

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month
Issue 306
April
2022

photo: Lola Stephen

*"We are a
mutating
entity and
an ongoing
party"*

Mandrake Handshake

**All aboard the Magic
Tour bus with Oxford's
Psych Stars**

Also in this issue:

**Introducing THE PEOPLE VERSUS
At work with MARTIN NEWTON**

plus

**All your Oxford music news, reviews
and gigs for April**

OXFORD DUPLICATION CENTRE



Digitising Vinyl, Shellac, Acetate, Cassette, Reel to Reel, Cartridge
& Digital sources, to include all AV Video Tapes

Working on all projects, small or large for Corporate, Consumer and Heritage digitisation

Tel: 01865 457000 | 29 Banbury Road Kidlington OX5 1AQ
cheryl@oxfordduplicationcentre.com

THE BULLINGDON

APRIL 2022

GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Friday 1st April

Sean Walsh:
Back from the Bed

Doors: 7PM

Friday 1st April
HAUS Party
Volume 2

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 2nd April
Semi Detached X The Operation
Friend Within
Tuff Culture

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 3rd April

Melt-Banana

Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 5th April

Danny George Wilson

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 6th April

Lilibet
Enjoyable Listens
Tiger Mendoza
Half Decent

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 7th April

Police Dog Hogan

Doors: 7PM

Friday 8th April

Dreadzone

Doors: 7PM

Friday 8th April

Good 4 U

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 9th April

Reggaeton Party

Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 13th April

Brite Spire
The Subtheory

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 14th April

Count Skylarkin
Holy Thursday

Doors: 10:30PM

Friday 15th April

Kardinal X Voltstorm

Doors: 7PM

Friday 15th April

We Are Still Young

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 16th April

Terraforms 14th Birthday
Fabio & Grooverider (90 mins)

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 17th April

The Rock Project Oxford

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 20th April

Bobby Mair: Cockroach

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 21st April

Nathan Caton:
Let's Talk About Vex

Doors: 7PM

Friday 22nd April

Mclusky

Doors: 7PM

Friday 22nd April

Back to the 80s

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 23rd April

Musical Medicine
Eliza Rose

Doors: 11PM

Monday 25th April

Bambara
Nuha Ruby Ra

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 27th April

The Stevie Watts Trio

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 28th April

Sugarrush
The Midnight Suns
A-Tay and Malvor

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 28th April

So Fetch
2000s Party

Doors: 11PM

Friday 29th April

Bootleg Blondie

Doors: 7PM

Friday 29th April

Tracksuit & Trance
The Euphoria

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 30th April

Simple - Mayday Party

Anz & Jenson Interceptor

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 1st May

Kristin Hersh

Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 3rd May

Fluorescent Adolescent

Doors: 7PM

Friday 6th May

Noasis

Doors: 7PM

Friday 6th May

Drum and Bass

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 7th May

Time Warp!

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 8th May

Whyte Horses

Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 10th May

Adam Rowe: Imperious

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 11th May

Daze
Ben Pilston
Ben Pinches

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 12th May

Stray
Vambo

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 12th May

Semi Detached
TBA

Doors: 11PM

Friday 13th May

Geoff Norcott:
I Blame the Parents

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 14th May

Musical Medicine
Colleen 'Cosmo' Murphy
& Kirollus

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 15th May

Bob Vylan

Doors: 7PM

Monday 16th May

Grace Petrie
Jenny Owen Youngs

Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 17th May

Josh Berry

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 19th May

Crystal Tides

Doors: 7PM

Friday 20th May

Keston Cobblers Club
Nick Edward Harris

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 21st May

Simple
Haai

Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 25th May

The Wave Pictures

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 26th May

Peanness

Doors: 7PM

Friday 27th May

King Awesome

Doors: 7PM

Friday 27th May

Back to the 80s

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 28th May

New Boss Order X Outlook Festival

Oxford Launch Party

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 29th May

Battle Born
Bring to Bear
Jokers Parade

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 1st June

Musical Medicine
DJ Paulette

Doors: 11PM

Friday 3rd June

Skylarkin Soundsystem
David Rodigan

Doors: 11PM

Friday 10th June

The Quireboys
A Bit of What you Fancy
30th Anniversary Tour

Doors: 7PM

Friday 10th June

Raving Trippy
The Summer of Love

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 11th June

Semi Detached
TBA

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 12th June

Wrest

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 16th June

Jody and the Jerm
The Factory Lights

Doors: 7PM

Friday 17th June

The Deadbeat Apostles

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 18th June

Simple
Tim Reaper & LCY

Doors: 11PM

Thursday 23rd June

Ulysses Wells

Doors: 7PM

Friday 24th June

Rock of China
Don't Laugh
Roast Duck

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 29th June

The Vandoliers

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 14th July

James Oliver

Doors: 7PM

Friday 22nd July

Hurray for the Riff Raff

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 6th August

Semi Detached
Wookie

Doors: 11PM

Thursday 25th August

Debbie Bond
Pete Boss & Friends

Doors: 7PM

Friday 9th September

Noahfinn

Doors: 7PM

Friday 18th September

DIY Class of 2022 Tour
Yard Act
English Teacher
Lime Garden

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 22nd September

Laurence Jones

Doors: 7PM

Friday 23rd September

The 900

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 13th October

Jordan Brookes:
This is Just What Happens

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 18th October

Semi Detached
TBA

Doors: 11PM

Thursday 20th October

So Fetch
2000s Party

Doors: 11PM

Thursday 27th October

Mark Simmons:
Quip Off the Mark

Doors: 7PM

NEWS

Phone: 01865 372255

email: editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk

Online: nightshiftmag.co.uk



THIS YEAR'S TRUCK FESTIVAL is now sold out. The event, headlined by Sam Fender (*pictured*); Blossoms; Bombay Bicycle Club and Kasabian, sold its final weekend tickets on the 14th March. Truck, which runs over the weekend of the 22nd-24th July at Hill Farm in Stevenon, celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Acts chosen by the Truck Festival Bands App will be announced in the coming weeks. Full line-up and news at truckfestival.com.

SUPERNORMAL FESTIVAL sold out their initial allocation of tickets in under a minute when they were released on the 14th March. The leftfield music and arts festival, which takes place at **Braziers Park in Ipsden**, has earned a reputation as one of the best and most adventurous festivals in the UK. This year's event takes place over the weekend of the 12th-14th August following a two-year lay-off due to Covid. 2019's event featured sets from Hen Ogledd, Zu, Dälek and Sealionwoman. The next batch of tickets goes on sale within the next few weeks; keep up to date with sales details at www.supernormalfestival.co.uk.

RECORD STORE DAY takes place on **Saturday 23rd April** with Truck Store on Cowley Road and Rapture in Witney set to return to their traditional celebration of limited edition releases with live music and DJ sets after two years of smaller events due to Covid. For details of what's in store and for a full list of what both shops have in stock, visit truckmusic.store.

FRONT ROW FESTIVAL returns to Fritwell this year. The one-day festival takes place at **Fritwell Playing Fields** on **Saturday 25th June** with acts to be announced. Previous headliners have included Desperate Journalist. This year's event will be in aid of Oxfordshire Youth, Orinico, and The Hummingbird Cancer Care and Therapy Centre. Follow them at facebook.com/frontrowfest or [@frontrowfest](https://twitter.com/frontrowfest) on Twitter.

DIVINE SCHISM host another Oh, Community! mini-festival this month. The all-day event takes place at **Fusion Arts** on **Sunday 24th April**. Acts are yet to be announced. All proceeds go to the Oxford Young Women's Music Project.

LOW ISLAND release a new digital-only EP this month with all proceeds going to the **Disasters Emergency Committee** to help deliver aid to refugees and displaced people from the war in Ukraine. 'Just Another Dream' features four new songs, including the single 'Everything Before Us', and is released on the 8th April, but you can pre-order your copy at lowislandmusic.bandcamp.com. Meanwhile, local bands **Brite Spires** and **The Subtheory** play a benefit gig for Unicef Ukraine at **The Bullingdon** on **Wednesday 13th April**.



APHRA TAYLOR AND TAMARA will represent Oxford music at next month's **Are You Listening?** festival in Reading. The all-day event takes place across eight venues in Reading town centre on **Saturday 7th May**. Among the other acts announced are Alfie Templeton; Pip Blom;



GLASS ANIMALS spent their eighth consecutive week at the top of the global Spotify chart with their song 'Heat Waves' at the end of March. The song, taken from their third album 'Dreamland', released in 2020, has now been streamed over one billion times, becoming a huge global hit, reaching Number 1 in the US, Australia and Switzerland as well as a Top 5 hit across Europe. Last month the Oxford quartet became the first UK act to top the Billboard Chart in consecutive weeks since The Spice Girls with 'Wannabe' in 1997; 'Heat Waves' now holds the record for the longest climb to the Top 5 in the US chart's history, while they also received a Grammy nomination for Best Newcomers, despite forming in 2010 and releasing their debut album in 2014.

Glass Animals will join fellow Oxford stars **Foals** and **Supergrass** at this summer's **Glastonbury** in June. Local stars-in-waiting **Julia-Sophie**, **The August List** and **Mandrake Handshake** are among the artists on the Emerging talent long-list for this year's festival.

A reminder that Glass Animals, Supergrass and Foals all began life playing small local pub venues. Without small grassroots venues, the chart toppers and festival stars of tomorrow have nowhere to learn their craft. Also a reminder that with the closure of The Cellar, The Wheatsheaf and The Deaf & Hard of Hearing Centre in recent times, Oxford no longer has a single regular city centre gig venue.

Kathryn Joseph; Bob Vylan; Jockstrap; The Goa Express; Peanness, and Wesley Gonzalez. All profits from the day go to Reading Mencap which celebrates its 60th birthday this year. Full line-up and ticket details at areyoulistening.org.uk.

BBC INTRODUCING IN OXFORD, continues to showcase local music every Saturday night from 8-9pm on DAB and 95.2fm. The show, produced by Liz Green and presented by Dave Gilyeat, is available to stream and download at bbc.co.uk.

OXFORD GIGBOT provides a regular Oxford gig listing update on Twitter (@oxgigbot), bringing you new gigs as soon as they're announced. They also provide a free weekly listings email; just contact oxgigbot@datasalon.com to join.

MELTING POT on Get Radio continue to showcase and celebrate Oxford music on their fortnightly Thursday night shows hosted by Rich and Deadly, as well as hosting regular In The Mix shows with playlists from Oxford music luminaries. Local acts can submit music to be played by emailing info@getmeltingpot.co.uk.

NIGHTSHIFT is always keen to hear from new contributors – reviewers or photographers. If you're enthusiastic about live and new music or feel your favourite stuff isn't being covered in the magazine, get in touch at editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk.

DIGITAL BACK ISSUES OF NIGHTSHIFT going back to 2005 are available free at nightshiftmag.co.uk. One day we promise we'll get all back issues digitised and online.



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

PROGRESSION BREAKBEAT, ELECTRO, FUNK AND DISCO
FORTNIGHTLY WEDNESDAYS - 9PM

Mandrake Handshake

photo: Lola Stephen



“GOING ON TOUR CAN FEEL a bit like a school-trip sometimes; our manager has to do a roll-call to make sure everyone’s ‘present’. As far as Home Alone moments go, luckily, this hasn’t happened too often yet, fingers crossed. Though there was one time where we all left to do a photoshoot in Florence Park and locked our old singer Tegwen in our flat because we didn’t realise she was in the bathroom. Awkward.”

NIGHTSHIFT IS TALKING to Row Janjua and Trinity Oksana, respectively guitarist and lead singer with local psychedelia collective Mandrake Handshake, an ever-evolving ensemble that can number up to ten members at any given time, many of whom are tambourine players. With the their career beginning to seriously take flight, and more and more gigs around the UK, we have to wonder at the logistics and potential pitfalls of taking such an expansive group of musicians around the country. Quite aside from making sure everyone is present and correct when the tour bus sets off, simply getting everyone to fit on stage has been an issue at times. “Fortunately it’s becoming less of an occurrence for us now,” says

Row, “but in the early days, when we played venues like The Library and The Wheatsheaf, ten members was obviously a bit of a squeeze for those diminutive stages. So usually the tambourine players would stand on the floor, heads right in the PA, cheerleading in the audience. It wasn’t so much hierarchy, as practicality. I mean, you don’t have to plug a tambourine into anything in those kind of venues, so the percussionists can stand basically anywhere – in the audience, on the bar, in the loos...”

LONDONER ROW AND Toronto-born Trinity started Mandrake Handshake – originally under the name Knobblehead – back in 2018 having moved to Oxford to study at university, after Row experienced “an epiphany” at a festival. “I’d been in a band before but hadn’t done any music for a few years. But, when I went to Green Man in 2018 I saw the most cosmic of sets by legendary bands like The Brian Jonestown Massacre and King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard; I had an epiphany on a mound there – the open D chord played by seven guitarists, man. I came back and started demoing immediately. “I got Trin to sing on some

demos and soon enough we were looking for musicians to play. I always tried to make the most of what was directly around me, and luckily, at the college I was at, I was surrounded by phenomenally talented musicians that weren’t in any other bands!”

THE CURRENT MANDRAKE Handshake line-up retains the core of the band’s original line-up, with Row and Trinity accompanied by rhythm guitarist ‘Robot’ Nick; drummer Joe Bourdier; multi-instrumentalist David Howard Baker; keyboard player Shan Shriharan, and a double dose of tambourine players named Elvis and Eris. Other members, including extra tambourine players, come and go as time and tide dictate, and having begun life as a student band, a steady line-up was never really on the cards. Row: “The retention of bandmates was never something I saw as particularly likely at the beginning, which was why the idea of having a loose collective was so attractive. It actually turned out to be pretty easy. Everyone in the band at the moment is very committed, but it has taken us a while to find the right line-up. As mentioned in a previous *Nightshift* Introducing feature with

the band, Row and Trinity found the university and the students generally disinterested and unsupportive of bands and gigs, which prompted them to seek out the local scene from the off. “I don’t think university students are as interested in going to rock gigs as they used to be. It’s more about club nights now, and Abba re-runs. Sadly, I don’t think this is going to change anytime soon. “Going out and meeting and mixing with the non-student music scene was one of the most easy and natural experiences. Being inside the university bubble, me and Trin were worried that the initial step might be hard, but we found the Oxford music scene incredibly welcoming. “If I had to give advice to other students wanting to form a band and get involved in the local scene, I’d say meeting the right person is always around the corner, so don’t get too hung up on small setbacks. Just keep writing and putting yourself out there. You’ll get noticed! Also, don’t look to the uni for any validation. You must find that within yourself.”

MANDRAKE HANDSHAKE’S debut release, as Knobblehead, was their excellent ‘Aeroplane Membrane’ single, which came

out on All Will Be Well – the local DIY collective label helmed by future Mandrake recruit Shan, better known among Oxford music fans as Moogieman. ‘Aeroplane...’ drew together various strands of psychedelia, from 60s wyrd-folk and flower power, through Brazilian and Indian psych traditions to the 90s krautrock-inspired sounds of bands like Stereolab – a band that has been a huge influence on Row and Trinity and the band from the very start and came fully to the fore on their glorious 2020 magnum opus ‘Hypersonic Super-Asterid’, nine-minutes of expansive, motorik hypno-pop that honed the band’s loose collective vibe into something singular and irresistible. Row: “Structurally Trin and I saw a lot of similarities between ourselves and Tim and Lætitia from Stereolab, who wrote the music and vocals respectively – as well both being vicious communists... Sonically, the cleanness of their sound, the absolute precision, and the sheer nuance of every. fucking. part. Nothing is accidental and that in itself is mind blowing.”

Mandrake Handshake have described their sound as “flowerkraut”, an accurate appraisal of the influences they draw on – a convergence of disparate psychedelic and hypnotic music from across the decades and around the globe. Trin: “Shan, the Moogieman, himself, came up with the name actually on some social media post and we were like, ‘this is perfect, let’s use it.’ Our music is colourful and bright and outward-facing, like flowers, right? And most of our songs are quite long: a lot of Neu!-esque motorik beats, experimental grooves with absurd time signatures, hence the Kraut.

A PIVOTAL MOMENT FOR Mandrake Handshake came in the summer of 2019 when they played the inaugural – and sadly, due to Covid, only – Oddball Festival – a one-day celebration of psychedelia held in the garden of The Isis Farmhouse in Iffley, headlined by The Sun Ra Arkestra and featuring a host of psych-minded Oxford acts. Not only were Mandrake Handshake one of the standout acts on the day, it helped them feel part of something bigger – at the time, a burgeoning local psych scene. Trin: “The psychedelic scene in Oxford felt particularly strong around the time of Oddball, which was why that event was so successful. You had us, Jeramesa, The Elephant Trip and more: bands which we were particularly close with at that time. But there hasn’t been another Oddball since. There are still so many bands in Oxford

we adore: Flights of Helios, who we played with in December, and Catgod, who we’re playing with at the Jericho this month. But as far as psychedelic scenes go, it’s hard to say if it’s as strong as it was in 2019. Then again, not all of us live in Oxford anymore, so hopefully we’re very wrong about this.”

MANDRAKE HANDSHAKE’S run of early singles attracted the attention of Nice Swan Records – home to Courting, Sprints, The Rills and English Teacher among others. Signing to the label has taken the band’s profile to another level, with an EP, ‘Shake the Hand That Feeds You’, produced by Stereolab drummer Andy Ramsay, released last year and featuring the singles ‘Monolith’, ‘Gonkulator’

“No single genre tag could summarise us perfectly, especially as the music is changing quite a lot, but ‘Flowerkraut’ captures the gist, for the moment anyway.”

and ‘Mandragora’, as well as gigs around the UK including appearances at major events like Manchester Psychfest. With new songs recorded and set for release, the Psychedelic Roadshow is really rolling. Trin: “We released ‘Mandragora’ through Shan’s All Will Be Well label. It did quite well, and Nice Swan heard it on the *NME* New Bangers playlist and sent us an email saying, ‘we want to sign you’. It was really cool to be recognised by a label we already had respect for, and in what seemed like no time at all. “The best thing about being on Nice Swan, aside from the really cool exposure, has been meeting and playing with the other bands on the label. When gigs were coming back last Summer, the label organised a lot of showcase events. We ended up playing like four gigs with Opus Kink, who we since have become good friends with. Meeting likeminded musicians with similar dreams and ambitions to you has been very affirming for us.” Where have been the band’s favourite places to play beyond Oxford so far? “We always look forward to playing Glasgow. It’s an absolute riot: the crowd are always up for it, the people are aggressively welcoming. And the best rider and drinks we’ve ever received! They also have a great psych scene – check out the Kundalini Genie, Gelatine and Nekkuro Hana! Almost makes up for the shit weather.” The next couple of months will see another set of songs released. What can we expect – a continuation of or

a divergence from what we’ve heard up to now? Row: “To you, I don’t know. To me, it’s a clear divergence but it should always feel like that. The thought of staying where you are kinda horrifies me, so it should always at least be a development on previous work. The new EP is an exploration into time signatures and creative ways to blend soft, smooth and blistering atmospheres. We didn’t try to write for radio or anyone else, but really I was trying to channel what we had been listening to for the last year into something unique and passionate. It tackles lots of different energies in hopefully interesting and brave ways.”

WITH SUCH AN EXPANSIVE collective, and one that has changed

regularly and significantly over the course of the band’s lifetime, we wonder how Mandrake Handshake organise the songwriting and rehearsal process. While Row and Trinity are at the core of the collective, some of their gigs we’ve seen recently, have carried the air of jam sessions with songs emerging from what sound like semi-improvised workouts, in classic psychedelic style. Trin: “It’s a bit of everything really. In the early days, all the songs were fully formed from the Garageband demos Row had produced on his laptop. And that’s still the case sometimes too, especially over lockdown, where there was lots of time to demo new material. But the more the band has played together and the tighter we’ve become as a unit, the more stuff has come from jam sessions, from mucking about in rehearsals. ‘Mandragora’ originally came from an improvisation we did at a house party, for example. More recently, the pattern has been usually: Row will come to a rehearsal with an idea, a riff and a change, and songs will build from there, everyone will join in. Then Row will go away, have a think, come back the next week and be like, ‘okay, here’s how the song’s going to go’. Everyone has their say, but the buck stops with Row.” To what extent is Mandrake Handshake an ever-evolving or mutating entity? What have recruits like Shan who have experience playing in other bands previously brought to the party? Trin: “About half the band has

been the same since the beginning, and various members have come and gone. We *are* a mutating entity, but as much by circumstance than by choice. When we all were still students, some members graduated so weren’t around to play with us anymore, so had to be replaced. And also, as the band has become bigger and busier, it has become more of a commitment. So often these changes happen quite organically. “Getting people like Shan in the band has been great for us. Some of us live in London now, but when we were all still Oxford based, having members who knew the local scene inside-out proved invaluable for us getting by.” Is Mandrake Handshake an ongoing party? “Yes! When you’re hanging out with ten of your really close mates, making awesome music and joking about, there’s constantly a vibe. We all live our own separate lives for the most part, so it’s always a wonderful experience to get together and shoot the shit, because we all genuinely love each other. But don’t worry, *Nightshift* readers, we’re pretty good at getting our heads down and working hard when we need to. It’s important to be organised, especially when there’s so many of us to organise!”

AS MANDRAKE HANDSHAKE gear up for a busy few months of releases and gigs – including, we hope, plenty of summer festivals to which their music is so perfectly suited – we wonder, if the whole band could jump on a multicoloured bus and drive to a place and point in time for music, where would they go? Trin: “We’d hightail to the mid-90s, where underground music was infiltrating the mainstream, and bands actually made some money. We’d tour with Stereolab, Broadcast and Yo La Tengo, and have beef with Anton Newcombe, just because. Britain was having a psychedelic heyday then. We’d fit right in.” Thinking of the flower power side to their sound, in a world forever beset by conflicting and now on the verge of international war, to what extent can music bring peace and love back to people? “Nothing that competent and vaguely empathetic governments couldn’t achieve.” If the band had to choose between mandrake, magic mushrooms or a nice cup of tea, which would it be? “Why choose? But mushrooms...” And finally, how many tambourines might be too many tambourines? “No more than three. Let’s not go crazy here.”

Mandrake Handshake play The Jericho Tavern on Saturday 2nd April.

RELEASED

PROMETHEAN REIGN

‘Eat the Rich’

(Self released)

The closure of The Wheatsheaf during Covid lockdown robbed Oxford of its finest grassroots venue but also Oxfordshire’s heavy rock and metal scene of its chief hub – not just a venue but a gathering point for bands and fans alike. The reason given for the closure was the venue’s unprofitability but really it was due to greed – extremely rich property owners wanting to get even richer by turning the place into student flats.

Appropriately then, one of those metal bands who played regularly at The Sheaf, Promethean Reign, have returned from pandemic hibernation with a new single about rapacious capitalism destroying the world, and talking of hibernation they sound like a bear with a very sore head. Pitched between the often interlocking worlds of black and death metal, Promethean Reign are almost symphonic in their musical violence, guitarists Jon Arnold and Kai Boyce (the latter, formerly of Confront the Carnage, replacing original shredder-in-chief Ryan Collins) dispensing with any niceties to brew up a storm of guitar glissando but it’s singer/bassist TJ Higgs’ rasping bawl that is centre



PANDAPOPALYPSE

‘Brain Freeze’

(All Will Be Well)

Musically, the 1990s are synonymous with Britpop and yet closer inspection of the decade reveals a far less uniform soundscape than is often portrayed. Dance music held sway for the entire period and beyond, evolving into any number of sub-genres. Of these, Big Beat, which emerged with The Chemical (ex-Dust) Brothers’ landmark long player, ‘Exit Planet Dust’ in 1995 came to dominate the cultural consciousness in the 90s’ closing years. Fat Boy Slim became the genre’s megastar while acts such as Propellerheads, Death in Vegas and Lo-Fidelity Allstars treated us to a string of dancefloor favourites. It’s puzzling how rarely Big Beat has been



stage, growling lines like “Your appetite will never be satisfied / Until you’ve consumed all the Earth can provide” with suitably hellish intent, although while the song is anti-capitalist, mention of sirens and shelter and lines like “Sow the seeds of violence, and you shall reap pain” could equally apply to certain warmongering despots. Hell, the band’s debut EP was titled ‘Aftó Einai Pólemos’, Greek for ‘This is War’. It’s dark, it’s violent and it sounds like the last Jaegerbomb session at Ragnarok. Promethean Reign are truly the soundtrack to 2022 so far.

Ian Chesterton

revived – perhaps because America’s reinvention of 90s dance via EDM whipped the rug away. So, Pandapocalypse’s reworking of the movement in recent times has been one of the most welcome developments on the local scene. Not that the trio are wholly beholden to the bracket. Big Beat in its purest form was rarely less than terrific, but it was generally very male while the tendency for some of its exponents to pose coolly while wrapped in puffa jackets meant it would occasionally lack a sense of fun, the t-shirted former Housemartin excepted. Pandapocalypse, emerging as they have from the ashes of excellent local combo Balkan Wanderers, have quite a bit more joy about them, a rollercoasting frenzy of bubblyness and a tendency to mix more traditional instruments with the vagaries of electronica.

Early songs such as breakout tunes ‘Glitter and Gems’ and ‘Do You Wanna’ were full of sheer exuberance and this new tune does everything in carrying on the tradition. It helps that Rachel Luscombe-King has such a strong voice, recalling a Toni Halliday or Lykke Li, while the multitasking in evidence in the music itself will have left nothing for idle hands to do. Clare Heaviside, earlier best known for some gorgeous clarinet interludes in her Balkan Wanderers days as well as a guest on her aforementioned bandmate’s solo ‘Vivid’ EP, here deploys a saxophone to equally appealing effect while Middle Eastern baselines and squelching keyboards *a la* Norman Cook are also a big part of the mix. It’s great jollification once more and now venues are opening up again, make sure you get down to see them.

Rob Langham

Sponsored by



BENEDICT HEANEY

‘Everything & Inbetween’

(Self released)

Nobody, not even poets, have ever measured how much the heart can hold, but Benedict Heaney’s unalloyed fugue to loss and longing at least travels the breadth and depth of torment in search of the answer.

‘Everything & Inbetween’ is a portmanteau of exploratory instrumentals and “bad day” songs, that combine in beautiful yet austere desolation. Tracks like ‘Pandora Time’ and ‘Space Time Sequence’, that seem to foam out of dreams, are built on Heaney’s gorgeously aching electric violin, with its ironic synthesis that digitally recreates the gushing, analogue Mellotron ‘tri-violins’ so evocative of the late 1960s. Each piece is a distorted succession of energy reduced to a single, drawn-out beat stretched over infinity.

Then there are the rising Shepard scales of ‘Never Ever Forget’, layers of highly processed audio drones created from tiny segments of recording, working together like nanobots of tension, while the bass-heavy ‘Stone Wall’ feels as if the music is made of concrete. This one is a real bowel irrigator; if this behemoth has a physical release it should come with a free adult nappy and a plastic sheet.

Between these Heaney channels Nick Cave in the mournful ‘Megan Rose’ and Mark Lanegan’s baritone in ‘To Be With Them’, wherein he growls “I fell for a marriage breaker set of eyes, with a smile to match”, which is the whole story right there.

The album ends with one of the best covers we’ve heard of ‘Her Bright Smile Haunts Me Still’, a sailors’ shanty written in 1857 by J.E. Carpenter & W.T. Wrighton. Its stoically hopeful aire has been a liver-spotted lament for over a century of unrequited passion, and is the sort of song you join in while swinging your beer. There are moments here when, whatever the body’s attitude, the soul is on its knees. Played over the current bellicose, TV-news-on-mute, ‘Everything & Inbetween’ appears much more than a tear-stained elegy to sanity; it becomes the only fitting sound when there are no words left to say.

Paul Carrera



THE TROPHY CABINET

‘No Man’s Land’

(Self released)

With old-school indie popstrels Jody & the Jermis on the cover of last month’s *Nightshift*, what better time for The Trophy Cabinet to return with – by our records – their first release since 2015.

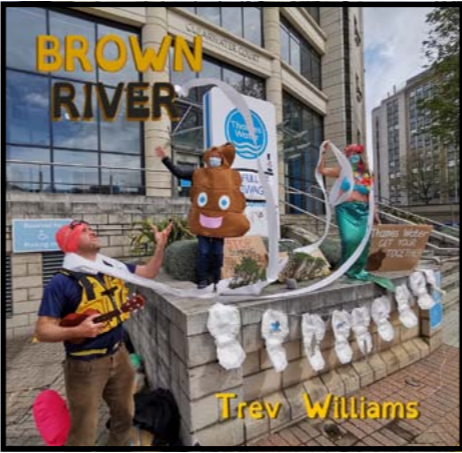
The band originally formed in the late-1980s before jobs and families sent them their separate ways, but they reformed in the early-Noughties, releasing a handful of singles and playing at the Oxford Punt. This new EP was recorded remotely on Garageband during lockdown and marks a slight shift in sound and style without sacrificing itself too much to modernity.

Opener ‘Star-Crossed’ owes much to James, particularly vocally, though melodically it could be a second cousin to The Libertines’ ‘Can’t Stand Me Now’, while ‘At Sea’ is sleepily rakish, sighed more than sung and with the spirit of The Smiths hovering not unpleasantly at its shoulder. ‘Spangle’ sees The Trophy Cabinet make a slight left turn into something a bit gnarlier and motorik but while there’s a case to be made for the song sounding like Steve Harley fronting Clinic, somehow it doesn’t quite hit the



mark and loses its initial momentum but ‘No Man’s Land’ ends the EP in some style with its warm, languorous limb stretching, the guitars churning like vintage Ride, synths and chime bars reminiscent of Joy Division’s ‘Atmosphere’ and the close harmony singing revealing the band at their most elegant, those influences adding to rather than detracting from The Trophy Cabinet’s own sound, making them sound timeless rather than merely vintage.

Dale Kattack



TREVOR WILLIAMS

‘Brown River’

(Self released)

There’s an absolute plethora of troubles going on in the world right now, so why not use it as fuel? Trev Williams, one of Oxford’s most politically minded musicians, has done just that.

Kicking things off on his new EP is ‘1.2.3.4’, a ditty full of the charm of how things once

BRUNO MUERTE

‘Monodrone’

(All Will Be Well)

Given that Oxford has long been home to one of the best small indie game design companies in the UK, Rebellion, it should come as no surprise that the local music underground has its own subset of bands who sound like they should be creating the soundtracks to those games. Tiger Mendoza leads the pack but The Subtheory and Bruno Muerte are close behind.

Having lost 50% of their line-up when guitarist Roberto Bini returned to his native Italy, we didn’t expect Bruno Muerte to continue as they’d left off but Stefano Maio has recruited

former Vienna Ditto man Nigel Firth, who has been dabbling in various solo electronic projects in recent times, and this new single shows a relatively seamless transition to the new incarnation of the band – flowery 80s synth flourishes making way for unabashedly showy guitar of a similar vintage; you can almost picture itself with its jacket sleeves rolled up. We have to say, on its own and without any visual accompaniment the track feels like it lacks context: you can probably fill in your own action scene in your head while you listen but we’re not sure it works as a stand-alone piece of music as well as many of Bruno Muerte’s previous routines and a full EP might more sense.

Dale Kattack

THEBOYWHOCCHOSE

THESEA

‘The Seas Beyond the Stars’

(Expert Sleepers)

When the world feel like an unendingly turbulent shitstorm, where tragedy follows atrocity follows catastrophe, seeking out moments of calm can feel like an indulgence not afforded to those most battered and broken by its waves. It’s *Nightshift*’s job and duty, though, to review this new album from Chris Monger – better known round these parts as helmsman of psych-rockers Shotgun Six – and, for the most part, it feels like a warm, soothing musical balm set away from the grim reality of pandemics, corruption and the wars of angry, inadequate little men.

‘The Seas Beyond the Stars’ features eight instrumental pieces written on piano but recorded on synthesisers created by synth-makers Expert Sleepers, and released on their own cassette label. A scene is set from the start with ‘We Have All Laid Aside Disguise But You’, soft synth hums and arpeggiating piano beginning what promises to be an endless drift into the firmament. ‘Ghost Stories’ brings buzzing insectoid synths but remains, at its core, something soft, almost soporific and dissipates gently before any edge of menace can properly take over and is followed by the washes and drones of the aptly-titled ‘A Subtle Distraction From This Moment in Time’, just that slightest hint of something darker beneath the gentle tide. The title track itself appropriately calls to mind Vangelis’ stately *Cosmos* soundtrack.

However, for all the album’s soothing power, the stand-out track here is ‘The Game Was Never Fair’, seven-minutes of unsettling ecclesiastical organ boom that could have come from the fingers of Anna von Hausswolff, enough to shake you back into cold, hard reality before ‘Epilogue (in C Minor)’ restores the karmic balance. Anyone who watched Brian Cox’s brilliant *Universe* series will know that the ambitions and actions of despots and dictators to achieve power, riches and immortality are ultimately beyond insignificance compared to the vast time and space expanses of the cosmos and ‘The Seas Beyond the Stars’ both in title and music is a reminder that human-created horror is just a blink of an eye in the endless serenity and awesome violence of the stars, though whether that thought brings you peace or a sense of deepening existential dread is another matter entirely.

Ian Chesterton



GIG GUIDE

FRIDAY 1st
WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR: The Jericho Tavern – Ruarri Joseph’s new band return to the Shire for the first time since their 2019 show in Witney, this time touring their album ‘Maverick Thinker’, the trio’s earthy blues rocking inspired by Jim Morrison and JJ Cale.
DUB PISTOLS: O2 Academy – Wall-to-wall festival-sized bangers from Barry Ashworth’s enduring electro/dub/big beat/jungle/hip hop stars, keeping true to their tried and tested formula on most recent album, ‘Addict’, the follow-up to 2017’s acclaimed ‘Crazy

Sunday 3rd
MELT BANANA / SHAKE CHAIN: The Bullingdon
If you already know Melt Banana, you already love Melt-Banana and have your ticket for tonight’s gig clutched tightly in your sweaty fist, the excitement of knowing you’re going to see them only slightly tempered by the knowledge that you possibly won’t be able to hear anything for at least the next month, your neck might never recover and your jaw will be locked in a rictus grin for some time to come. Don’t believe us? Last time they were in town the band managed to make smoke billow out of the PA system, much to the chagrin of the venue’s sound engineer. The Tokyo duo’s breakneck yap coupled techno-grind guitar scree is uncompromising in the extreme but backed with digital beats it takes on an inhuman relentlessness while leaving the window ajar just enough to allow shards of melody into the malevolent mix. *Nightshift* described that last show in town as “akin to having a pack of rabid Chihuahuas performing cranial surgery on you with power drills and a pavement saw” as well as giving you some idea of what it might be like to being trapped in a boil wash spin cycle. Yasuko Onuki and Ichirou Agata are bad people and we love them for it. And if that ain’t somethin’ to fry your synapses, performance art/wyrd-pop types Shake Chain are the support, back after their show-stealing set at Oh, Community! last year.



APRIL
Diamonds’, featuring guest turns from Ragga Twins, Cutty Ranks and Too Many T’s.
CRAIG CHARLES’ FUNK & SOUL CLUB: O2 Academy – BBC Radio’s most infectiously enthusiastic DJ and space traveller brings his party-starting collection of soul, funk and rare grooves back to town, with support from local luminaries Count Skylarkin’ and Tony Nanton.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY featuring OSPREY & THE OX4 ALLSTARS + DARKGNOSS + OLLIEWOODZ + 16 SHADOWS: Gladiator Club – Klub Kakofanney host their monthly gig party with funk-ed-up blues from local star Osprey, plus twisted rockers Darkgnoss, hip hop from Olliewood and electronica from seven-year-old 16 Shadows.
HAU5 PARTY: The Bullingdon – Techno, house and disco club night.

SATURDAY 2nd
MANDRAKE HANDSHAKE + CATGOD: The Jericho Tavern – Space is the place, with flowers in their hair and cruising down the autobahn – *see main interview feature*
GUNS 2 ROSES: O2 Academy – Whoopy-fucking-doo.
ME LOST ME + FLIGHTS OF HELIOS + MILKWEED: Florence Park Community Centre – A triple helping of experimental folk-inspired music from Divine Schism with Newcastle-based Jayne Dent bringing her full Me Lost Me band to town for some darkly atmospheric loop-based action, taking traditional north eastern folk music into stranger places, alongside local psychedelic electro-folk ensemble Flights of Helios, and lo-fi alt. folksters Milkweed.
OVER THE MOON + LINDA WATKINS: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Intimate, emotive roots and swing from Canadian couple Suzanne Levesque and Craig Bignell at tonight’s Wychwood Folk Club.

SUNDAY 3rd
MELT BANANA + SHAKE CHAIN: The Bullingdon – Speaker-melting noise-rock fun from the incendiary duo – *see main preview*
THE HARA: O2 Academy – Lightweight stadium pop from Manchester’s Hara, out on their We Are the Movement tour ahead of their appearance at this summer’s Truck Festival.
JAKE BUGG: O2 Academy – The ‘Lighting Bolt’ hitmaker returns to town after his show at The New Theatre in 2018, this time touring his ‘Saturday Night, Sunday Morning’ album, which features more pop-friendly songs, written by Andrew Watt and Ali Tamposi, who’ve previously written for Miley Cyrus, Justin

Bieber and Post Malone.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY SUNDAY SESSION: The Tree, Ifley (4-7pm) – Free afternoon of live music from Klub Kakofanney with sets from Puppet Mechanic, Firegazer and Tony & Sal Moore.
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms – Weekly open session.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon – Weekly Irish folk session.
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (2.30pm) – Weekly afternoon open session.
SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Black Swan (3pm) – Free live blues, Americana, folk and roots session.
THE MYSTERIES: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5.30pm) – Acoustic soul.
OPEN MIC: The Wheatsheaf, Drayton – Weekly open session with Andy Robbins.

MONDAY 4th
THE LINDISFARNE STORY: Nettlebed Folk Club – Former members Billy Mitchell and Ron Laidlaw run through some of the North-East folk legends’ 50-year career highlights.

TUESDAY 5th
SUPERGRASS: O2 Academy – Homecoming show from the local legends – *see main preview*
DANNY GEORGE WILSON: The Bullingdon – Heartland rock, folk, country and soul from the Danny & the Champions of the World and Bennett Wilson Poole man, touring his new album ‘Another Place’ at tonight’s Empty Room Promotions show.

WEDNESDAY 6th
LILLIBET + HALF DECENT + TIGER MENDOZA + ENJOYABLE LISTENS: The Bullingdon – Adele-style jazz-flavoured pop and balladry from Oxford/Milton Keynes singer Lilibet alongside rapper Half Decent, industrial, drum&bass and hip hop soundscapist Tiger Mendoza and dapper 80s-styled showman Enjoyable Listens.
PROGRESSION: The Bullingdon – Fortnightly breakbeat, electro, funk and disco club night.

THURSDAY 7th
POLICE DOG HOGAN: The Bullingdon – Upbeat urban bluegrass, suburban country, West Country folk, fun drinking songs, tales of failed barbecues and cheap wine, and souvenir tea towels at tonight’s Empty Room show from the ever-touring octet, back in town ahead of a showing at this summer’s Cornbury, the band featuring *Guardian* columnist Tim Dowling on banjo, their inclusive, feel-good onstage vibes a neat counterpoint to his dry, hangdog humour.
KENNY THOMAS: O2 Academy – Return of

the 90s r’n’b singer playing hits ‘Outstanding’, ‘Thinking About Your Love’, ‘Best of You’ and ‘Projekt Misanthropia’.
ES + SNIFFANY & THE NITS + HE DIDN’T: The Library – Dark, gothic post-punk in the vein of Xmal Deutschland, The Raincoats and Girls At Our Best from London’s Es at tonight’s Divine Schism show.
DAZE + HYACINTH + THE CANDY THIEVES: The Jericho Tavern – It’s All About her Music local bands showcase.
SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon – Sparky hosts his monthly open mic night.
HONEY & THE BEAR + MISHRA: The Unicorn, Abingdon – Delicate, harmony-led folk and roots from multi-instrumentalists Jon and Lucy Hart.
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon – Weekly open session hosted by Tom Dalby.

Tuesday 5th
SUPERGRASS: O2 Academy
At last, a homecoming for Supergrass, one of the bands who most helped to put Oxford on the world music map. Tonight’s show was due to happen at the end of 2021 but Omicron hit and so here we are, four months later – but better late than never and with tonight’s show taking place in the O2’s upstairs venue it’s going to be a proper celebration of the band, with Gaz, Mick, Danny and Rob reuniting in 2019 to coincide with the release of a career-spanning box set of all their albums, plus rarities and more. And what a career: from that blast of fresh pop-punk air ‘Caught By the Fuzz’, which was voted Greatest Ever Oxford Song in *Nightshift*’s Oxford Music World Cup during the first covid lockdown, through a dizzying run of hits – ‘Mansize Rooster’; ‘Alright’; ‘Going Out’; ‘Richard III’; ‘Pumping on Your Stereo’; ‘Grace’; ‘Moving’; ‘Diamond Hoo Ha Man’ – that mark Supergrass as one of *the* great quintessentially English guitar bands to stand alongside The Jam or Squeeze. Six albums – five of them Top 10s – of variously ebullient fuzz-pop fun, bulldozing alt.rock and airy contemplation elevated Supergrass above and beyond almost all their Britpop-era contemporaries both in creative quality and commercial success and if this reunion isn’t set to last – they’ve already stated tonight will be their final Oxford show – their legacy will. If you’ve got a ticket already consider yourself very lucky; it’ll be a gig for the ages.



FRIDAY 8th
DREADZONE: The Bullingdon – Dreadzone return to town once again with their peculiarly British form of reggae, fusing roots sounds and dub with a folky feel, trance and breakbeats. Incredibly they’re 29 years old this year, veterans of a dozen albums, six Peel sessions and countless tours and festival appearances; their enduring appeal rests in their ability to transform any room, or field, into a reggae party. The trippy, spacious, almost rustic feel of their sound might feel almost archaic compared to what’s come since but it’s following their own path that’s ultimately kept them on top of their game for so long.
RIOT JAZZ BRASS BAND: O2 Academy – Exuberant melding of Latin jazz, Balkan folk, hip hop, grime, drum&bass, trap and dubstep from Manchester’s nine-strong brass ensemble, led by MC Chunky, mixing original songs with covers of Britney Spears, Todd Terje and more.
PANDAPOPALYPSE + BRUNO MUERTE + MILA TODD: The Library – A double single launch show from All Will Be Well Records, with big beat electro-popstrels Pandapocalypse bringing the bounce alongside synth-rock-meets-spaghetti western soundtrackists Bruno Muerte, with a solo set from Ciphers singer and recent *Nightshift* introducing act Mila Todd opening the show.

SATURDAY 9th
THE ALARM: O2 Academy – After a series of tours pre-pandemic reimagining some of their old albums, Mike Peters’ anthemic folk-punk warriors head out on tour to promote new album ‘War’. Timely.
MONTMORENCY: The Burton-Taylor Theatre – Rootsy contemporary folk, blues and pop from the Cotswold quartet, drawing on English, American, Scottish and Irish traditions.
REGGAETON PARTY: The Bullingdon – Club night.

SUNDAY 10th
ELVANA: O2 Academy – Return of the Elvis impersonator-fronted Nirvana tribute, rearranged from last December.
BAS JAN + ZEHRA HAJI FATH ALI TEHRANI: Florence Park Community Centre (2.30pm) – A special family-friendly matinee show from Bas Jan, hosted by Divine Schism, with Serefina Steer’s electro-folk-pop and fidgety post-punk experimentalists touring their second album ‘Baby U Know’, singer, harpist, bassist and keyboard player Steer having previously played and recorded with acts as diverse as John Foxx, Chromehoof, Hannah Peel, Rozi Plain and Tunng. Support comes from YWMP organiser Zehra Haji Fath Ali Tehrani, building up to the release of her new EP, exploring themes of parenthood, protection and survival through experimental, atmospheric electronics.
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms
SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Black Swan (3pm)
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (2.30pm)
ADAM MATTHEWS: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5.30pm) – Acoustic pop, rock, soul and Irish folk from the singer and guitarist.



Friday 22nd
MCLUSKY: The Bullingdon
“All your friends are cunts / Your mother is a ball point pen thief” is up there with the greatest opening lines of any song, but Andy Faulkous’ scabrous, darkly witty, often surreal lyricism didn’t end there, as he led his band through short, sharp – painfully sharp – and downright hysterical hardcore swamp blues that married The Birthday Party to The Jesus Lizard via Big Black. The Cardiff trio – singer, guitarist and lyrical demon Faulkous joined by bassist Jonathan Chapple and drummer Matthew Harding (later replaced by Jack Eggleton) – burnt an incendiary path across the UK live scene from the late 90s to 2005 when they split. They left behind a small but faultless trio of albums: debut ‘My Pain and Sadness is More Sad and Painful Than Yours’; the nailed-on classic ‘Mclusky Do Dallas’ – the 20th anniversary of which tonight’s show celebrates – and the wonderfully titled ‘The Difference Between Me and You Is That I’m Not On Fire’. Chapple formed Shooting At Unarmed Men, while Falkous fronted Future of the Left, gradually introducing more Mclusky songs into his set, until the pair reunited in 2015 to play a few charity shows and returned to being a genius face slap to musical mediocrity. Tonight the band return to the scene of their previous crimes against rock complacency with songs like ‘Without MSG I Am Nothing’, ‘The World Loves Us And Is Our Bitch’ and ‘Lightsabre Cocksucking Blues’ set to blowtorch any unbelievers.

OPEN MIC: The Wheatsheaf, Drayton
MONDAY 11th
OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Ladygrove, Didcot – Fortnightly open night.

TUESDAY 12th
WEDNESDAY 13th
BRITE SPIRES + THE SUBTHEORY: The Bullingdon – A benefit gig for Unicef Ukraine, with local electro-indie-pop stars Brite Spires alongside trip-hop duo The Subtheory.
THE ACADEMIC: O2 Academy – return to town for Ireland’s lightweight buoyant guitar-pop crew in the vein of The 1975, touring their ‘Community Spirit’ EP ahead of a summer of festivals.

LOUISA LYNE PATTERSON +
BRICKWORK LIZARDS DJs: Tap Social – Brickwork Lizards’ Louisa Lyne Patterson debuts her piece for strings and piano, ‘Thinking of Blue Almonds’, mixing up influences of Debussy and Yann Tierson with Arabic inflections.

THURSDAY 14th
TOBY SEBASTIAN: O2 Academy – Trystane Martell off of *Game of Thrones* puts down his sword and picks up an acoustic guitar so as to make music that would be as well to have a barrel or two of Wildfire poured on it.
HOLY THURSDAY: The Bullingdon – Local DJ legend Count Skylarkin spins a heady mix of reggae, dancehall, rocksteady, ska, calypso, jungle and hip hop.

Friday 22nd – Sunday 24th
FOLK WEEKEND OXFORD: Various venues
Back after a two-year absence due to Covid, and in person for the first time since 2018, the community-run Folk Weekend has become the centrepiece of the Oxford folk music calendar, once again taking over venues across the city with a range of gigs, sessions, workshops, dances, buskers and more. Among the big names on show across the three days are **Belshazzar’s Feast** on the Friday, Paul Sartin and Paul Hutchison bringing humour and virtuosity to old English dance tunes, ballads, war poems and folk standards, while Saturday sees singer and fiddle stalwart **Jackie Oates**, and English folk veteran **Martin Carthy** performing. Local electronic-folk fusion collective **The Folkatron Sessions** are among Sunday’s highlights, but across the weekend you’ll catch the likes of **Three Pressed Men; Granny’s Attic; Angelina Morrison; Steph West & Paul Rademeyer** alongside local faves like **Moonaroon**. Beyond the ticketed gigs there are a host of celiedhs; Irish, English, Scottish and shanty sessions; song and instrument workshops; family sessions, Morris dancers and buskers, with venues as diverse as The Ashmolean, The Old Fire Station, The Story Museum, Holywell Music Room, The Quaker Meeting House and St Barnabas Church playing host to live music. Great to have the event back in town after such a time away. Concerts over the weekend are ticketed individually with many of the events free to enter – see the full programme at folkweekendoxford.co.uk.



ADVANCE BASE + KARIMA WALKER + KATIE MALCO: Fusion Arts – Double dose of Stateside electronic Americana courtesy of Divine Schism tonight with Chicago’s Advance Base – former Casiotone For the Painfully Alone fella Owen Ashworth – touring last year’s ‘Wall of Tears & Other Songs I Didn’t Write’, alongside Arizona’s ambient/electro-folk singer Karima Walker.
NEW BANDS SHOWCASE: The Jericho Tavern – It’s All About the Music showcase night.
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Stevenon

FRIDAY 15th
THE WEDDING PRESENT: O2 Academy – David Gedge’s enduring indie heroes celebrate the slightly belated 30th anniversary of third album ‘Seamonsters’.
KARDINAL X + VOLTSTORM: The Bullingdon – Double dose of new metal rising tonight with London’s Kardinal X kicking out Led Zep and Deep Purple-sized riffage alongside Voltstorm, mixing up elements of thrash and NWOBHM into an epic rumble.
WE ARE STILL YOUNG: The Bullingdon – Retro emo and pop-punk club night as part of the build-up to this summer’s Las Vegas nostalgia festival.
CEDARS OF LEBANON + GET LOOSE: The Jericho Tavern – It’s All About the Music local bands night.

SATURDAY 16th
MYSTERY JETS: O2 Academy – The Noughties indie survivors keep on keeping on, touring their 2020 album ‘A Billion Heartbeats’ featuring a more political lyrical edge while retaining their airy, ebullient guitar pop sound.
DANNY MELLIN: The Jericho Tavern – Fresh-faced, upbeat indie rocking from the local singer-songwriter.
XOGARA + OWL LIGHT TRIO: Florence Park Community Centre – Galician folk from Anglo-Welsh trio Xogara plus contemporary instrumental folk from Owl Light Trio.

SUNDAY 17th
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (2.30pm)
OPEN MIC: The Wheatsheaf, Drayton

MONDAY 18th
TUESDAY 19th
NICK MASON’S SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS: The New Theatre – Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason teams up with Gary Kemp, guitarist Lee Harris and long-time Floyd collaborator Guy Pratt and others to revisit the band’s first two classic albums – ‘Piper at the Gates of Dawn’ and ‘Saucerful of Secrets’ – so expect ‘See Emily Play’, ‘Interstellar Overdrive’, ‘Remember a Day’ and, best Floyd song of all time, ‘Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun’.
THE TREATMENT + SOUTH OF SALEM + PISTON: O2 Academy – Classic hard rock



Saturday 23rd
RIDE: O2 Academy
Like many others Ride are celebrating a special anniversary a little after the due date due to Covid. In this case it’s the 30th birthday of their debut album ‘Nowhere’ – a bona fide indie masterpiece, a pioneering musical opus and one of the most important records in Oxford music history. ‘Nowhere’ was released in October 1990 and reached Number 11 in the album charts. Before this no other Oxford act had enjoyed such a successful album; it laid the groundwork for Radiohead, Supergrass and Foals as well as spearheading that distinctive strain of guitar music now widely known as shoegaze. From the swirling psychedelic grandeur of opener of ‘Seagull’, through the brooding glory of ‘Dreams Burn Down’ and the soaring, plaintive spangle of ‘Paralysed’ to the airy, effervescent closing peak of ‘Vapour Trail’, ‘Nowhere’ was and remains an absolute work of art – from the sleeve to the songs – and has aged superbly, continuing to be an influence on subsequent generations of bands across the globe and a benchmark by which everything subsequent can be compared. Ride have been no strangers to hometown shows since they reformed in 2014, having played the O2’s upstairs venue as well as Oxford Town Hall and The New Theatre, but this show will feel extra special as the band go right back to the beginning – for them and for Oxford music itself.

and punk from Cambridge’s riffmeisters and previous tour support to Buckcherry.
BE GOOD + THE BOBO + CJ PANDIT: The Jericho Tavern – First hometown show in some time for local pop crew Be Good, playing songs from their most recent ‘Everything’s Alright in the Evening’ EP, alongside atmospheric electro-pop star The Bobo.

WEDNESDAY 20th
THURSDAY 21st
PETER HOOK & THE LIGHT: O2 Academy – Joy Division and New Order living legend Hooky and his band continue to explore his back catalogue, playing classic tracks from both bands.
THE REYTONS: O2 Academy – Russia’s fiendish ongoing plan to clone The Arctic Monkeys until there’s no venue room left for anyone else continues.
GEMMA CULLINGFORD + MEANS OF PRODUCTION + CHOLLY: The Library – Sink Ya Teeth’s Gemma Cullingford comes to town in her solo guise at tonight’s Divine

Empty Room Promotions

Established 2002 - 20 years of high quality live music for the good people of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire

William the Conqueror
Chloe Foy
Friday 1st April
The Jericho Tavern
SOLD OUT

Courtney Marie Andrews
plus support
Monday 20th June
St John the Evangelist

Bill Kirchen
plus support
Wednesday 20th July
The Jericho Tavern

Danny George Wilson
Katy Bennett
Tuesday 5th April
The Bullingdon

Jesse Malin
Kelley Swindall
Wednesday 22nd June
Dinton Parish Church

Hurray for the Riff Raff
plus support
Friday 22nd July
The Bullingdon

Police Dog Hogan
Luke Tuchscherer
Thursday 7th April
The Bullingdon

Sierra Ferrell
plus support
Thursday 23rd June
St Barnabas Church

Bros. Landreth
plus support
Friday 9th September
O2 Academy 2

David Ramirez
Kirby Brown
Saturday 23rd April
Dinton Parish Church

The Vandoliers
plus support
Wednesday 29th June
The Bullingdon

Eddi Reader
plus Jill Jackson
Thursday 29th September
St Barnabas Church

Curse of Lono
plus support
Tuesday 10th May
The Jericho Tavern

Hannah Aldridge
Paul Handyside
Friday 1st July
Dinton Parish Church

Will Kimbrough
plus ARC
Friday 7th October
Dinton Parish Church

Echoes of Swing
Friday 3rd June
Dinton Parish Church

The Delines
plus Our Man in the Field
Friday 8th July
St Barnabas Church

Tommy Alexander
plus support
Saturday 15th October
The Cross Keys, Thame.

empty-rooms.com



[instagram.com/empty.room1](https://www.instagram.com/empty.room1)



[facebook.com/emptyroompromotions](https://www.facebook.com/emptyroompromotions)



[twitter.com/emptyroompromo](https://www.twitter.com/emptyroompromo)

Schism show, mixing up funk-ed-up post-punk, disco and synth-pop on her album ‘Let Me Speak’. Last year she remixed local electronic audio-visual duo and recent *Nightshift* cover stars Means of Production’s ‘Welfare Power Apparatus’ single and they remixed one of hers and having opened for Sink Ya Teeth previously, they’re back in the room with her once more, as is High Wycombe’s Cholly, making her Oxford debut after her rave *Nightshift* demo review, blending danceable synth-pop with witch house, somewhere between Burial, Grimes and Kate Bush. **PURPLE GRACE: The Jericho Tavern** **DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon**

FRIDAY 22nd
McLUSKY + CASSELS + BASIC DICKS: The Bullingdon – Andy Falkous’ incendiary hardcore crew will make your heart go the colour of Coca Cola as they celebrate the 20th anniversary of their classic ‘McLusky Do Dallas’ album – *see main preview*
FOLK WEEKEND OXFORD: Various venues – Opening day of the folk weekender with sets from Belshazza’s Feast, Nick Hart and

Monday 25th
BAMBARA: The Bullingdon
Dark times call for dark music and Brooklyn’s Bambara are painted in several shades of night. Formed in 2009 by twin brothers Reid and Blaze Bateh alongside childhood friend William Brookshire, the band have never walked on the sunny side of the street. Instead their music skulks in the shadows with a sense of foreboding, elegantly wasted southern gothic cowboy punk, sharing a shady space with Nick Cave, The Gun Club and Morphine. Their latest album, ‘Love on My Mind’, continues their journey from their early noise rock sound to something more complex and atmospheric, the addition of singers Bria Salmena and Drew Citron adding an extra dimension alongside Reid’s drawled baritone, while sax and trombones have bolstered and widened their sonic palette. Lynchian is something of a cliché to describe bands with a dark nature and a heavily-reverbed twilit surf edge but Bambara are exactly the kind of band you’d expect to find playing in the corner of one of Lynch’s twisted gothic dramas – decadent, haunted and powerful. Tonight’s show is their first visit to Oxford and if the evenings are getting lighter, they should draw a shroud over the sun and be a magnet for creatures of the night.



more – *see main preview*
BEARDYMAN: O2 Academy – Inventive human beatboxing from the veteran former UK champ, using vocal loops to augment his virtuoso beatmaking skills, taking in hip hop, dubstep and drum&bass.
BOSSAPHONIK feat. LEKAN BABALOLA’S SACRED FUNK: Cowley Workers Social Club – Global jazz-dance grooves again at this month’s Bossaphonik, with host Dan Ofer spinning everything from latin dancefloor, through Afro-frunk to Balkan beats and more, plus a live set from Nigerian percussion wizard Lekan Babalola and his seven-strong band. Babalola was a musical apprentice to Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti and has played alongside Prince, Pharoah Saunders, Roy Ayres and Art Blakey over the years, fusing apala and juju with sacred Yoruba culture and jazz and funk grooves for a pan-African sound.
BACK TO THE 80s: The Bullingdon – 80s club night.
CRIME: The Port Mahon – Grungy rock with a pop heart from the Oxford-Bristol outfit.
SAM CARTER + WEDNESDAY’S WOLVES: Harwell Village Hall

SATURDAY 23rd
RIDE + BDRMM: O2 Academy – The local indie legends belatedly celebrate the 30th anniversary of classic debut album ‘Nowhere’ – *see main preview*
FOLK WEEKEND OXFORD: Various venues – Jackie Oates, Granny’s Attic and Martin Carthy are among the highlights of the second day of the festival – *see main preview*
MUSICAL MEDICINE feat. ELIZA ROSE: The Bullingdon – Oxford’s leading disco club night brings Rinse FM and Jazz Cafe resident and Rhythms Sisters collective member Eliza Rose back to town after her sold-out set here in 2020.
MEGSON: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Traditional and contemporary English folk drawing on its Teesside roots from four-times-nominated BBC Folk Award duo Megson at tonight’s Wychwood Folk Club, Stu and Debbie Hanna having twice won the Spiral Earth Award.

SUNDAY 24th
FEEDER: O2 Academy – Grant Nicholas’ pop-friendly post-grunge rockers return to town after their show here in 2019 on the back of their eleventh studio album, ‘Torpedo’.
SALEM: O2 Academy – Post-grunge power-pop from Creeper’s Will Gould.
FOLK WEEKEND OXFORD: Various venues – Third and final day of the Fold Weekender with Folkatron Sessions and more – *see main preview*
OH, COMMUNITY!: Fusion Arts – Divine Schism hosts a full day of live music in aid of the Young Women’s Music Project. Acts tbc.
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (2.30pm)
OPEN MIC: The Wheatsheaf, Drayton

MONDAY 25th
BAMBARA: The Bullingdon – Paint it



Wednesday 27th
THE NIGHTINGALES: O2 Academy
In a rare case of a genuinely maverick band sticking at it and getting their dues, tonight finds The Nightingales headlining upstairs at the O2 having previously played The Jericho Tavern and The Cellar on their visits to Oxford. Obstinate and uncompromising, The Nightingales have typified the intelligence and inventiveness of the post-punk period for over 40 years now. Having originally formed in Birmingham as The Prefects and toured with The Clash, they went on to regroup under the Nightingales name and become firm Peel favourites throughout the 1980s before dissolving at the end of that decade, reforming in 2004 to continue their role as perpetual thorn in the side of complacent indie music. Along the way they’ve used up some 26 different band members, the sole constant being frontman and songwriter Robert Lloyd – Birmingham’s own Beefheart. Like The Fall they’re a band that changes shape regularly but somehow stays the same, Lloyd’s surly cerebral-caustic presence and delivery as irresistible as it is intimidating. Live The Nightingales have few equals, Lloyd defying age and experience to an often terrifying degree, fronting an astonishingly intense band that includes former-Violet Violet drummer Fliss Kitson – easily the best drummer *Nightshift* has witnessed in the last few years. At their last Oxford show in 2018 they were supported by comedian Stewart Lee who was at the time making a film about the band. That film, *King Rocker*, released in 2020, brought wider attention to The Nightingales and hopefully many of those viewers will make the trip out tonight for a band who deserve every bit of love and attention they’re finally getting.

black, black as night, black as coal – *see main preview*
OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Ladygrove, Didcot

TUESDAY 26th
LARKIN POE: O2 Academy – Southern-fried blues and country from Georgia/Tennessee sisters Rebecca and Megan Lovell, back over in the UK to tour 2020 album ‘Kindred Spirits’ and last year’s live LP ‘Paint the Roses’, the pair’s rocked-up take on roots music having seen them dubbed “The Allman Brothers’ kid sisters”.
LEWIS WATSON: O2 Academy – Love,

longing and lashings of hope from Bicester’s polished pop balladeer, touring his ‘The Love That You Want’ album while continuing to rework songs from his debut album ‘The Morning’.

WEDNESDAY 27th
THE NIGHTINGALES: O2 Academy – Robert Lloyd continues to refuse to go quietly into that good night – *see main preview*
THE STEVE WATTS ORGAN TRIO: The Bullingdon – Lively funk, jazz, soul and blues from in-demand organist Steve Watts, who has played with Steve Winwood, Arthur Brown, PP Arnold and the Ronnie Scott Blues Explosion among others, joined at tonight’s Haven Club show by singer Alice Armstrong.
PROGRESSION: The Bullingdon

THURSDAY 28th
EMMA HUNTER + OSPREY & THE OX4 ALLSTARS + BARRICANE + CAPTAIN KUPPA-T & THE ZEPPELIN CREW: O2 Academy – Intense gothic balladry, flamenco-flavoured torch songs and inventive loop-based dark-pop from recent *Nightshift* cover star Emma Hunter at tonight’s It’s All About the Music show. She and drummer Tom Bruce are joined on tonight’s bill by stalwart local bluesman Osprey and his band, plus tripped-out indie-folksters Barricane and a capella folk and steampunk crew Captain Kuppa-T.
SUGARRUSH: The Bullingdon – Synth-pop and disco classics.
SO FETCH: The Bullingdon – Noughties

club night.
PROMETHEAN REIGN + BLACK TISH: The Jericho Tavern – Blackened death metal from local uber-heavyweights Promethean Reign, launching their new single ‘Eat the Rich’.
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 29th
JAMES BAY: O2 Academy – James Bay, You are so grey, You’re worse than David Gray, Why don’t you go away. You see, that’s almost like poetry, and it’s still better than anything he’s ever written.
THE PEOPLE VERSUS: O2 Academy – Sweet-natured, hymnal chamber pop with a hint of folk and bluegrass from headliners The People Versus – *see Introducing feature*
SAINT AGNES: The Jericho Tavern – Seriously heavy-duty psychedelic blues-rocking from the east London quartet, channelling the classic 70s rock swagger of Led Zep, the dark blues of The Kills and the rumbling garage rock of Black Rebel Motorcycle Club. Their last show here back in 2018 was so loud and so heavy they managed to set the venue’s fire alarm off but no-one could hear it. This is the sort on unholy volume level *Nightshift* can get onside with.

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.

TRUCK



OXFORD • WITNEY • ONLINE

NEW & PRE-OWNED VINYL AND CD,
LIMITED EDITIONS, CLASSIC ALBUMS,
CULT FAVOURITES AND LOADS MORE!



APRIL 23 2022

APRIL NEW RELEASES

 <p>FONTAINES DC SKINTY FIA</p>	 <p>WET LEG WET LEG</p>	 <p>FATHER JOHN MISTY CHLOE & THE NEXT 20TH CENTURY</p>
 <p>RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS UNLIMITED LOVE</p>	 <p>KURT VILE (WATCH MY MOVES)</p>	 <p>SPIRITUALIZED EVERYTHING WAS BEAUTIFUL</p>
 <p>JACK WHITE FEAR OF THE DAWN</p>	 <p>RAMMSTEIN ZEIT</p>	 <p>KAЕ TEMPEST THE LINE IS A CURVE</p>
 <p>CALEXICO EL MIRADOR</p>	 <p>HANNAH PEEL & PARAORCHESTRA THE UNFOLDING</p>	 <p>BEIRUT ARTIFACTS</p>

TRUCKMUSIC.STORE



DESERT STORM / BATTALIONS / UNDERBELLY

O2 Academy

Whatever the members of Underbelly have been up to in the 30 odd years since they last played a gig, mellowing with age isn't one of them. Hell, singer James Greene is still wearing the same shorts and baseball cap he had on when *Nightshift* last saw him in action. Musically this is thunderous stuff, the reformed local 90s stars' mix of grunge, sludgy metal and serrated hardcore little changed since their original incarnation, although the set highlight is opener 'Beginnings', which they wrote and recorded just before Covid hit suggesting that rather being frozen in time, their best is still to come. Battalions might hail from Hull but they look like they should be driving around the dusty roads of Tennessee in a pick-up truck

with a dead steer slung in the back. Keeping with one of the core themes of tonight they're sludgy in a Weedeater kind of way but topped off with some hellish rasping vocals that add some extra pain to their power. If their set never deviates from its set course over 30 minutes, it does a job. That job being to lay the foundations for Desert Storm's 15 years hometown celebration. Celebration if your idea of a party is a cake that's actually an active volcano, fireworks that are actually a violent thunderstorm and a chorus of 'Happy Birthday' sung by the unleashed hordes of Hell. Even in heavy rock's less-than-fickle world 15 years is going some, especially given that Desert Storm have only very recently

changed from their original line-up, with bassist Chris Benoist replaced by Matt Dennett. The quintet are like the Uluru of Oxford music: a mighty edifice that neither time nor tide can erode. They are at once an unstoppable force and an immovable object. Tonight's set spans the band's five studio albums as well as a couple of new numbers and shows that for all their unbowed heaviness it's those deft touches, subtleties and nuances, not to mention a decent ear for melody, that lift them above and beyond the rest of the rock pack as they get bluesy – almost funky even – on 'Shadow of an Eagle', and inject levels of something like psychedelia into 'Queen Reefer', but equally can simply pummel and steamroller

you with a track like 'Black Bile'. Dennett gurns almost comically for the first half of the set before Benoist is invited to play his last ever show with the band for the second half – although a delay in plugging his guitar in suggests he's already forgetting what it was he did. There's an almost casual venom in Desert Storm's brand of sludgy rock and stoner metal with Matt Ryan's growl-cum-roar akin to an ogre capable of swiping buildings aside without paying them much due as guitarists Ryan Cole and Chris White brew up a blizzard worthy of the band's name. Tonight is a celebration of 15 years of work but also, more importantly, another reminder of just what a great band Desert Storm are, and will continue to be. They rock, and we salute them. **Dale Kattack**

NAPALM DEATH / RAGING SPEEDHORN / THE HOPE BURDEN

O2 Academy

One of the joys and challenges of the metal scene is trying to keep track of the ever-expanding throng of genres and sub-genres. Local troupe The Hope Burden are described as atmospheric post-metal, which is great if the atmosphere you're after is a psychotic riot in a slaughterhouse, but with slow passages making them suitable as a good opening act, aided by a highly skilled drummer. Like all of tonight's bands they're more satisfying to listen to at home, where the subtleties and complex harmonics, and there are plenty, are easier to appreciate. Corby's finest, Raging Speedhorn, tell us the last time they played here was 9/11 so, given the current state of the news, maybe we should stop inviting them. More traditional and straightforward in their musical approach, the lack of invention is partly offset by sheer relentless power, leading to inescapable thoughts of Motörhead and even earlier metal pioneers. The longstanding use of two vocalists adds welcome variety, even if one looks like he's been hitting the refreshments before coming on. Their new 'No War' T-shirts point to a social conscience not always associated with such bands, but sadly we don't get their cover of T. Rex's 'Children of the Revolution'. Raging Speedhorn's departure takes a fair portion of the crowd with them, which is a shame as Napalm Death are true

giants and legends of the scene. Emerging from the West Midlands in 1981 they remain the prime exponents of grindcore, mixing elements of metal with hardcore punk, with pained, guttural, shrieking vocals that stand out even in a field where this is expected. They also hold a world record for the shortest song, 'You Suffer', at 1.316 seconds. None of the original members remain though the current four, including vocalist Barney Greenway, all date back more than thirty years. They're as much of a merciless onslaught as the preceding bands but there are some stark contrasts. Maybe realising the impossibility of reproducing the recordings they go for an almost improvisational approach, Shane Embury plucking at his bass right up its neck in odd little runs, while drummer Danny Herrera flails around his kit in a manner more often seen in jazz contexts, only a lot harder and a lot louder. Original guitarist and polymath Justin K Broadrick is long gone, the 2004 album under his Jesu alias being probably the finest work to emerge from the whole diaspora. A recent quote from him may shed light on what motivates many in the scene; "what I'm trying to do is express that overload of emotion that I feel consistently through music, because it feels like that's all I can do... I have to make music that feels like it's the end."

Art Lagun

THE SPIN BAND

Old Fire Station

Nothing makes you feel more at home in a room full of beanie-wearing men thrice your age, who have perfected the "eyes-closed-jazz-nod", than Pete Oxley's charisma. But the Spin Jazz Club band's charisma goes far beyond their witty public speaking skills. What makes their show so delightful, is their ability to create pockets of unity and order among the beautiful chaos that jazz often offers. Guitarist Oxley is able to take his audience down the unpredictable paths jazz tends to find itself creating, perfectly complemented by Paul Cavaciuti's ability to ground us with his beautifully resolved drum fills, let alone the sweet brush work he introduces halfway through the show, providing texture where other players take a step back; the value of this doesn't go unappreciated, and truly makes all the difference. There seems to be a musical conversation being had, especially between Gee on piano and Oxley on guitar, who both manage to excel in allowing room for one another. Oxley more than Gee seems to have perfected the knack of appreciating

the white space while improvising. Where Oxley does pipe in articulately, we definitely catch a couple of stunned faces at the gorgeous licks he's plucking out, which are almost as funky as his floral jacket. Although rare, the moments of bass solo are exactly what the room needs on occasion, acting as a breath of fresh air mid-gig, not to mention the humble player trying to hide his smile behind the neck of his instrument at the sound of applause. But it's true that these moments are rare, and leave the audience hungry for more of his Ron Carter-like sound. Now ensconced at The Old Fire Station having had to leave their old home at The Wheatsheaf, The Spin Band invite a repeat visits, with a friendly feel and an easily accessible sound; it would be a pleasure to see the band complemented by a guest brass player, which luckily happens often at the Spin. At the tip of our fingertips, the local band are definitely worth a visit, from the jazz-heads to those who need convincing. **Edie Michael**



REPAIR ...
RESTORE ...
REBORN

Guitar and amp repairs, custom modifications and accessories

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

25mm Pin Button Badges now available
Premium quality badges made in Oxford

10 Badges £10
50 Badges £18
100 Badges £25

Email : garagerockmerch@gmail.com for info
Head over to our Facebook page for more prices

[f](https://www.facebook.com/garagerockmerch) [i](https://www.instagram.com/garagerockmerch) [garagerockmerch](https://www.facebook.com/garagerockmerch)

WeGot Tickets

Proud supporters of the Oxford music scene since 2002.

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

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

Come and write for

NIGHTSHIFT

It'll be fun

email: editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk

Experience not required. Enthusiasm essential

FYREFLY STUDIOS MUSIC PHOTOGRAPHY
WWW.FYREFLYMUSIC.COM



MELT YOURSELF DOWN

The Bullingdon

Such a long time has passed since tonight’s gig was originally scheduled to take place (back in March 2020) that Melt Yourself Down are now touring a new new album, following that year’s ‘100% Yes’, with this year’s ‘Pray For Me I Don’t Fit In’. All but a handful of songs in their set are from this pair of albums but you wouldn’t know it by looking at the crowd. From the first drum beat to the last cacophonous blast of joy everyone in the room can’t help but grin ear

to ear.

The obvious stand outs of the set are the up-tempo bangers – ‘Boot And Spleen’, and breakout single ‘Fix My Life’ to name a couple – which have enough energy to make even the most jaded journalist dance like it’s not a school night. The true beauty though is in the crafting of the set as a whole. No one could keep up with Melt Yourself Down’s peak energy for 90 minutes – everyone would be passed out on the floor by the end;

instead, like a well-planned DJ set, there are ebbs and flows, peaks and troughs, that result in a masterclass in crowd control; we are eating out of the palm of their hand with every breakdown, every screeching solo, and every sing-along chorus. ‘Nightsiren’, from the newest album, is a microcosm of this journey: a perfectly executed build of tension which releases into a bass drop that shakes the very foundations of Cowey Road. MYD’s blend of 21st Century

jazz, no wave avant garde, and North African beats is simply extraordinary, and since we saw them eight years ago as they emerged onto the scene they’ve only grown more confident in their sound. This kind of sweaty club show is where their sound really works the best, where the crowd can feel involved, participating in a shared experience. The set has a few first-night-of-the-tour technical issues, but frankly who cares – we’ve been waiting two years for this show and it is absolutely worth it.

Matt Chapman Jones

KIRAN LEONARD / DEAR LAIKA / AIDEN CANADAY

Florence Park Community Centre

Aiden Canaday, who is both opening act and part of the promotion team, explains the otherwise inscrutable ‘Colour of a Lion’ by noting that his songs are mostly about “people who I love who are dead”, making him the sentimental, symbolist EJ Thribb. Delivered with a tentative, lightly quavering voice over guitar plucks, accordion wheezes or stabs at the venue’s janky old joanna, the songs might often seem undercooked, but deliver unexpected moments of beauty, and we’ll take that over-practised consistency any day. All too swiftly, the set is over. So, farewell, then, Aiden. “I left out the chorus, because I don’t know how to play it”; that was your catchphrase.

Two of Kiran Leonard’s Trespass On Foot band perform as Dear Laika before the main event. Their set enacts a battle between songwriting and production, light and melodic keyboard songs being subjected to the sorts of extreme delay, flutter and distortion that make William Basinski’s ‘Disintegration Loops’ sound like smooth lift Muzak. There’s a track that sounds like the wistful ghost of Laurie Anderson on a malfunctioning transistor radio; one that sounds like a cyborg choir singing John Tavener, and one that sounds like Aimee Mann produced by a puckish, shitfaced King Tubby. There are times when you wish that the treatments were less extreme,

and times you fear the songs aren’t all strong enough to survive without them, but it’s hard not to love a piece that sounds like ‘Pyramid Song’ with random interventions by Vangelis (puckish and shit-faced, naturally). The tones are more earthy for Leonard’s band, consisting of a trio of guitars, a cittern, and arco double bass. The opening is wonderful, a chamber Godspeed You! Black Emperor piece with frantically strummed chords coming in fizzing waves, like a spring tide filled with Alka-Seltzer. This is followed by almost whimsically abstract folk, in the vein of The Incredible String Band, before a third track comes in with a vocal line so strong and sinewy it could have been borrowed from sources as diverse as a 16th Century Norfolk crabber’s song to a lost Maximo Park single. The set is as eclectic as it is enthralling, with Leonard playing unusual but still folky guitar lines like a Vorticist Richard Thompson, and boasting a surprise bass solo that’s all gruff harmonics and seagull laments. By the time the night finishes with an epic, hypnotic track built on a simple bass motif that’s like a recreation of the *Fire: Walk With Me* pink room music recreated at a west country barn dance, all you can do is close your eyes and sway like a loon. So, farewell then, dignity...

David Murphy

SNAPPED ANKLES / TALK SHOW

O2 Academy

Tonight’s gig features a double-header of two of the best drummers *Nightshift* has seen in recent times. London quartet Talk Show tick plenty of the right noise-rock boxes, led by the intense presence of singer-guitarist Harrison Swann, who has something of the young Thom Yorke about him in his wiry contortions, but the star of this show is Chloë Stacey MacGregor, an absolute cyclone behind the kit and who powers the dark, scrawling mess along with explosive, driving precision. The band are near neighbours of Shame and you can hear some postcode similarities, as well as the turbulent darkness of The Murder Capital, but like Dudley, Eunice and Franklin, they’re different storms with shared power and destructive force. Like Chloë Snapped Ankles’ drummer is a metronomic force of nature. We don’t know his name since the band hold their anonymity close to their chests, their faces hidden by webbing and foliage, looking less like the trees they claim to be descended from as budget *Dr Who* monsters from the 1970s, but for all that novelty Snapped Ankles are serious fun. It begins with the drummer, then the bassist, then each member takes the stage to build and build the opening number until the singer emerges and almost immediately

climbs into a rapidly retreating audience to chant, holler and yelp, all the while carrying what looks like a slender tree trunk that he hammers out his own rhythm on. This sets the scene for the set: part prog-rock workout, part techno rave, part psychedelic trip and part krautrock cruise. For a band steeped in naturalistic pagan imagery, they evoke cityscapes and urban freeways far more than woodlands and fields. There are moments when they temper their high-octane onward rush and here they risk losing momentum and the crowd’s attention but soon enough the drummer is once more laying waste and we’re whipped into a euphoric frenzy of hypnotic pulses and synth sparkles, an acid-house Devo, a speed-fuelled Neu! or perhaps Cabaret Voltaire possessed by Killing Joke’s demonic force. Set highlight ‘The Evidence’ is a searing motorik whirlwind but it’s almost matched by long-time favourite ‘Jonny Guitar Calling Gosta Berlin’, tonight rendered as a stretched-out space jam. And then, as the band depart, the drummer is still on stage, still hammering out his hypnotic rhythm. He might still be there for all we know, master of ceremonies on a night when rhythm is king.

Dale Kattack

THE FRATELLIS

O2 Academy

It’s been 15 years since the release of ‘Chelsea Dagger’ but it’s fair to say that Glasgow trio The Fratellis still know how to put on a fantastic show. Even before The Fratellis start their first song, they stir up the energy of the room by playing ‘Galop Infernal’ (more commonly known as the Can-can song) which the audience is quick to join in with. The concert’s atmosphere is more reminiscent of a party than a gig, with live backing singers and a brass band, these on-stage performers projecting further vitality onto an already animated audience. Unsurprisingly the songs from the band’s debut album, ‘Costello Music’, are the best received but crowd’s enthusiasm and energy remains strong and matches the band throughout the set. Last year’s ‘Half Drunk Under A Full Moon’ showcases a real diversion from The Fratellis’ usual

style, reflecting a 60s doo-wop sound. Refreshingly, the band don’t promote the album particularly, or talk much at all in general between songs, instead allowing the music to speak for itself. Their rendition of Baccara’s ‘Yes Sir I Can Boogie’ – lately adopted as an unofficial anthem for the Scotland football team and their fans – sees the band come into full swing, capturing the joyous feeling of the audience. Placed between the rush of the band’s upbeat repertoire, calmer tracks such as ‘Imposters (Little by Little)’ allow us to catch our breath before we dance our way into the next track. As the band leave the stage prior to their encore, screams of anticipation for firm favourite ‘Chelsea Dagger’ can probably be heard from the far end of Cowley Road, and it doesn’t disappoint, the song perfectly captured the celebratory tone of the evening.

Laura Cutting

WHITE LIES
O2 Academy
25 Mar

LLOYD COLE
SJE Arts Centre
SOLD OUT
See next page

ENOLA GAY
Jericho Tavern
29 Mar

ROLLING BLACKOUTS COASTAL FEVER
O2 Academy
24 May

MANDRAKE HANDSHAKE
Jericho Tavern
02 Apr

PEANESS
The Bullingdon
26 May

BAMBARA
The Bullingdon
25 Apr

AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS
O2 Academy
07 June

LARKIN POE
O2 Academy
26 Apr

NOAHFINNCE
The Bullingdon
09 Sept

**CROSSTOWN
CONCERTS
OXFORD**

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

photo: Leo Bowder



BOSSAPHONIK with K.O.G **Cowley Workers Social Club**

We were warned: there will be sweat. The word ‘energetic’ doesn’t quite cover it. K.O.G (Kweku of Ghana) and his band have the kind of innate kinetic power that struggles to be constrained by any mundane physical manifestation. Especially Mr K. himself. Gripping a mic – whilst hammering out

complex rhythms that usually require two hands and engaging in vigorous hip-shaking – he mesmerises these most receptive Bossanauts. Assisted and supported by a relentless tide of uplifting soundscapes created by some seriously talented musicians, it is impossible not to be captivated.

This is our first Bossaphonik in three years – Covid’s icy grip having weakened somewhat – and also the final date in a UK tour promoting Kweku’s new solo album, ‘Zone 6, Agege’. The tour included a date at Camden’s Jazz Café but the Cowley Workers Club, Bossaphonik’s new home, is

the lucky venue for this occasion. From the LP, ‘Shidaa’ has an accessible niceness, a sparkling horn-inflected groove, as does ‘YaaYaa’. These tracks have definite 70s Afrobeat and highlife stylings – the latter did, of course, originate in Ghana. However, there is enough here to unsettle any chin-stroking genre-fundamentalists. ‘Ayine’ has a hip-hop sensibility that complements the more traditional vocal passages. Always eclectic, yet the sonic styles it branches into – especially dancehall and reggae/dub (e.g. ‘Fire on the Mountain’; something we would have been even happier with a lot more of) – never stray too far from the Afrocentric foundations, which makes sense, when you think about it.

The K.O.G crew have a very keen sense of dynamics: they are able to whip up a degree of frenzy, from traditionally fairly reserved Oxfordians (even the up-for-it Bossanauts have to be initially encouraged to step forwards to the stage), but also some very tranquil interludes, with some particularly melodic guitar codas. There are some (almost) Fela Kuti-esque long interludes, but not, like, half an hour long. There are various percussive objects scattered around the packed stage, where every now and again the band members set up a pulsating riddim. Kweku himself is surrounded by such devices, and random objects he utilises such as a wok and what looks like a metal thali tray. In this time of emerging global convalescence K.O.G have perfected the concept of rhythmical remedy.

Leo Bowder

OCTAVIA FREUD / MOTHDROP / THE SUBTHEORY **The Bullingdon**

Previously The Subtheory was the solo project of former Death of Hi-Fi man Andy Hill, creating instrumental soundtracks to imagined action movies and computer games with a decidedly 80s bent. Now, though, he’s joined by singer Cate DeBu and it’s very different musical beast. The opening number is dark trip hop, Cate’s vocals mining Beth Gibbons’ broken torch singer depths, while Andy’s electro backing is closer to Sneaker Pimps. From here the pair move into brighter, poppier territory and spangled synth-pop, like Gary Numan soundtracking an early 80s John Carpenter film. ‘Seashore’ is dreamy machine-pop and if a more soulful track is less effective it’s immediately followed by something more akin to a gothic Yazoo. It’s a compact but varied and inventive set that even at this early stage for them as a two-piece marks The Subtheory out as serious contenders in Oxford’s wonderfully fertile electronic music scene.

From trip hop to techno in the form of Mothdrop, the solo musical incarnation of Brendan Morgan, who has been an under-sung star of that scene for a while now. Dispensing with a laptop he uses a table of messy gadgetry – buttons, pedals and knobs all linked by a web of wires – to create a kind of freeform New York rave that’s more organic than most solo electro artists manage, sounding like Arthur Russell brought into the 21st Century by Giant Swan.

As Octavia Freud, Martin Andrews has been making rave-inspired music for a couple of decades now but lately has hit gold with a deeply personal yet political style that reaches out of its electronic corner to embrace post-punk, drawing a line between A Guy Called Gerald and Yard Act, with dry, ruminative narratives like ‘50’ and ‘When I Was a Kid’, exploring memory and middle age in a way that makes you think this is the path Jarvis Cocker might have taken instead of Pulp if he’d spent his student days dancing at The Hacienda. When he isn’t looking inward he’s raging outwardly, ‘Boris Can Dance’ bursting the bravado of our bloviating PM, Martin one minute skulking over his equipment, hoodie over his head, the next doing a soft shoe shuffle across the stage, like Sleaford Mods exploring their inner Fred Astaire.

The set ends with something like a techno call to arms in ‘Safety In Numbers’, one of Martin’s older numbers, euphoric and propulsive with its awesome synth swells and a timeless clarion call to stand up for what’s right – a message given extra impetus by the Ukrainian flag projected across the back of the stage. All of life is contained in this unstintingly engaging forty minutes – you can fight for your right to party, or party for your right to fight; either way Octavia Freud leave you feeling you’ll win the day.

Dale Kattack

MYELE **MANZANA** **St John’s College** **Auditorium**

Myele Manzanana’s drums and Lewis Moody’s piano are already at warp speed when saxophonist Emma Rawicz gets alongside. It’s not even the end of the first tune yet their short ride in a fast jazz machine (with apologies to John Adams) sounds like the finale to a gig just ten minutes on from the opening chords. Now the risk is that whatever comes after will be anti-climatic by comparison. But Myele and his band just get better and better.

All bar one tune in tonight’s two 45-minute sets are Myele’s compositions, with several from ‘Crisis and Opportunity’, the first of a five album series written when lockdown, he tells us in his awkwardly charming manner, sent the recent arrival from New Zealand into an existential crisis.

His tunes are rich in easy-on-the-ear melodies that invite you in. He has a reputation for blending jazz with electronica, broken beat, and world music.

Tonight it’s jazz that predominates, and with Myele’s



photo: Colin May

bass drum and the excellent Karl Abel’s bass guitar locked together, grounding the music, and rising star Emma Rawicz’ saxophone and Nubian Twist’s Jonny Ensor’s trumpet often in unison, the nod to the modal jazz classics of the 50s and 60s (Miles Davis’ ‘Kind of Blue’ is in there) is clear. But with Myele frequently drumming three different rhythms simultaneously, there’s always a contemporary twist. For instance his warm hearted ‘Brixton Blues’ has a soul-

funk vibe towards the end.

Myele can play delicately but mainly he is a powerhouse drummer; there’s no quiet caressing of the skins with brushes. Much of the energy comes not just from how he hits the kit but from the tension between his haste and the restraint of some of the horn writing. His own inventive drum solos don’t become boring but wisely he allows plenty of space for the subtle touch of Lewis Moody’s channelling of Debussy

and Bill Evans on the piano keys, and for scene stealing solos from 20-year-old saxophonist Emma Rawicz as she explores her instrument’s full range getting up on her toes when hitting the high notes.

But for a group of musicians playing together for the very first time what is most remarkable is how uplifting, how very enjoyable, the five sound. Even Myele says he’s surprised how well it’s going.

Colin May

Text 55UK18 £10 to 70070 to help Sea Shepherd defend marine wildlife

SEA SHEPHERD UK

Preserving ocean life through direct action campaigns, education and cooperation.

GHOST NET CAMPAIGN
Removing harmful 'ghost' fishing gear from around the UK's coastline.

MARINE DEBRIS CAMPAIGN
Cleaning beaches and educating about the harm plastic is doing to our oceans.

PILOT WHALE DEFENSE
Exposing the killing of Pilot Whales and Dolphins in the Danish Faroe Islands

To learn more about Sea Shepherd UK, campaigns such as the ones above and how you can help play your part in conserving the most vital habitat on the planet, look us up online.

f Sea Shepherd UK i seashepherduk t @seashepherd_uk s seashepherduk.org

huntsabs, stopping the dirty old hunts!

HUNT SABOTEURS ASSOCIATION

www.huntsabs.org.uk

WHAT’S MY LINE?

A monthly look at jobs in local music. This month it’s MARTIN NEWTON and he’s a SOUND ENGINEER.

How long have you worked in this job? “40 years but 15 years full time as a professional.” What is one thing you have to do as part of your job that the average person might not know? “Telling people where the toilets are; that I am not looking after their coat; that I don’t control the air conditioning, and that if they want a lighting engineer they should pay for one.” What’s been the single biggest highlight of your career so far? “They booked my favourite band to play at The Bullingdon. I thought it was a joke. Paul Williams (the manager) enjoys winding me up. I assumed because I had been going on about them for so long and playing their music over the PA between the bands all the time he was getting his own back. But no, they were coming, and they did, and they didn’t bring a sound engineer so I had to do their sound. Blimey, I was nervous As I write this I am just about to get in a van and do a UK tour with them as their sound engineer. Blimey.” And the lowlight? “I quite often stand next to touring engineers to keep an eye on them. Don’t get me wrong, some of them are amazing, but some of them are bloody awful and think they are amazing. I hate having to listen to people do my job badly and ask me to sort it out. I hope I am not that person when I visit other people’s venues.” How much and how did Covid affect your



job? “Covid destroyed lives and livelihoods. It shut down the music industry and caused damage that will never be repaired. It caused a lot of upset and resentment in how people were treated and a lot of people decided that they would rather go and work in other industries where they would be better paid and get to see their families. As a result there are less people to do more work now. On the bright side it meant that rates of pay have gone up – some people doing my job in other venues were earning close to minimum wage. Things are going to be tough for a long time yet.” Who’s your favourite ever Oxford musical artist? “Grant Baldwin. He has released loads of albums and I love them all. I have worked with him for well over half my life and he never ceases to entertain me with new ideas and great

melodies. I wouldn’t say he was a genius (see below) as that is an overused word.” What’s the single most important piece advice you’d give to someone wanting to do your job? “Listen – listen a lot. Don’t think you can learn it from a book: just because you know the theory doesn’t mean you can do the job. Don’t be a dick.” Who’s the most awkward person you’ve ever had to deal with in your job? “Steve Dunn from The Ocean. Flyposting bastard.” When was the last time you heard genius? “The Bullingdon used to put on jazz nights every Tuesday evening. They were free – as in you didn’t have to pay to get in, not free jazz. Some of the artists who performed at these nights were amazing, particularly when they put bands together on the fly of local jazz celebrities. We never used to have many people turn up –just 20 or 30 and we had to stop doing them because it didn’t pay. I miss those nights. We should bring them back, although it wouldn’t be the same.” Have you ever compromised your integrity in the course of your work? “Every time I set up a club night or do lighting.” Would you swap your job for any other? “I have done a lot of other jobs. This is the only job where I have never wanted to skip off work for a day. It’s a good job.” Are you rich? “No, he’s the other guitarist (this was a Wonderland in joke – sorry if you don’t get it).” Do you consider your job glamorous? “Being abused by drunks at the back of a hall and yelled at by people for stuff that is nothing to do with me? God no.” What’s your favourite thing about Oxford’s music scene? “The Bullingdon.”

INTRODUCING.... THE PEOPLE VERSUS

Who are they? The People Versus are an Oxford sextet made up of Alice Edwards (lead vocals); Jack Wilkinson (guitar/vocals); Benedict Crone (cello); Danny Evans (keyboards/vocals); Owen Stepney (drums), and Cathy Ife (bass/harmonies). They formed from the Oxford open mic scene; Alice, Ben and Jack had been working together previously in London and had been staying out with Jack’s family in Oxfordshire when they wrote some songs and decided to test them at The Harcourt Arms. Soon after they found Danny “playing an acoustic guitar, kick drum and harmonica, and asked him to learn to play a synthesiser. We informed Owen he was our new drummer and I don’t think he’s realised he could say no. Please don’t tell him.” The band got airplay from BBC Introducing Oxfordshire and played a sold-out debut EP release show at the Jericho Tavern. Despite forming just nine months before the pandemic started they have toured around the UK and Denmark, released two more singles and appeared on BBC South Today. Their new single ‘Again & Again’ is released on the 29th April. What do they sound like? Variousy rootsy and celestial orchestral folk-pop with an indie shimmer around the edges: euphoric, harmony-laden and light on their pins songs with Alice’s gently expansive voice lending them a dreamy airiness while cello adds a chamber-pop-like lushness to their sound; or, according to Alice, “haunting fairytales powered by sheer pop euphoria.” What inspires them? Alice: “From an early age, instead of going outside on the playground, I had my nose in a Grimm’s fairytales written in old English. Regular family trips to see Shakespeare and staring open mouthed at three-part harmony choirs at the Globe Theatre also were an influence. From that I graduated to writing poetry to deal with stressful teen years and bit by bit I smushed together stories and melodies until this happened.” Their career highlight so far is: “Doing our first international tour, and it not ending up terrible.”



And the lowlight: Jack: “I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer in the first summer of the pandemic; thankfully we didn’t have any shows to reschedule and the Oxford hospitals were incredible. I am more or less through it now, but having it explained to me that the surgery had a chance of making me monotone meant my harmonies would have got even worse.” Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is: “In Flight-Movie – ‘The Assistant’ is an A-Class certified banger.” If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be: “‘An Awesome Wave’ by Alt-J.” When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect? “29th April at the O2 Academy; you can expect to have a good time and hopefully escape for a while if you like our music, because if there is one band that plays our songs well, it’s us.” Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are: “Favourite is how supportive and diverse the community is and how anyone can get involved. Least favourite is how hard it is to get to be on the cover of *Nightshift*.” You might love them if you love: Kate Bush; Aurora; Florence and the Machine; Arcade Fire; The Sundays; Stornoway. Hear them here: thepeopleversusmusic.com.

Bossaphonik
Superb live bands each month! DJ Bossaphonik Dan and Guests
OXFORD'S UNIQUE JAZZ WORLD DANCE EVENT

LEKAN BABALOLA'S SACRED FUNK

Nigerian percussion wizard with 7 piece band - Yoruba sounds meet jazz funk!

2 time Grammy winner, Lekan Babalola received a cultural, political and musical apprenticeship with the great Fela Kuti.

He has since performed with Roy Ayres, Ernest Ranglin, Tony Allen, Prince, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and Pharoah Saunders amongst other jazz and funk luminaries.

He brings traditional apala and juju music considered sacred in Yoruba culture and fuses it with a jazz funk groove. The result – a deep and ecstatic Pan-African dancefloor experience.

Friday 22nd April 9pm - 2am
£12adv / £12 student ID / £15 door Live band on at 10pm
wegottickets.com

NOW AT COWLEY WORKERS SOCIAL CLUB
Between Towns Road, OX4 3LZ
www.bossaphonik.com

Dr SHOTOVER: Offshore Banking Business

Ah there you are, Young Jackfruitski. Welcome to Offshore Night at the East Indies Club marina and bar. How was your yacht trip over? Oh, you decided to power-ski, Jackfruitski? [Wheezy laughter]... Well, pull up an inflatable oligarch and buy us all a drink. I'm sure Bedingfield our Club Steward will gladly accept that waterproof suitcase full of crisp notes. I love the smell of freshly-laundered cash in the morning, don't you? Or indeed at any time of day. Hmm, what's my poison? Make mine a Cayman Island Iced Tea, why don't you? Now let's give something a spin on the club jukebox, aka the Laundromat. The usual 'Money' songs by ABBA, Pink Floyd and The Flying Lizards? Or one of the lesser-known tracks by (here we go) Blavatnik Kershaw, LEBEDEVO, Wet-Leg Deripaska...? They're all, erm, potential chart gold. But... (Abramo) Vich one is better? There's only one way to find out. [Leans forward on barstool] FIGHT! Next month: Un Deux Trois Quatre Sanctions

SCENES FROM TORY HQ: 'Says it's from a Mr, sorry, Lord Lebedev, sir'

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO Good things come to those that wait, and back in April 2002, Oxford metallers **Sevenchurch** were getting some well-earned retrospective acclaim when extreme metal bible *Terrorizer* listed their one and only album ‘Bleak Insight’ as the third greatest doom-metal album of all time – beaten only by **Black Sabbath**’s eponymous debut and **Saint Vitus**’ ‘Die Healing’. The album, released in 1993 on Noise Records, has earned Sevenchurch cult status in underground metal circles, notably in eastern Europe, while in 2010, *Nightshift* hailed them as the second greatest Oxford metal band, beaten only by **Sextodecimo**. Coming up to date, this month saw exuberant indie stars **The Samurai Seven** release their debut album, ‘Le Sport’, on Rotator Records, while punk-metallers **Headcount** also released their debut, ‘It’s a Business Doing Pleasure With You’ and were interviewed at length in *Nightshift*, railing against paedophiles and Harold Shipman (“he was a cunt, wasn’t he”) who graced the album cover. Other local releases this month included **Varjak** (‘So Called Science’), **Coma Kai** (‘Firekillschildren’), and **Hardcoresmen of the Technopalypse** (‘N’), the techno duo releasing the twelfth of twelve EPs spelling out the first word of their name over the previous year. Proof once again that tomorrow’s stars are today’s opening acts, a band called **The**



Libertines were supporting **The Vines** at **The Zodiac**, while also at the venue this month were **Six By Seven**, **Gallon Drunk** and **International Noise Conspiracy**.

10 YEARS AGO Rockabilly-inspired crew **The Long Insiders** graced the April 2012 cover of *Nightshift*, guitarist Nick Kenny and singer Sarah Dodds pictured taking to a guitar with an oxyacetylene torch, while Nick is quoted as saying “It’s really boring when rock bands start saving the planet; it makes me want to pull my eyes out.” The band later continued without Sarah, Nick taking over vocal duties. Back then they were launching their debut album ‘Cat Gut & Engine Oil’ – a quote taken from an early *Nightshift* review. A look back at the gig guide from this month sees the likes of **Ladyhawke**; **The Lemonheads**; **Lanterns on the Lake**; **Chuck Prophet** and **Mystery Jets** all playing at the O2 Academy. Over at **The Jericho Tavern**, meanwhile, were a bunch of fresh-faced newcomers called **Bastille**, yet to become world-conquering pop stars and a byword for insipid tedium. Wander over to the demo pages and there are a few still familiar names: regular local busker **Lewis Newcombe** was top of the pile, while **Swindlestock** were close behind, the band later morphing into **The Great Western Tears**. **My Crooked Teeth** also featured, while down in

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY the Dumper were **Sceniclife**, described rather poetically as “as appetising as fart-flavoured Monster Munch.” They don’t seem to have come back, so the review obviously worked.

5 YEARS AGO “The idea of disappearing or living in absolute isolation is a rejection of the world and I find that fascinating,” said Martin Child, one half of **The August List**, who were on the cover of *Nightshift* for the second time in April 2017 as they prepared to release their masterpiece of a second album, ‘Ramshackle Tabernacle’, which centred on the themes of hermits and absenteeism. “Ramshackle is a favourite word that we’ve never worked into a song and it sums up our style to an extent,” added partner Kerraleigh. The duo certainly practised what they preached, existing in the splendid isolation of an old converted barn in the wilds of rural east Oxfordshire. We know this because *Nightshift* tried to pay them a visit once and got hopelessly lost. Apparently several Tesco delivery drivers have disappeared in the area, never to be seen again. Back in urban Oxford, there were visits to town by **Chase’n’Status**, **The Jesus & Mary Chain**, **While She Sleeps** and **Tinariwen**, all at the **O2 Academy**, while **The Moonlandingz**, **Pins**, **Jaws**, and **Lætitia Sadia** were at **The Bullingdon** and **The Orielles** were down at **The Cellar**.



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



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

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



EVOLUTION
 RECORDING STUDIOS

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

 Experienced Engineers, Session musicians and Producers in-house.

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

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

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



Glasshouse Studios
 Rehearsal and Recording studios

Four state of the art rehearsal rooms and a professional recording studio.

For bookings call Jamie on 07917685935
 Glasshouse studios, Cumnor, Oxford • glasshousestudios.org

TRACKS

Yin & Yang Audio

Top track of the Month wins a free mix/master from Yin & Yang Audio, courtesy of Umair Chaudhry. Visit www.yinandyangaudio.co.uk/nightshift

TOP TRACK ALEXANDRA HAMER

These are, if you've been paying even the slightest bit of attention, bleak and frightening times. And as ever in bleak and frightening times, you can immerse yourself in escapism and pretend it's all okay really and the big knobs will get round the table and yank the iron out of the fire, or you can reflect the gaping void back at itself with music of equal darkness. Alexandra Hamer opts for the latter here with a delicate, desolate rendition of Alice Dona and Serge Lama's 'Je Suis Malade', sung rather beautifully in its original French, Alexandra's plaintive vocals, backed only by simple, plangent piano and sparse percussion, juicing every drop of heartache from the words. Words that speak of passion and obsession and loneliness – a cousin to the similarly classic 'If You Go Away' – but seem completely fitting in the context of children wrenched from their homes and schools and families as angry, inadequate little men pursue their pathetic power trips. "Like an orphan in a dormitory / I don't want to live this life anymore" might be aimed at an absent, uncaring lover, but poignantly speaks a universal truth of the horror of war, wherever and whenever it is waged. Subtly and softly Alexandra sings but it's all drama and passion, and that she's singing it while sat in her pyjamas somehow only adds to the intensity of it all. This is bleak, beautiful and broken. The world is currently two of those and only when stupid, selfish scum understand what being a great man really entails can it be the other.

BROKEN EMPIRE

Before there were several score metal micro-genres there was simply heavy metal; it had long hair, big riffs and thought it was riding into battle sometime in the Viking era. Broken Empire's mission is to fill the gap between rock and metal, return it to those simpler olden times, and this they do efficiently on their song 'Disguise', the first single from their forthcoming debut album. It's suitably epic and takes in NWOBHM, thrash, and even an occasional spot of metalcore but remains, at heart, old fashioned heavy rock, beating its chest solidly alongside Alter Bridge while batting

its eyelids at Killswitch as singer Ieuan, whose name would make a decent opening gambit at Wordle, pitches in somewhere not far from Ian Gillan. In some ways the song is almost a potted history of heavy rock as it progresses from classic early 80s metal to something more complex and intense. As such it's forced to tread a fine line between sounding dated and contemporary, but given the imminent threat of global thermonuclear war, maybe those 80s influences are entirely apposite.

THE GREAT APE BAND

Another 80s trend to go alongside classic heavy metal and Cold War terror was a decidedly British strain of jazzy soul-pop that even today evokes memories of Ford Capris, unironic moustaches and jauntily worn Trilbies. The Great Ape Band, back after previously delivering us something vaguely similar a couple of years back, just as the pandemic first took hold on global affairs, hark back to those less than glorious days. The band claim to be "focussed heavily on groove" but this is neither heavy nor groovy, more like the funk equivalent of a mug of weak, overly sweet tea, and while the song in question, 'Kill the King', is apparently about "dodgy leaders leading us down foolish paths and also about social media madness", as far as protest songs go it's less barricade-manning call to arms, more Sergeant Wilson in *Dad's Army* idly asking "do you think that's awfully wise?" any militancy or clear message lost amid the meandering lightweight jazz-funk groove and soft rock guitar wandering, a moment of something a bit more focussed that might be a chorus a brief and ultimately futile promise of something better beyond the aimless noodling. "Not everybody cares what's on your mind" declares the singer but maybe a better answer to social media over-sharers is a swift smack on the back of the head with a breeze block rather than this mild and milky musical reproachment.

THE BOOYAH SETTLEMENT

Ah, now, that's better. The Booyah Settlement were round these parts a few short months back winning the Top Track title is psychedelic style with their mix of Spiritualised stoner drones and Velvet Underground gutter-level rocking. Perhaps with thoughts of warmer weather on the horizon this new song, 'Mary Magdalene is Getting Stoned', finds them mellowing out a bit more, leaving the filthy basement scuzz back in the bedsit while they luxuriate in the shade of a willow tree in their local park: lysergic gospel psych and airy organ drones fronted by washed-out hymnal vocals and the feeling that you could drive a truck full of exploding air horns over their prone torsos and they'd be too blissed out to notice. If we're honest, this sounds perhaps

a bit too much *exactly* like Spiritualised to hold up in court, but it passes the tribute-not-pastiche test and frankly if we're going to sit outside and gaze at clouds that aren't of the mushroom variety, this is exactly the kind of soundtrack we want.

CIRCLE

Choral folk ensembles aren't something we get a huge amount of here at *Nightshift*, so we should welcome Circle to the review pile, even though we are initially hugely disappointed they aren't experimental Finnish psych merchants Circle. We're also slightly disappointed they ask us for a review because they're "keen to get more of a profile as it drives more digital interaction," which we fear is the modern equivalent of wanting to change the world or touch people's souls. Still, the tranquillity of the music here is a pleasantly cooling balm after thirty seconds of watching the news through our fingers. Celestial harmonies swooning softly over sparse harp, dulcimer and classical guitar arrangements is remarkably reassuring, with a sweetly pure take on 19th Century folk standard 'Tiree Love Song' a particular highlight, while a choral rendition of 'Green Grows the Holly' makes us think it's Christmas all over again and we're two-thirds of the way through a leftover bottle of sherry by the time the album's done. At which point the combination of rarefied church vibes and fortified wine bring forth a vision of an angel, come to save us all. Or it might be one of the neighbours wondering why we're lying on the pavement at 10 in the morning. Given how utterly appalling most of our politicians are, perhaps it's time to put our trust in a higher power. And right on cue here's a track called 'Prayer For a Burning World'; it's this month's most apt title and comes coated in a sheen of optimism; let's hope it works.

MY LOVELY HEARSE

And after that, it's time to unleash hell! My Lovely Hearse is the solo work of Olly Corona Brown from Undersmile and Drove, so we're all set for a righteous storm of noise. We've even uncorked another bottle of leftover sherry (this one was under the sink and is apparently from the Domestos vineyard, with a lovely lemony bouquet). But, wait, what's this? An instrumental track utilising layers of keyboard patches over programmed beats, all from the *Casio Book of DIY Sci-Fi Filmscore Composition?* Well, yes. Sandpaper synth drones, floaty, almost folky interludes, a waspy buzz and the onward march of the animated android army – it's kind of like something you might have heard on a vintage 'Introduction to Moog Music' compilation back in the 1970s. And actually it ain't bad, with an abrasive persistence about it, but given Olly's previous form, we expected something slightly more akin to the sound of Hades vomiting a trillion demons upon the surface of the world. Guess we shouldn't be too upset not to be faced with the end of times right now. Although, given what's up next...

Send tracks, downloads or streaming links for review to editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk. If you can't handle criticism, please don't send us your music. Same goes for your stupid, over-sensitive mates. New Kinder World rules do not apply here, you bunch of sanctimonious hippies.

TEK KHALIQUE

"I have produced some songs, all pop in genre," announces Tek, which cheers us up no end since we're craving a bit of fun and escapism right now. And fifteen minutes later we're still craving a bit of fun escapism, although we did briefly imagine escaping via a sixth storey window halfway through in the hope that severe cranial trauma might blank out the frankly bizarre, but not in a good way, approximation of pop that is the song 'Tutankhamun'. It's like someone attempting a *Horrible Histories*-style song in the style of lo-fi trap, tinny beats and library keyboard samples underpinning a hamsterish freeform rap about the titular pharaoh with choice rhymes like "Mummified / Come alive!" and a refrain of "Tutankhamun / Come out of your tomb", because what the planet really needs now, after a global pandemic on top of catastrophic climate change and a looming world war, is an ancient Egyptian curse let loose. That said, if the alternative is having to listen to any more of Tek Khalique's school drama faculty end-of-year revue in-a-hip-hop-stylee, being consumed by a plague of scarab beetles might not be the worst option.

TOILET TRACK

THE WORD66

For a few brief moments the opening bars of The Word66's song 'Just To Show My Love' makes us think they're going to sound a bit like REM. Those brief moments really are briefer than a *Love Island* contestant's briefs, dear reader. Because within seconds of getting our hopes up they've sunk into workmanlike, middling soft rock of the kind we imagine jaded session musicians construct like so much flat-pack furniture in between working with people who might have some faint spark of artistic creativity. Or a soul instead of an endless sea of grey sewage pipe discharge. Seriously, we wouldn't be surprised if the guitarist here is called Alan Key, so functional is his fretplay and the general mundane inconsequentiality of the music. "I just want to show you my love is true" over-enunciates the poundshop Axl Rose on vocals, pleading to be allowed to bask in the object of his devotion's "sweet rays" as we realise he's actually singing to God. Mate, have you watched the news lately? God has forsaken you, and the rest of us, though if the Devil is now walking among us he damn well didn't bother giving you any of the best tunes we're so often told he has. The Word66 have another song, 'On the Way To the Promise Land' (*sic*), which we guess is about Heaven and on which they get properly heavy. And by properly heavy we mean a sluggish form of vaguely grunge-tinged chuggaboogie that would doubtless lose an arm-wrestling contest with a Creed power ballad. We sometimes imagine the house band in Hell is a riotous collaboration between Lemmy, Janice Joplin and Keith Moon but it isn't, is it: it's this lot. Playing all night, every night, for all eternity.



QUALITY BACKLINE
£10 PER HOUR
 Inc. TAMA, UNN, MARK BASS, BLACKSTAR, FENDER, & SHURE gear
Safehouse
 STUDIO
JUST OFF ST CLEMENTS - OR4 1BA - FREE PARKING
CONTACT: MIKE 07731 804796
SAFEHOUSESTUDIO.CO.UK
 @SafeSafehouse



Master Rhythm STUDIOS
 Drum room and rehearsal room in Cowley
info@masterrhythm.co.uk
 07765224245 *Online booking reintroduced!
masterrhythm.co.uk/booking
 Facebook: Master Rhythm Studios



TURAN AUDIO.co.uk
 professional audio mastering
 for all platforms and all genres

 Mastered in the studio last month;
TOM CAMPBELL, VIRGIN PRUNES, DEAD ROMANTIC, PAUL QUARTERMAN, TOBY SEBASTIAN, THE AUTUMN SAINTS, FIREGAZER, THE GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, MAX O'DONNELL, MIRAGES, JUDAS PRIEST, JUNGLE ROT, ELVIS COSTELLO, METALLICA, PETER GREEN'S FLEETWOOD MAC, THE CURE.
01865 716466 tim@turanaudio.co.uk



A modern, friendly recording service

 Situated just by the Oxford ring-road, our acoustically isolated and conditioned studio space is perfect for voice overs, narration, session work, tracking instruments for bands, mixing, production and more.
 Contact us for a chat about your project.
www.startrecording.co.uk
Start Recording



TAD STUDIOS

 • 3 High-Tech Newly Renovated Recording / Rehearsal Rooms
 • Full Backline and PA System in Every Room
 • SSL / Neve / Thermionic Culture Recording Gear
 • Mapex Kits, Fender / Marshall / Ashdown Amps
 • Doorstep Parking, Discounts Available For Block Bookings

www.tadstudios.co.uk / Email: contact@tadaudio.ltd
 Call 01869 934532 for Recording Enquiries
 Text 07877 645410 to Book a Rehearsal
 Built by Musicians, for Musicians

WED~23~MAR~22
JERICO TAVERN, OXFORD
OCTOBER DRIFT

THU~24~MAR~22
O2 ACADEMY, OXFORD
GENTLEMEN'S DUB CLUB

WED~30~MAR~22 **SOLD OUT**
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
THE VACCINES
ACOUSTIC SHOW

FRI~01~APR~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
DUB PISTOLS

SUN~03~APR~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
THE HARA

FRI~08~APR~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
RIOT JAZZ BRASS BAND

SAT~16~APR~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
RHYTHM OF THE 90S

FRI~22~APR~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
BEARDYMAN

TUE~26~APR~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
LEWIS WATSON

FRI~29~APR~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
THE PEOPLE VERSUS

FRI~29~APR~22
JERICO TAVERN, OXFORD
SAINT AGNES

FRI~13~MAY~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
SEA GIRLS

MON~16~MAY~22 **SOLD OUT**
O2 ACADEMY, OXFORD
ALT-J
STRIPPED/SEMI-ACOUSTIC

TUE~17~MAY~22
JERICO TAVERN, OXFORD
DELIGHTS

WED~18~MAY~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
FEET

FRI~20~MAY~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
PHIL CAMPBELL AND THE BASTARD SONS
PLAY MOTORHEAD

FRI~20~MAY~22
O2 ACADEMY, OXFORD
DUTTY MOONSHINE BIG BAND

FRI~27~MAY~22
THE BULLINGDON, OXFORD
KING AWESOME
80'S ROCK TRIBUTE

FRI~27~MAY~22
JERICO TAVERN, OXFORD
PUPPY

SAT~28~MAY~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
HANG MASSIVE

SAT~11~JUN~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
THE INFLATABLES

THU~23~JUNE~22
THE BULLINGDON, OXFORD
ULYSSES WELLS

SAT~02~JUL~22
O2 ACADEMY, OXFORD
BLACK PARADE - 00'S EMO ANTHEMS

SUN~21~AUG~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
THE RUMJACKS

FRI~23~SEP~22
THE BULLINGDON, OXFORD
THE 900
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER SOUNDTRACK COVER BAND

FRI~14~OCT~22
O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD
RED

FRI~09~DEC~22
O2 ACADEMY, OXFORD
THE CRAIG CHARLES FUNK AND SOUL CLUB