound like?

Soulful jazz-lounge with the catchiness of pop. Musically her songs are soft and intimate but equally rhythmical and edgy and there’s a soulful weariness about both her voice and lyrics, with ‘Get Up & Go’ pondering “the strangeness of not feeling quite like an adult nor a child and wanting to fly the nest”. A *Nightshift* live review said: “there’s something of the lost jazz siren about Joely, something of the wee small hours and the loneliness of faded jazz bars.”

What inspires her?

“Hearing a song I wish I’d written; watching a performance I wish I’d given. The biggest form of inspiration comes when someone is bringing something new and refreshing to the table.”

Her career highlight so far is:

“My headline EP launch gig at the O2 last year. The amount of people who showed me support by coming to the gig and showing love to the EP surpassed my expectations; all the hard work and stress leading up to that night felt worth it. ”

And the lowlight:

“Nothing’s been soul destroying so far, touch wood. I guess occasional periods of writer’s block resulting in loss of confidence has had its moments.

Her favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

“So much good music comes out of Oxford; Dolly Mavies is amazing live and a great songwriter; Harry Quinn is like John Mayer with an acoustic guitar and a ton of soul and groove and I’m a big fan of Willie J Healy; he



brings something unique and fresh to the indie guitar scene.”

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

“‘Rumours’ by Fleetwood Mac. I think, between the different gigs I’ve done in my life, I’ve probably played this whole album now.”

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

“Atic in Bicester on the 7th Feb. Expect the full band experience, soulful vocals, slide guitar, and me doing awkward talking between the songs.”

Her favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

“Favourite is the community: everyone seems to know each other and support each other, whether that’s at the O2 or an open mic down the pub. It’s a small enough scene for that to be a thing and I love that. I really can’t think of anything I feel hinders my enjoyment of the Oxford music scene; maybe the unlikelihood your favourite artist is going to come to Oxford. It feels like the city rarely makes an appearance on tour posters.”

You might lover her if you love:

Joni Mitchell; John Mayer; Amy Winehouse; Bruno Major; Kacey Musgraves.

Hear her here:

Joely on Spotify / Apple Music / facebook.com/joelymusic

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

Midwinter and dark days for Oxford music in February 2000 with news that local stars Unbelievable Truth and The Egg had both become victims of the music industry’s belt tightening. Virgin dropped Unbelievable Truth despite debut album ‘Almost Here’ selling a respectable 20,000 copies and the band scoring successes across Europe and supporting Tori Amos in the States. Trance-rockers The Egg, meanwhile, were left homeless when their label, China, was disbanded by Warners.

In other bad news live music in Charlbury was under threat when trouble in the town between teenagers and police was blamed by some residents on monthly live music night The Lock-In, run by local band Canola’s Josh and Siobhan Lambert, despite the fact those concerned hadn’t even attended the gig that night. Nevertheless, The Lock-In was cancelled and the Nimbys got their little kick.

Also closing down was the legendary Chipping Norton Recording Studio. The studio, now commemorated with a Blue Plaque, hosted Status Quo and Gerry Rafferty in its 25 years, as well as being the place where Ride recorded ‘Going Blank Again’ and Radiohead made their debut ‘Pablo Honey’.

On the gig front NME’s Carling-sponsored tour featured Shack, Les Rhythmés Digitales, Coldplay and an astonishingly loud Campag Velocet at Brookes University Union, while Therapy? Death in Vegas and The Clint Boon

Experience were at The Zodiac, Rachel Stamp were at The Bullingdon and Seafood played The Point.

10 YEARS AGO

More youngsters promising great things on the cover of February 2010’s *Nightshift* – this time Dead Jerichos, a trio of teenage miscreants from Drayton who were singing about blood-spattered punch-ups at parties and the boredom of hanging around on street corners while still too young to play most of Oxford’s venues (they’d even found themselves slung out of a couple for attracting small armies of underage fans to the gigs they could get). “These songs are delivered with a tightly-wound mix of hooligan swagger and spangling, spidery art-pop subtlety. They fizz with steely intent and tell it like it is, but they’re danceable and fantastically catchy. Dead Jerichos rock with bruising elan of The Jam and Arctic Monkeys but skip and skitter with the wiry, uptight funk of Foals,” we gushed. “At 14 years old Drayton became the place to be with all the local youngsters with their bottles of Strongbow, or if you didn’t have the money for that, a 3-litre bottle of Frosty Jacks. Nasty stuff. That’s where I got most of my songs from – the mayhem we did and saw,” said singer Craig Evans, now one of the top hairdressers in town.

One of Oxford’s greatest success stories beyond its famous bands was of course The Club That Cannot Be Named, started by friends Alan Day and Dave Hale to promote their favourite hardcore

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

and metal bands. In February 2010 they celebrated their tenth anniversary with a show at The Wheatsheaf featuring the best of those local noise heroes, including Sextodecimo, Faith In Hate, Shouting Myke and of course JOR. Noses were broken, fun was had. Alan is now one of the UK’s leading promoters, in charge of booking some of the biggest bands on the planet.

5 YEARS AGO

Once one of those young scamps on the scene, February 2010 saw Gaz Coombes established as an elder statesman and releasing his second solo album, ‘Matador’. Featured on the cover of this month’s *Nightshift* Gaz talked about his formative experiences in Oxford music: “Ride at the Co-op Hall in 1991 was pretty much the first gig I ever went to. It was an amazing show and without doubt had a big impact on me, as it did for many people. As school kids they inspired us to grow our fringes, jump on a stage and believe we could have an impact, even if we came from a place where there wasn’t a big scene or movement, like there was in Manchester at the time. They totally put Oxford on the map musically.”

A pleasingly packed gig calendar featured gigs by Palma Violets, Fat White Family and Slaves at the O2 Academy as part of the NME Awards Tour; Hozier; Alvveys; The Staves; Jungle; Rae Morris, and Hudson Taylor, also at the O2; Slow Club at The Bullingdon, and Jonny Greenwood & the LCO Soloists at St John the Evangelist.

THE WHEATSHEAF
Saturday 1 st February – <i>CROSSTOWN CONCERTS</i> 7:45pm PEANESS
Thursday 6 th February – <i>THE SPIN JAZZ</i> 8pm STEVE WATERMAN
Friday 7 th February – <i>KLUB KAKOFONIE</i> 7:45pm MANDRAKE HANDSHAKE BEAVER FUEL / MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS
Saturday 8 th February – <i>M7TM HEAT 4</i> 7:45pm PIRAMUS / XYLOC / WEAPONRY
Wednesday 12 th February 7:45pm HOME COUNTIES / LUCUNA COMMON
Thursday 13 th February – <i>THE SPIN JAZZ</i> 8pm ROBIN ASPLAND
Friday 14 th February 7:45pm GET LOOSE / MOGMATIC / BONE MACHINE
Wednesday 19 th February – <i>M7TM HEAT 5</i> 7:45pm BURNED FOR HERESY DOOMTRODON / ARIMEA
Thursday 20 th February – <i>THE SPIN JAZZ</i> 8pm JULIAN NICHOLAS
Friday 21 st February – <i>IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC</i> 7:30pm THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE STARBELLY / CHEAP PETROL
Saturday 22 nd February 7:45pm JODY & THE JERMS
Wednesday 26 th February – <i>IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC</i> 7:30pm JAMES WALKER / JAKE FINN / JAKE TAYLOR
Friday 28 th February – <i>M7TM HEAT 6</i> 7:45pm BRING THE ONSLAUGHT DENIAL OF HUMANITY / KNOWW
Saturday 29 th February – <i>GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES</i> 7:45pm BRITE SPIRES HOAX PARADE / THE VALIANT EFFORTS
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TRACKS

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TOP TRACKS

ASHER DUST

Andrew Jones – aka AJ, aka Asher Dust, and several other *noms-de-plume* over the years – plays by no musical rules other than his own. This means he’s occasionally become disillusioned with making music and gone quiet, but strange, skewed creativity courses through his veins and so he always returns, off on another tangent, that maverick spark never diminished. Here he is again with one song, ‘Ring Out’, that is unmistakably him – he has one of the most instantly recognisable voices in town, soulful but snarling – but once again takes a left turn into the unexpected. In this case a harsh, metallic slab of nagging, almost industrial dark techno that clangs like the metallic walls of a far-future space prison. The influence of The Chemical Brothers and The Prodigy scraps and headbutts its way out of the triple caffeinated scurry, but also hints of Danel O’Sullivan’s Grumbling Fur project. Turn it up loud enough and it can start to feel like you’re being attacked by a swarm of angry cyborg bees, but on a purely sonic level that’s an experience to revel in, even as you try and suppress your rising panic attack. That the song is a tirade against knife crime only raises the tension bar an extra notch. Brilliant stuff, but watch out for your teeth – there’s a distinct chance you’ll grind them to stumps listening to this.

BRUNO MUERTE

A case of close but no cigar for Bruno Muerte, who in most other months might have nabbed the title of Top Tracks. Formed by Moogieman & the Masochists drummer Stefano Maio alongside fellow Oxford-based Italian Bini, the duo conjure atmospheric, almost gothic pieces, mostly instrumental, that range across this five-track offering, from galloping techno-western soundtrack – all Ry Cooder-style open-spaces slide guitar and electronic beats – through almost completely electronic techno throb, to more airy electro-shoegaze and cosmic drifting where the guitar becomes a middle distance spangle amid the more synthetic landscape. If ‘Monte Cristo’ is a tad ponderous, taking too long to really get a head of steam up, ‘Esplendidos’ is heavier, ready for the chase, its mix of far future and distant past reminding us a bit of Pink Diamond Revue’s surf rock-acid house soundclash.

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

On last track ‘Gan’ (a nod to *Blake’s 7*’s gentle giant character, we wonder?) we finally get some vocals and Bruno Muerte complete their journey to the gothic underworld. What they find there and what they bring back with them should be something worth waiting for.

EN-TRANCE

Blimey, we’re on a right old roll this month. Another one that might have come out on top in any other month. en-Trance is the work of prolific local producer, DJ and label honcho Joe Truby, whose speciality is up-and-at-‘em trance and progressive techno, this new track, ‘Throwback’, a seven-minute four-to-the-floor hard trance banger that’s got us bouncing round the *Nightshift* kitchen knocking mugs and ornamental cat crockery flying. It’s a proper powerhouse display, featuring a superb drop in the middle, that demands some decent pyrotechnics for full effect, so we stick a bunch of fireworks we were saving to celebrate the full and final collapse of the monarchy into the fuse box and dance around the ensuing conflagration. Everything is wrecked, including us, but you know what? It was worth it.

MY CROOKED TEETH

Somewhat gentler pleasures here from long-time face on the scene Jack Olchawski, purveyor of wide-eyed romantic country-folk and a man who you imagine falls in love with all his heart at least ten times a day and finds wonder in the most mundane of everyday objects. ‘Something Real’ here is intimate in intent yet fulsome, almost epic, in delivery, Jack and his band very much in the mould of Stornoway and The Epstein as they warm their tender souls by the campfire. If en-Trance is the act most likely to end the night dancing amid the flames of a torched night club, My Crooked Teeth is the one most likely to be found broken hearted in the last saloon on the edge of town. Not to worry mate: tomorrow will bring ten more things to fall in love with.

FLAT LAGER

Following on from the above, Flat Lager are the band we imagined most likely to end the night involved in a mass brawl outside their local kebab van on the way home from an eight-pint Stella session. But, for the first couple of minutes or so of this new song they seem to have discovered their sensitive side, or at least calmed down enough from their default

roughhouse and raucous setting to start contemplating existential angst. Amid some hard to decipher drawling “someone said we’re the viruses” is a line that stands out, a realisation that humanity is an infection that needs cleaning off the face of the planet. It’s all rather dour and downbeat, edging into Radiohead territory for a few brief seconds, before the singer decides “fuck it,” necks his pint in one, orders another and glances round the pub to see who deserves a good shoeing first. Even then the first punch is slow in coming but soon enough Flat Lager are growling and bawling and standing in the middle of the market square, bare-chested and inviting all-comers to come and have a go if they think they’re hard enough. It’s not pretty and it likely won’t end well but in the interests of saving the planet, Flat Lager have realised the best course of action is to depopulate it of humans one closing time scrap at a time.

ROOKLING

“Hi *Nightshift*, I found your publication in the Music Box. It’s the Lord’s work you’re doing!” says Rookling by way of introduction, oblivious to the fact *Nightshift* mostly works for the other fella (the hourly rate is shocking but we get all the Asda own-brand gin we can stomach). We are, though, occasionally inclined to exclaim “Oh God, what is this?” when faced not with another earthly miracle but the result of some deluded would-be pop messiah’s grunted or mumbled musical proclamation. Which makes you think, “ha! Rookling’s about to get a proper critical kicking, let’s grab some popcorn,” but you’d be wrong, because while this song, ‘Football in the Field’, is about as wet as Piers Morgan’s nappy when he sees Meghan Markle eating a Greggs vegan steak bake, it’s also, in its own way, quite sweet, a simple, sad-eyed acoustic strum that might be as lacking in substance as candyfloss but comes with some starry-eyed poet vocals and a nice bit of folk fiddle playing to lift it to new heights in the chorus. Of course it probably needs to get its head out of that Victorian romance, turn off that Belle & Sebastian album and have a spell in the army, but, like stealing pocket money from baby otters, it feels unnecessarily cruel to be too unkind about something so gentle natured and pure of heart. So come on then Rookling – let’s be off down the field for a kickabout. Last one to five goals is a big softie pants.

RHYS WARRINER

Enough of sadness and softness – here’s Rhys Warriner and his song called ‘Ecstasy’, which at worst is bound to be a euphoric celebration of the wonders of life, and at best a bangin’ ode to getting completely off your noggin on a Saturday

night. Absolutely no way will it be tortured piano ballad with choice sexy lines like ‘You’re turning me on in those hot blue jeans’ sung in a pained, adenoidal voice that makes Jack Savoretti sound like Muddy Waters. It’s like a desperate record company exec decided to stick a bunch of jaded session musicians in a studio with a discarded first draft of a Snow Patrol b-side and ordered them to “polish that turd!” the result is much as you might imagine. “Light it up, light it up for me” pleads Rhys and we’re happy to supply as much petrol as required to erase all evidence this ever existed.

TOILET TRACKS

STEVEN B

There is, at the very edge of our cluster of galaxies, something called the Local Void, an area of space calculated to be anything up to 300 million light years across, where almost nothing exists. Listening to this bunch of songs made us think of it since it too is a vast lifeless vacuum, a gaping void where songs or ideas or at least a modicum of attitude should be. Steven B tells us he’s “a songwriter, lyricist and musician. I possess musical talents in music genres such as Top 40 music, Pop music and all similar genres. I also happen to be one of members of The Guild of International Songwriters & Composers (GISC) which is home based in U.K.” So obviously he’s a proper music person and not some sausage-fingered bedroom charlatan. And he has proper ambitions: “I have a huge interest to win a record deal / publishing deal / other music deal; if you happen to know or have any acquaintances, connections or relations in the industry who are able to lead and guide this into something substantial, kindly ponder to relate me with relevant person,” and we briefly consider putting him in touch with “Mad Dan” whose music industry experience mainly involves throwing stage divers and over-zealous moshers out onto the street and “sorting out” bands’ off-rider requirements. We’re damn sure he’d enjoy this melange of flowery boyband piano-pop, lightweight blues-soul bleating and, well, more flowery boyband piano-pop. Him being a big fan of Pantera and an old drinking buddy of Lemmy and that. Anyway, if anyone needs a song writing, Steven here’s your man: a couple of plays on Jack FM and an opening slot at the next James Arthur show in town guaranteed, and all for the very reasonable price of your soul and your dignity. Really, it’s enough to make you want to fire yourself into the cold, dark emptiness of space, there to freeze and suffocate to death and drift in the firmament for all eternity – which is a slightly shorter span of time than this demo seems to lasts for.

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Sun 2nd Feb

Billy Lockett

Wed 12th Feb • 6pm

Take Me Out
(Brookes Charity Special)

Fri 14th Feb • 6.30pm

Oh Wonder
- Album Release Show

Sat 15th Feb • 6.30pm

Bingo Lingo

Fri 28th Feb • 6pm

Hot 8 Brass Band

Fri 28th Feb • 6.30pm

Vex Red
+ Sœur

Mon 2nd Mar

Kiefer Sutherland

Tue 3rd Mar

The Big Moon

Wed 4th Mar • 6.30pm

Ally Pally Comes to Oxford
Uni Student Darts

Thur 5th Mar

The Aristocrats

Fri 6th Mar • 6.30pm

Temples

Tue 10th Mar

Kerrang! Radio Fresh
Blood Tour: PENGSHUI
+ Kid Bookie

Wed 11th Mar • 6.30pm

The Calling

Fri 13th Mar • 6.30pm

The SUPERSONIC 70s SHOW

Sat 14th Mar • 6.30pm

Anamanaguchi

Sat 14th Mar • 6.30pm

Twin Atlantic
+ bloxx

Thur 19th Mar

Lee Scratch Perry

Fri 20th Mar • 6.30pm • SOLD OUT

The Cat Empire

Sat 21st Mar • 6pm

Palace

Wed 25th Mar • 6.30pm

Plain White T's
+ Harry Marshall

Fri 27th Mar • 6.30pm

Joanne Shaw Taylor

Thur 2nd Apr

Hayseed Dixie
+ 8 Ball Aitken

Fri 3rd Apr • 6.30pm

Cut Capers

Sat 4th Apr • 6.30pm

Bulsara and His Queenies

Tue 7th Apr

Red Rum Club

Fri 10th Apr • 6.30pm

Dutty Moonshine Big Band

Fri 10th Apr • 6.30pm • SOLD OUT

The Night Cafe
+ Dreamers + On Video

Mon 13th Apr

Adore Delano - The A/D Tour

Thur 16th Apr

Henge

Fri 17th Apr • 6.30pm

Goldie Lookin Chain

Sat 18th Apr • 6.30pm

Fell Out Boy
& The Black Charade
+ We Aren't Paramore

Thur 23rd Apr • 6.30pm

Ally Pally Comes To Brookes
Student Darts

Thur 23rd Apr

The Hara (Evening Show)

Fri 24th Apr • 6.30pm

Whitechapel

Sat 25th Apr • 6.30pm

UK Foo Fighters (Tribute)

Sat 25th Apr • 11pm

King Shine Vs Empire

Mon 27th Apr

Mystery Jets

Sun 3rd May

And So I Watch
You From Afar

Tue 12th May

Lime Cordiale

Sat 16th May

Rhymeskeemz Live

Tue 19th May

Mark Lanegan & Band

Fri 22nd May

The Springsteen Sessions

Sat 13th Jun • 6.30pm

The AC/DC Experience –
Bad Boy Boogie Tour

Fri 11th Sep • 6.30pm

The Dualers

Tue 29th Sep

Scott Bradlee's
Postmodern Jukebox

Sat 3rd Oct • 6.30pm

Nirvana UK (Tribute)

Fri 16th Oct

CASH: Paying Respect To
The Main in Black. Playing
The Prison Albums