



# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month  
Issue 310  
August  
2022

*There comes a  
point where  
you have to  
say 'I'm  
choosing  
happiness'*

Cheers for

# CHIIKA

Exam stress and fusion pop with  
Oxford's genre-blending star-in-waiting

Also in this issue:

Introducing **THE FOAM HEADS**

At work with **VEZ HOPER**

**CORNBURY** bows out

Plus

All your local Oxford music news,  
previews, reviews and gigs for August

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# THE BULLINGDON

AUGUST 2022

GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Saturday 30th July  
**Terraforms**  
**Nicky Blackmarket**  
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 6th August  
**Semi Detached**  
**Wookie**  
**Badger**  
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 13th August  
**Summer Bounce**  
**Luv Injection**  
**DJ Young Linx**  
**DJ Ovaproof**  
**DJ Stacey Love**  
Doors: 11PM

Friday 19th August  
**Luis Maldonalte Band**  
**Oxb Band**  
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 20th August  
**Sticky Disco**  
**D.A.V.E the Drummer**  
**Bad Boy Pete**  
**Jack Majic**  
**Spaceface. Mr P**  
Doors: 11PM

Tuesday 23rd August  
**Sports Team**  
**Album Launch Show**  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 25th August  
**Open Mic Night** *FREE ENTRY*  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 25th August  
**Debbie Bond**  
**Pete Boss & Friends**  
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 27th August  
**Terraforms**  
**Madcap (Metalheadz)**  
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 3rd September  
**We Are Still Young**  
**The Club Night**  
Doors: 11PM

Friday 9th September  
**Noahfinnce**  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 9th September  
**Reggaeton**  
Doors: 11PM

Thursday 15th September  
**Holy Coves**  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 16th September  
**DIY Class of 2022 Tour**  
**Yard Act**  
**English Teacher**  
**Lime Garden**  
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 17th September  
**Rawdia**  
**DRS in session**  
**T-I B2B Saxxon**  
**MC Juiceman**  
Doors: 11PM

Tuesday 20th September  
**Afflecks Palace**  
**Pastel & Vega Rally**  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 22nd September  
**Laurence Jones**  
**Blue Nation**  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 23rd September  
**The 900**  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 23rd September  
**Drum and Bass**  
Doors: 11PM

Sunday 25th September  
**Jayde Adams:**  
*Meh, I Can Save You*  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 30th September  
**Katy J Pearson**  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 30th September  
**Soul Sista**  
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 1st October  
**Skylarkin**  
**Mungo's HiFi Soundsystem**  
Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 5th October  
**Ben Poole**  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 7th October  
**Cut Capers**  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 7th October  
**The HAU5 Party**  
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 8th October  
**Reggaeton**  
Doors: 11PM

Sunday 9th October  
**Elf Lyons**  
Doors: 7PM

Monday 10th October  
**The Skinner Brothers**  
Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 11th October  
**Andy Parsons:**  
*Work in Progress*  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 13th October  
**Jordan Brookes:**  
*This is Just What Happens*  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 13th October  
**Semi Detached**  
**TBA**  
Doors: 11PM

Friday 14th October  
**Drink and Jive**  
Doors: 7PM

Sunday 16th October  
**The Trials of Cato**  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 20th October  
**Helen Bauer:**  
*Madam Good Tit*  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 20th October  
**So Fetch**  
**2000s Party**  
Doors: 11PM

Friday 21st October  
**Troy Hawke:**  
*Sigmund Troy'd!*  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 21st October  
**Raving Trippy**  
Doors: 11PM

Sunday 23rd October  
**Rob Auton:**  
*The Crowd Show*  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 27th October  
**Mark Simmons:**  
*Quip Off the Mark*  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 28th October  
**Harriet Kemsley:**  
*Honeysuckle Island*  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 28th October  
**Cut the Trap**  
Doors: 11PM

Monday 31st October  
**Soul Sista**  
**Panic at the Disco**  
Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 2nd November  
**Jerry Sadowitz:**  
*Not for Anyone*  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 4th November  
**The People Versus**  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 4th November  
**Bangerz and Lash**  
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 5th & Sunday 6th November  
**Rabidfest 2022**  
**Krysthla**  
**Footprints in the Custard, Desert Storm**  
**Pulverise, The Grand Mal, Disinherit, Wall**  
**Public Execution, Sin Dweller, Slay Duggee**  
Doors: 12PM

Monday 7th November  
**MC Hammersmith:**  
*1 Man 8 Mile*  
Doors: 7PM

# NEWS

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email: editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk

Online: nightshiftmag.co.uk



**LOW ISLAND** release their second studio album in November. **‘Life In Miniature’** is released on the **4<sup>th</sup> November** on the band’s own Emotional Interference label. It is preceded by a single, ‘Can’t Forget’, this month. Talking about the new record – the follow up to the Oxford quartet’s debut ‘If You Could Have It All Again’, released last year – singer Carlos Posada said: “the album is a sonic photo album; a journey through three years of accelerated change that felt like a lifetime; it’s a reflection on the headiness of youth and a fear of growing up. ‘Verse 2’ is a nod to the day I left home; as I drove down the street, I caught my dad crying and waving me away in the wing-mirror of my car. It’s one of those memories that gets printed right onto the front of your mind and that you never forget.” Hear ‘Can’t Forget’ at [lowislandmusic.bandcamp.com](https://lowislandmusic.bandcamp.com).

**LOCAL PROMOTERS DIVINE SCHISM** celebrate their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October with Divine Schism 10, a multi-venue weekend in Oxford between **Fri 30<sup>th</sup> September and Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October**, showcasing many artists they’ve worked with over the years as well as featuring new acts from Oxford and beyond. Started in 2012 by local musicians Andrew Grillo, James Cunning and Aiden Canaday, Divine Schism have consistently showcased new underground and DIY artists from around the world and been at the forefront of championing female and non-binary artists on the underground scene. As well as promoting shows, Divine Schism also launched their own record label, releasing albums by Lucy Leave and Canada’s Slow Down, Molasses. They also host the regular Oh, Community! and If Not Now, When? Mini-festivals at various venues around Oxford. By the time of the anniversary celebrations, they will have promoted 199 shows between October 2012 and September this year, as well as three If Not Now, When? festivals plus a number of online events during Covid lockdown. Talking about the anniversary celebrations, Aiden Canaday said: “We’re really excited about this and if it may seem last minute,



**BOSSAPHONIK** celebrates its 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary this month with a night of Brazilian dance. The monthly world jazz dance club is currently enjoying a new lease of life post-Covid in its new home at **Cowley Workers Social Club**, having been forced to seek a new venue when The Cellar closed in 2019. The birthday show takes place on **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August** with eight-piece band **Soma Soma** playing a fusion of 60s Brazilica and West African grooves, plus **Azhaar & Global Wave**, a soul-jazz project led by Brazilian ex-Sirius B vocalist and jazz violinist Azhaar Saffar. Bossaphonik host and DJ Dan Ofer said: “The new venue at Cowley Workers Social Club has provided us with an exciting, fresh vibe. There’s plenty of space to enjoy dancing, as well as an abundance of seating which makes for a great social occasion.” *Bossaphonik takes place on the third Friday of every month.*

Ronan from *Nightshift* actually reminded me it was our ten years a few months ago, so thanks Ronan! We love the scene and the people who work at the venues and the artists and we can’t wait to announce what we have coming up! I guess you could call this our 200<sup>th</sup> show; it’ll be like a mix of Oxjam 2016, where we had 78 acts play along Cowley Road, and which morphed into our If Not Now, When? festivals, and more recently our celebration of the music scene, Oh, Community! all-dayer series which is ongoing.” Line-up news will be announced

on the 29<sup>th</sup> July on Divine Schism’s social media as well as Wegottickets.com.

**MELTING POINT** is a new monthly live music night at **The Red Lion in Eynsham**, hosted by **Melting Pot**, the local music show on Get Radio. The new night launches on **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September** with sets from **The Deadbeat Apostles, Barricane** and **Tamara**; entry is free. The Red Lion, in the centre of Eynsham, is easily accessible by bus from Oxford and Witney. The pub *Continued over...*

## JON CARTER

Local musicians have been paying tribute to Jon Carter, best known as bass player in The Rock of Travolta and Barricane who has died following a battle with pancreatic cancer. As part of The Rock of Travolta Jon helped re-energise the Oxford music scene in the early 00’s as the band rapidly earned a reputation as one of the most intense and inventive acts around; they played at Truck Festival and opened for Radiohead at their South Park show in July 2001, while their track ‘Everything’s Opened Up’ earned them a *Nightshift* Number 1 in 2003. Jon later played in Glue-man and more recently joined indie-folk band Barricane and played their earliest live shows. Rosy Owen from Barricane said: “we are deeply saddened to have to say goodbye to Jon. We were blown away not just by his intuitive, brilliant musicianship and charismatic performership but also by how funny, inspiring and joyful he was. To the end he was a rare voice of hope and optimism and ‘it’ll be alright’ and he always had us in stitches and left the world a better, brighter place. Thank you, our Jon, for your wonderful soul and your wonderful music. We will miss you.” ‘Deadly’ David Crabtree who played with Jon in The Rock Of Travolta added: “Jon was simply the best. Had the fattest, big-bottom end of them all and was the nicest guy you could have met. His warmth, his spirit and his enthusiasm will be sorely missed by us all. Not just a great



player but a great friend. *Nightshift* sends its deepest condolences to Jon’s wife Rebecca and all of Jon’s family and friends – he was indeed a superb musician and a lovely bloke.

photo: Jonny Moio

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# NEWS

itself is looking to host more live music nights. Acts wanting to play future Melting Point nights, can get in touch at [info@getmeltingpot.co.uk](mailto:info@getmeltingpot.co.uk). For all other gigging opportunities there, email Becky and Luke at [contact@theredlioneynsham.co.uk](mailto:contact@theredlioneynsham.co.uk)

**RABIDFEST** returns in November, providing two days of live rock and metal over the weekend of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> at **The Bullingdon**. Among the first set of acts confirmed for Rabidfest 22 are Northampton's **Krysthla**, making their Oxford debut, as well as local rock titans **Desert Storm**. They'll be joined by Footprints In the Custard; Pulverise; The Grand Mal; Disinherit; Public Execution; WALL; 13 Burning; Red Method; Aluna; Draconian Reign; Sin Dweller, and Slay Dugee, with more names to be announced. Weekend tickets, priced £30, and day tickets, priced £20, are on sale now. More info at [facebook.com/rabidfest](https://facebook.com/rabidfest).

**SAFEHOUSE STUDIOS HAVE MOVED.** The studio, run by musician Mike Bannard, has had to leave its premises in Cave Street as part of the council's redevelopment

of the building, but has found a new home at Ark-T on Crowell Road in Cowley. The new studio is currently getting up to speed on its recording facilities with rehearsals already up and running. Talking about the move, Mike said: "our location in Cave Street is finally being redeveloped and is now closed. End of an era. Our future was looking very uncertain, but efforts and communities have prevailed, and it's now looking much brighter! Our new rehearsal space is in the refurbished Kate Garrett music studio, at Ark-T. Huge thanks for all the support, especially to those at Ark-T for helping secure this location. We're grateful to continue as an integral part of the Oxford music scene." For bookings contact Mike on 07731 804796.

**RIVERSIDE RHYTHMS** continues to showcase local music live and on radio this month on [www.windrush.radio](http://www.windrush.radio). Synth-pop duo **Slow Drift** are the live studio guests on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August between 8-10pm, while on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> August, **Self Help** will be performing live from Fat Lil's in Witney, a show that will be simultaneously broadcast live. Doors open at 7.30 with the show broadcast from 8pm. Local artists wanting to get

involved with the show can get in touch with Fergus McVey at [fergusmcvey@hotmail.com](mailto:fergusmcvey@hotmail.com).

**IT'S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC** host an **August Bank Holiday weekend summer festival** at a secret location this month. Local promoter Mark 'Osprey' O'Brien's three-day event features over 50 bands, solo artists and DJs over the weekend of the 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> August. Among the acts confirmed are: Osprey & the OX4 Allstars; Beard of Destiny; Barricane; Means of Production; Mark Cope; Emma Hunter; The Relationships; Peerless Pirates; Tiger Mendoza; Mojo Demon; Franklin's Tower; The Pink Diamond Revue; The Shapes; The Gees; The Scott Gordon Band; Nineteenth Hour; Delta Hardware; Firegazer; Storyteller; Holy Fools; Laima Bite, and Cedars of Lebanon. A full list of acts is on the It's All About the Music Facebook page. Tickets, priced £50 for the weekend, and £20 for day tickets, are available from [Wegotickets.com](http://Wegotickets.com).

**ABINGDON & WITNEY COLLEGE** has launched its Music Technology course for young people looking to work in the field of live and recorded music. Potential students can attend drop-in days at both campuses

on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August from 10am, or head for one of the college's Welcome Wednesdays at either campus between the 19<sup>th</sup> July and the 16<sup>th</sup> August. Curriculum manager Lewis Saunders said of the course: "equipped to industry-standard, our Music Technology Suite at Witney campus is the ideal place to take your skills to the next level. The teaching and technician team are highly skilled professionals who encourage our students to develop both their technical and creative knowledge. If you want to work in the music industry as an artist, producer, sound engineer or manager, this is the place to hone your talent. Our qualifications have been designed for students who have an interest in music performance and/or music production who wish to explore and extend this interest via a full-time, immersive learning experience." Visit [www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk](http://www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk) for more details.

**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](http://bbc.co.uk).

## CROSSTOWN CONCERTS



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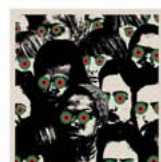
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A FOUL FORM



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**MUSE**  
WILL OF THE PEOPLE



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**Welcome Wednesdays:** 27<sup>th</sup> July - 24<sup>th</sup> August 10:00am-4:00pm

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19<sup>th</sup> July-16<sup>th</sup> August, 10:00-4:00pm at both sites  
[www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk](http://www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk)



# CHIIKA



“I’D SAY A SOLID 85% OF the vibe for this song came from struggling at university. I wrote it during winter term of my final year, feeling very much like I was going to fail my finals, but determined to have a good time nonetheless. I’m pretty prone to depressive spells, but I didn’t want my mental health or lack thereof to define my time at uni. This song became something I needed to tell myself.”

**CHIIKA IS EXPLAINING** the feelings behind her new single ‘Iwishmybrainworked’, her first release since finishing her finals at Oxford University and the follow-up to her ‘Cure, Antidote, Commotion’ EP released back in March. ‘Iwishmybrainworked’ is Chiika at her poppiest and funkiest (“It was fully intended to be a silly, fun pop song” she says); it sounds like the work of someone who’s suddenly free of the pressures of academic stress but yet to enter the scary world of full-time employment. It sounds like a soundtrack to sunny weather and she’s released it just in time for her Truck Festival debut at the end of July, having been chosen by *Nightshift* to help represent Oxford music at the sold-out event. “It is so much of a relief to be done with finals!” Chiika continues as she chats to *Nightshift* about finishing

uni, her first year making music on the Oxford music scene and her plans for the future now her degree course is done. “Five years in the making, eight lots of four-hour exams in two weeks... I’ve been making up on a lot of sleep debt.”

**ANYONE FOLLOWING** Chiika on Twitter would have seen just how intense the pressure can be on final-year students at Oxford; she was pretty scathing about what she sees as an archaic system at the historic institution. “As someone just now entering the world of post-grad employment, if I were charging each person almost 10k a year for my services, I might give a bit more thought towards their ‘customer experience’. Oxford suits a specific type of person, and I didn’t necessarily fit into that specific box – and because of the isolation and devolution of faculties, the collegiate system, etc. experiences vary wildly – and I say this as someone whose college was very lovely and supportive! Consistency and communication is key, and are certainly aspects I would focus on strengthening.” One stand-out line from ‘Iwishmybrainworked’ is “If we’re all screwed, we might as well party” – the joy and exuberance of the song tempered by a sense of dread.

“Have you seen the economy! And the politics! And the climate! And the world... the inundation of horrific news makes it seem like Gen Z have no future sometimes: like our outlooks are bleak and getting bleaker. It’s something that makes me feel hopeless at the best of times, and it’s so exhausting and demotivating to feel like that. There comes a point where you have to say ‘fuck it, I’m choosing happiness’; I always used to scoff at people who said happiness was a choice, and I still don’t fully agree with the statement, but I guess you can try and shift your mindset to pursue the positive over the negative and be optimistic, and that’s what this line is about, although in blunter terms. We can’t change some of the not-nice things we’re hearing and seeing, so we might as well grab joy where we can.”

**CHIIKA FIRST CAME TO** *Nightshift*’s attention with a series of singles released during lockdown, including the irresistible singalong banger ‘Natural Nicotine’ and its more poetic but still playful follow-up ‘Poseidon’, which showed off her skill in fusing pure pop with hip hop, r’n’b and the Indian Bollywood music she grew up with. Her songs are simultaneously instant and immensely catchy and difficult to pin down or pigeonhole.

Chiika featured as one of our favourite local acts to emerge during Covid lockdown in our comeback issue last September, alongside Barricane; Calypso; Erin Snape; Alexandra Hamer, and Piripa, and has continued to emerge as one of the brightest new talents on the local scene, with ‘Natural Nicotine’ earning her a Top 10 placing in *Nightshift*’s end of year run down of local music. With her ability to mix up styles and avoid falling into any single genre, we wonder at what point in her songwriting process does she decide which direction a song might go. “Ooooh it entirely depends... I’ve been on a funk guitar splurge lately and so P.Salm, the producer for this track and a very lovely friend, produced the instrumental with that in mind. So I knew it was gonna be an ostentatious, over-the-top pop kind of track the second I heard the instrumental. P.Salm is, at his core, more of a hip-hop producer though, so I wouldn’t have been surprised if it had ended up with some hip-hop influences. Because I’m more on the lyricist/toplining side of things, I’m of course influenced by the producer I’m working with; if I’m producing my own demo then I’ll normally fixate on a single sample and take the vibe from that and roll with it. When I write a demo thinking ‘I want to make X type of song’ it normally doesn’t turn out very well. It sounds too forced. I tend to surprise myself with the music I write sometimes, and that tends to be my best work.”

**BORN IN LONDON AND** growing up in Abingdon to Indian parents, Chiika’s heritage plays a subtle but significant part in her music – from the tablas and distinctive vocal percussion on ‘Poseidon’, to occasional singing in Hindi. How big a part does the Indian music of her parents’ record collection that she grew up listening to play into her own music? “Even when it’s not audible, its influence probably can’t be separated from who I am as a person. I didn’t grow up listening to much English music at all, barring a few ABBA tracks and the like, I basically only listened to Hindi music until I was about seven or eight, since that’s what my parents listened to and that’s what we had on in the car or playing in the kitchen when we cooked. I think my flair for the dramatic probably comes from that! Bollywood lyrics – firstly they’re beautiful, just in terms of how Hindi sounds as a language, and secondly they’re extraordinarily passionate and evoke emotion really well. When I write, I’m capturing a certain vibe or emotion rather than thinking of any sort of storyline or message, and that’s probably because of the music

I grew up listening to. When I finally got access to my sister’s old iPod, it had a lot of her music on it, so Fall Out Boy, Linkin Park... an artist called Vienna Teng, too – basically this big old eclectic range. I don’t really know how it all influences me, but it definitely does.” What is the UK’s contemporary Indian / south Asian music scene like for people who are unaware or unfamiliar with it and how does your music fit in or go down in that scene? “Oof, I’m not sure how much a part of the scene I can say I am to be honest! I think, like South Asia itself, it’s hugely varied, with space for a lot of types of music and people. Some really gorgeous music is being put out, whether that be in more traditional forms or fusion like I do. There’s a big r’n’b presence in the scene, perhaps best epitomised in Pritt or Maharani, especially in London, but there’s also people like Surya Sen and Nikhil Beats killing it in other genres. It’s hard to summarise! There’s really something for everyone, that’s for sure. It’s a scene I very much admire.” Despite the influence her parents’ music has had on her, Chiika has yet to tell her parents about her musical life outside of her academic one. What, we wonder will she do if she goes and wins a BRIT Award or has a Number 1 single? “Yup, it’s true, though I think I’m very far off from either of those things, if they ever happen at all, so I’ve probably got time to break the news... and I think if I can break it with an achievement like that they’d be pretty delighted! I don’t want to cause them unnecessary stress or anxiety, so I’ll tell them when I’ve proven that I can do music sustainably while looking after myself, and I hope they’ll be proud of me at that point. I don’t think their issue is with music, more that they want and need me to be self-sufficient and stable and achieving things. It’s just showing them that music can give me that, too.”

**BEFORE SHE BEGAN** making music, Chiika wrote poetry and it was early attempts to put those words to beats that began her musical journey; how easily did she find the move into making written words into songs and what are the most important things she’s learned or discovered along the way? “Weirdly easy in some ways; music just lifts and adds to poetry, gives it a new dimension, but the intent to convey and create emotion is still the same. However, suddenly, you’ve got a million things and tracks and instruments to consider instead of just the one! That’s something I’m still learning to value and balance, it just takes time. Don’t be afraid

of trying weird things, and there’s no right or wrong answer in music; it just needs to sound good. That’s definitely the most important thing I’ve learned. I have tons of imposter syndrome as a young artist: I often feel like I’ve got no clue what I’m doing, but some people seem to like it, so clearly something is going right!” To say she’s got a few things right is quite the understatement. Across the board in Oxford people involved in the local scene have got very excited about Chiika’s music; from *BBC Introducing in Oxford* to *Nightshift* and local station Get Radio’s music show *Melting Pot*, the reaction to her music has been overwhelmingly positive; did she imagine she’d be so

“*Oxford University suits a specific type of person, and I didn’t necessarily fit into that box*”

warmly received by the local scene when she first sent her songs out? “I did not! It’s been such a blessing and I really just would not be here, would not have necessarily had the confidence to keep going, without the support from the local scene. For me, the local scene is real – it’s real people in a way that ‘internet people’ aren’t, if that makes sense. Physical, tangible proof that has led to physical, tangible things that have meant a lot to me and that I’m really proud of. I don’t fully know how to deal with compliments and praise – I tend to hear the flaws in my music and focus on points of improvement – but it makes my heart warm to know that the Oxford scene has my back.” The last twelve months or so really have been a big new adventure for the young singer and musician; what have been the particular highlights? “‘Poseidon’ being played on BBC 6Music was massive! That was just entirely overwhelming. When Dave Gilyeat at *BBC Introducing in Oxford* did an episode with the BBC Asian Network talking about Oxford Asian musicians as well, when *Nightshift* put me as one of the ones to watch and rated ‘Natural Nicotine’ so highly in their end of year roundup... as I’m thinking about this question I am realising that for me, people being willing to throw their hat in my ring, so to speak, feeling that me or my music is worth a mention or worth backing, that really makes my heart skip a beat. I did a gig at The Bear on May Morning with Melting Pot, and it was one of the biggest crowds I’ve played to, and even though they’d been having an absolute blast with ‘Sweet Caroline’ ten minutes prior, they were willing to give my music a try and seemed

to have a good time; it’s just all stuff that really sticks with me.” Any particular frustrations? “Probably just in terms of resources and my eternal desire to achieve more and be better, it frustrates me to feel like I’m not good enough, or doing enough, or that I’m limiting myself, and obviously balancing exams and student budgets with music inevitably meant that was the case. I’m both a perfectionist and someone who gets easily frustrated and is impatient, which is a terrible combination.” Previously lockdown had stopped you getting to know the scene; have you had a chance to meet or get to know any other local musicians; anyone in particular you like or

anyone you’d like to collaborate with maybe? “Slowly but surely, yes. I’d love to work with Emma Hunter, she’s absolutely lovely. I had coffee with Chloe August recently too, and we write entirely different music, so working with her would really teach me a lot I think. And all the people at InspireSounds: Tiecee’s voice and my voice sound really pretty together, it would be cool to capitalise on that.”

**EMMA HUNTER WAS THE** other local artist picked by *Nightshift* to play Truck Festival in July. We’re talking to Chiika before her set there on the main stage and wonder how she’s looking forward to it. “I am *So! Excited!* I hope I meet people through it; I hope people like my performance; I’ve never been to Truck so I want to soak in the atmosphere and just really enjoy it.” Another major event Chikka got to play at was Oxford Pride in June. As a queer musician how important is the event for her, both as a person and for her music? “I got to play at The Westgate 48 hours before my first final exam for Oxford Pride, which was crazy. I didn’t grow up with Pride as a month or as a concept, and I think it’s a wonderful thing as both a celebration and to draw attention to what still needs to be done. I’m not sure how well I can articulate this, but all aspects of myself are incorporated in my music, so it’s not limited to a single event or month; the same is true of my heritage not being limited to Diwali for example, but it’s a time where you can enjoy or highlight or focus on that aspect. What Pride can give to a community, what it can do for people in terms of helping them find their places, find who they are,

that’s something really special.”

**WITH UNIVERSITY LIFE** now behind her, Chiika is heading into the big, wide world of work, which will mean a not-too distant relocation to West London in the coming months, but she’s not done with Oxford, the city and the scene that helped shape her. “Alas! Parting is such sweet sorrow. Except there’s nothing sweet about it, barring having an actual income. I’m in the westernmost part of London, so just 45 minutes from Oxford on the bus – I’ll definitely be back as often as possible. London is kind of scary, and Oxford is my home – you won’t be able to get rid of me that easily.” Do you think London holds more promise for a musician of your style? “I don’t know! London’s music scene is overwhelmingly huge and I’ve got no clue what I’m doing there. I’ve been lucky enough to do a performance with Pardesi, who support Asian artists, and I’m hoping to slowly feel it out and figure out what I’m doing, but the scene is chock-a-block so who knows how it’ll turn out. I’ll keep being optimistic though! I think once I meet the right people and understand how it all works a bit more, I’ll start to get my feet back under myself and can trot off into the sunset.” So what does the immediate future hold now for Chiika and her music now that finals are done and dusted? “I’m working on a dark-pop song with my friend Nush that I hope will come out towards the end of this year; it’s pretty cool. I’m improving my vocal technique, especially in terms of classical Hindustani singing, and I’m also trying to work on picking up the guitar for songwriting and production purposes. On the other side of my life, I’m hopefully starting a job at a start-up next month, which is great for funding music but also for learning and practicing important life skills; music is still a business, so I need to become a businessperson too. It’s going to be a very busy few months with a lot of change, but I’m looking forward to it, and I think the majority of that change will be positive and put me in a position where I can write even better music, be an even better version of myself. I’m excited! I’m going to see an F1 Grand Prix before I start working, which is not relevant to anything but does make me very happy, so I thought I’d mention it. Happy is good; happy is best. As the message of ‘Iwishmybrainworked’ goes: choose happiness. And happy is what you’ll be if you get some Chiika tunes in your life.

*Hear Chiika at chiikachunes.bandcamp.com*



# RELEASED

## JUNK WHALE ‘Caught In The Act Of Looking Weird’

*(Self released)*

This six-track release is the first I’ve heard from Junk Whale, and it seems I’m late to this party. The band formed in 2017, released an album in 2019, and have recently become a four-piece.

Lead track ‘Pilebox’ is a lovely, fizzing concoction that crams plenty of invention into its sub-three-minute length; it opens with warm, catchy guitar lines that could easily be ripped from the grooves of an early-90s Slumberland release (think Black Tambourine, Lilys, or Velocity Girl), then skips warm-heartedly into a neo-shoegaze-gone-indie-pop fuzz-fest, with tinges of shouty lyrical rambunctiousness and jerky rhythms à la Youthmovies.

‘Happy Birthday’ is initially more lumpy-sounding; the lyrical rhythms feel somewhat awkward. However, it soon reinforces a keen ability to conjure up incredibly rich feelings of genuineness and honesty, touching at times on the celestial majesty of Built To Spill with its combination of melodic overload and richness. ‘Airbed’ is very similar, but in this instance that’s no bad thing: by the end of the EP’s halfway point, I feel like Junk Whale have defined themselves as something special. There’s not much I don’t like about fuzzy guitars, defiantly cute vocal touches, artful brevity and the feeling that the people involved are Very Good Folks.

At over four minutes in length, ‘Apparent’ feels like an epic in the context of this EP. Certainly, they’ve slowed the pace a little here, and even have the confidence to include a couple of seconds’ worth of pure silence. Maybe I’m spoilt



by what came before, but I feel the track could benefit from having a minute cut off – which speaks to it perhaps not having the melodic strength of the other songs here. ‘Joe’s Country Song’ kicks things back into shape; it’s a proper sunbaked festival sing-along of a tune. Lyrics like “I lied / Sorry, but I’m not / Fine” could be emo fluff in the wrong hands, but feel genuine and pleasant when wrapped in these layers of overdriven guitar and – in the final third – pretty fierce rockin’, riffin’ attitude.

‘Creases’ winds up the EP with no lessening of energy or invention. While Junk Whale aren’t creating new musical worlds with every track, it doesn’t matter. What they’ve crafted is an exceptionally good place to spend some time. This EP is endlessly recommended for anybody that’s led a similar listening life to me: lots of indie pop; lots of shoegaze; lots of music that combines those things; and a growing appreciation of music that sounds nice and makes me feel like a better human.

*Simon Minter*



## THE FOAM HEADS ‘Waste of the World’

*(Self released)*

This is an outstanding sonic peach of a single, with a stone hard truth at its core. A pulled thread of a tortured synth intro, then *POW!* a none-more-guttural flanged bass scarifies the scenery of your senses, and is joined after several

bar crawls by the sort of glorious riffing you’d get if The Cult’s Billy Duffy had joined The Chameleons.

So there you are, happily air guitaring like an early 80s indie-crazy, when you find its lyrical intent matches the lost sock of Midnight Oil’s ‘Beds are Burning’, to the effect of, in our overpopulated, over-materialistic modern existence we can bin-bag our rubbish and have it cargoed out of sight and out of mind, to landscape far flung Malaysia, West Africa and Turkey, without it embarrassingly piling up around our own shores and ears. Yes, it’s the uncomfortable pebble in a developing society’s shoe as we hobble off to Hell.

Oxford trio The Foam Heads tailor out some of the hectoring in their cadence by the smart stacking of vocals, and they throw in a ‘Pablo Honey’-era Greenwood white-out before whispering some reverse psychology with “Don’t listen to me, just throw it away” to weird you out, but ultimately we need more songs like this. We are both part of the problem and the solution, and don’t *we all* know it. Still, that monster bass intro, and that phasing riff, eh?

*Paul Carrera*

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## SLOW DRIFT ‘Slow Drift’

*(Self released)*

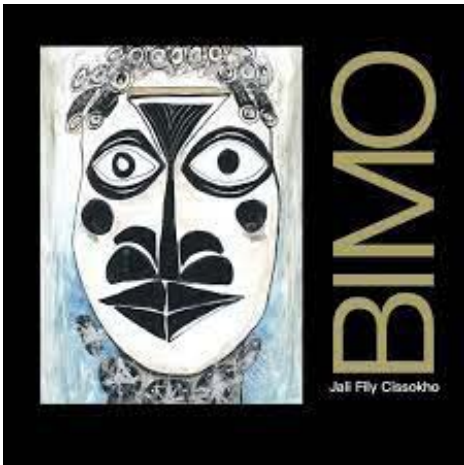
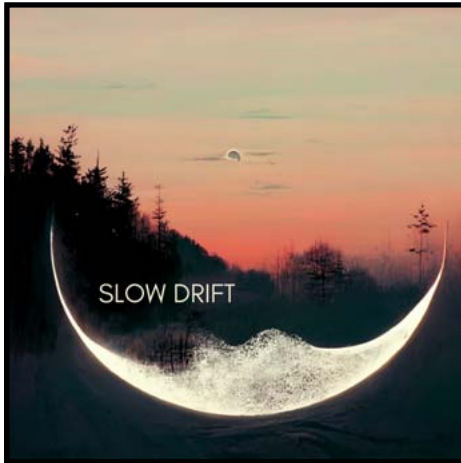
Few local acts have made a first impression like Slow Drift did when they sent us their debut track ‘Oblivion’ late last year. The song, a simply glorious slice of spectral sci-fi synth-pop, earned them Track of the Month by a country mile and a Number 3 berth in *Nightshift*’s end of year Top 30. A second offering, ‘Winter’, similarly won them Top Track and now they release their first full EP – five songs including those two previous releases. *Nightshift* is reviewing them as the UK heatwave hits its peak and yet by the end, the temperature in the office has plummeted several degrees and our frankly pathetic fan has packed up and gone home, no longer required.

The two halves of Slow Drift – electronics chap James Askwith and singer Jenn Steeves – are in some ways diametrically opposed and yet fit together perfectly. His synths swarm darkly or create rich enveloping textures, while her vocals, although detached at times, provide the emotional heart of the songs: sleek purity mixes with almost angelic chill and desolation.

Of the new songs ‘Postcode’ is spacious and starlit, music for the firmament, Jenn limpid and alone amid the electronic spangle; ‘Buffalo’ is subtly discordant and daydreamy, while ‘Closer’ is the best of the lot: steely yet vulnerable, like something off the first Chvrches album. We’ve barely stopped listing to the the two older tracks since we first heard them and their lustre has never faded. ‘Winter’ is heartbeat trip-hop awash with loneliness and desolation, while ‘Oblivion’ is simply one of the greatest songs we’ve heard in recent times – full of ominous beauty, the soundtrack to cityscapes at night and a thousand epic sci-fi moments, equal to the best of Portishead or Ladytron.

By the time you read this Slow Drift will have made their live debut at Truck Festival; should the heatwave continue into that weekend, the duo will doubtless exude enough cool to refresh everyone there. This is simply delicious pop music from one of the most exciting new Oxford bands of the last few years.

*Dale Kattack*

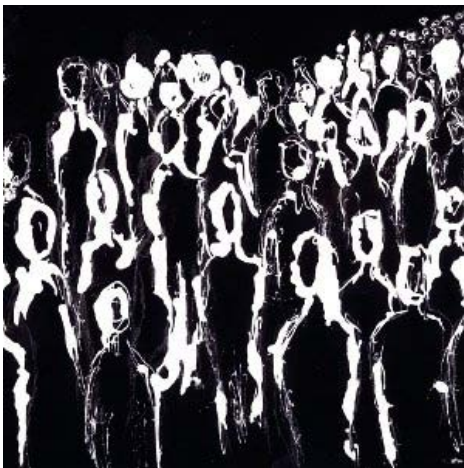


## JALI FILY CISSOKHO ‘Bimo’

*(Self released)*

The fifth album from part Witney resident, Senegalese master of the kora (African harp) and singer Jali Fily is classic griot (West African praise singer/oral historian/storyteller/educator). Over half the twelve tracks, of which seven are Jali Fily originals, are praise songs, including one for Senegalese and ex-Liverpool star footballer Sadio Mane, with another two or three offering advice about life.

Jali Fily sings in Mandinka. There are brief liner



## KANADIA ‘Distant Life’

*(Self released)*

Few bands on the local music scene can sound as epic as Kanadia. Since their solid debut single ‘Ocean Blue’ in 2017, the band have got better and better and have honed their wall-of-sound sonic signature to jaw-dropping effect.

This new EP kicks things off with the beautifully atmospheric ‘Wish Away My Time’, where singer James Bettis croons the song title until the band take us to an almighty crescendo – part Muse ballad and part ‘Bends’-era Radiohead; the band know how to deliver a chorus, as it builds and gets even sweeter with each listen.

Recent single ‘Hi/Lo’ is a showcase for drummer Tim Lucas’ abilities – driving the band through this absolute stonker of a tune. You can tell James’ songwriting is maturing as effortless falsettos complement the driving riffs performed by bassist Jack Ashworth.

‘Where’s Your Friends/Wild’ is a more tender

notes indicating what each song is about, but its Jali Fily’s wonderfully expressive vocals that punch holes in the language barrier. You hear the fun on ‘Boto Bama’ about a dancing queen; the cautionary tone on the title track ‘Bimo’, advising you to take care whom you trust; they may let you down (could apply to griots and prime ministers), while his voice soars on the praise songs. His elegant, often soothing kora playing, assisted by his regular djembe player, is without much ornamentation and the uncluttered sound makes the different rhythms clear, which further helps making the album accessible.

At 74 mins and 28 seconds ‘Bimo’ is a long listen, but alternating more meditative and upbeat tracts adds structure to the vocal and instrumental variety, and we find repeat listens yield ever more discoveries with most, if not every, praise song.

While no track displaces the snake ‘Miniyama’ as all time Jali Fily favourite, ‘Boto Bama’, brilliant for dancing to in the kitchen, comes close. The album ends strongly, Jali Fily following his high energy praise for Mane, introduced by the roar of a football crowd, with the only instrumental on the album, ‘Tabara’, a gentle coda and excellent end-of-the-day music. After probably his best ever WOOD festival performance, this warm-hearted album sees Jali Fily in great form.

*Colin May*

affair, initially at least. The space on the song is a welcome breather as Kanadia show us how they can also make us swoon with an atmospheric and delightfully dark lullaby, culminating in the climactic coda in which James screams “I’m gonna take you for my own” – seriously, it’s goosebumps on this one.

EP closer ‘June’ takes us back down again with some wonderful arpeggio work from Bettis, and as it swells and washes over you it demands you go back for another listen. There is a richness to this set of songs that shows just how far Kanadia have come and where they should be going: joining the likes of Glass Animals and Foals on a stage far more befitting of their abilities.

*Caitlin Helm*

## RHYMESKEEMZ ‘Rhapsody’

*(Self released)*

Rhymeskeemz has long been the soulful heart of Oxford’s rap scene, collaborating with the likes of Tiece previously – but this new single is his first release in a while. It’s very much on the thoughtful side of the sound he made his own on 2018 album ‘Inside Out’, with a distinctly English take on classic rap, here pitching him up not far from Loyle Carner as he raps about the mental health crisis among young people faced with a world seemingly closer to the brink each day. It carries an almost nostalgic vibe about it, sparse beats and even sparser plucked guitar providing space for rumination on a friend lost to suicide. As a solitary track it shows off just one side of the versatile Rhymeskeemz personality and style but the subject matter demands his more contemplative side.

*Bekti Manish*



## BRUNO MUERTE ‘Computers On Parade’

*(All Will Be Well)*

After losing half their number when guitarist Roberto Bini returned to Italy, Bruno Muerte recruited former Vienna Ditto man Nigel Firth to play alongside synth man Stefano Maio and this new single sees both a return to form after their disappointing previous single ‘Monodrone’ and a slight left turn stylistically with ‘Computers on Parade’ sounding like it was composed by master of strange David Lynch himself to soundtrack a new spaghetti western; it’s fidgety and digital with a surf twang about it and kind of makes us think of *Wild At Heart* if it had been set in *Westworld*, evocative of flyblown frontier towns, gunslingers and sinister androids with secrets. The track comes with a backward version of itself and a 40% slowed down version; the former obviously sounds like wacked-out psychedelia because that’s what most backwards things sound like but it retains its musical integrity well and in fact the slowed-down version is even trippier, taking that cyber-western imagery to an even darker place.

*Ian Chesterton*

## LOW ISLAND ‘Can’t Forget’

*(Emotional Interference)*

A band who’ve always been prepared to stick their emotional head on the block as they sing about mental health issues and the like previously, Low Island’s first single ahead of the second full album, due in November, deals with the transition from youth to adulthood, the memories left behind, the hopes and fears ahead. As such it’s unsurprising it’s a melancholy slice of woozy if not quite psychedelic electro-pop, in a similar vein to Tame Impala, and like Oxford neighbours Foals most recently, with an affectionate gaze towards the mid-80s. In fact, in another time this might have been thrown in with yacht rock as it sails smooth musical waters that hide its emotional undercurrents. The band are on that tipping point where the right break could see tracks like this become summer festival singalongs; it’s certainly got an anthemic feel for all its downbeat nature.

*Sue Foreman*



# G I G G U I D E

## MONDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

## TUESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

## WEDNESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**SOOT SPRITE + OKAY BYE + SPANK HAIR: The Library** – Urgent, emotive shoegaze and indie fuzz from Exeter’s Soot Sprite at tonight’s Divine Schism show, the trio touring their ‘Poltergeists’ EP, released last year on Specialist Subject Records. They’re joined by feminist punks Okay Bye and local emo crew Spank Hair.

## THURSDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**THE ISIS CITY ROCKERS: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock** – Rock, blues, punk and Americana covers from the local supergroup made up of members of Deadbeat Apostles, Ragged Charms and Beard of Destiny.  
**RICH RAINFORD + BEN JACOBS + CHLOE AUGUST: The Jericho Tavern** – It’s All About

## Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>

## GIMIC / BASIC DICKS / FOXCUNT / PREY: The Library

Too often these days what’s described as punk is far from it, however liberal your view of the term, but tonight’s Divine Schism show is punk to its very marrow with four very different acts united under the punk banner and fit to wear it. Bristol’s Gimic have an almost psychedelic quality about their scrappy DIY noise attack which finds songs clocking in around the two-minute mark but so highly strung you imagine they’d snap clean in half if they went on any longer. Basic Dicks should be no strangers to fans of local punk and DIY shows, the band’s militant anarcho-punk laden with caustic humour and musical nods to Crass, Fatal Microbes and Rudimentary Peni while swinging a well-aimed (vegan) Doc Marten at the patriarchy. Wycombe’s Prey make both of those look epic by comparison to their door-hammering hardcore punk with its riotous roots in Discharge, GBH and The Exploited, but best of the lot tonight are London’s Foxcunt, almost cultured and poppy in their venom, taking the Crass template for a merry-go-round ride through Girls At Our Best and The Au-Pairs and coming up sounding and smelling like the distilled essence of punk. Get angry; get happy; get down there.



# AUGUST

the Music local artists showcase.

**STEPH PIRRIE JAZZ: Harcourt Arms** – Live jazz from the singer and trumpeter and her band.  
**DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon** – Weekly open night.

## FRIDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**SLOW DRIFT + BRUNO MUERTE + MILA TODD: The Port Mahon** – OMS mag hosts an EP launch show for Oxford-Canada electro-pop duo Slow Drift, fresh from making their live debut at Truck Festival and keeping it tripped out and cosmic alongside synths’n’spaghetti western duo Bruno Muerte and politicised electronic pop and hip hop from Mila Todd.  
**JAMAICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY: O2 Academy** – A night of reggae, dancehall and dub to celebrate Jamaican Independence Day.  
**AIRTIGHT 80s: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – 80s rock covers.

## SATURDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**SEMI-DETACHED feat. WOOKIE: The Bullingdon** – Garage, hip hop and house club night with garage stalwart Wookie.  
**HIPSHAKIN: Harcourt Arms** – 50s and 60s r’n’b, rock’n’roll, jump jive, jazz, soul and more.

## SUNDAY 7<sup>th</sup>

**OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms** – Weekly open night.  
**FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon** – Weekly Irish folk session.  
**THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Tree, Iffley (3.30pm)** – Feelgood folk, ska, blues, rock and funk from the local veterans.

## MONDAY 8<sup>th</sup>

## TUESDAY 9<sup>th</sup>

**GIMIC + BASIC DICKS + FOXCUNT + PREY: The Library** – A night of DIY, hardcore and scrap punk hosted by Divine Schism, with Bristol’s Gimic and more – *see main preview*

## WEDNESDAY 10<sup>th</sup>

## THURSDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

**FAIRPORT’S CROPREDY CONVENTION: Cropredy** – First day of Fairport’s annual folk gathering, today with sets from The Trevor Horn Band, Clannad, Edward II and Fairport Acoustic.  
**DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon**

## FRIDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**SUPERNORMAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden** – First day of the sold-out celebration of leftfield, underground and avant garde music and art, with industrial techno king Surgeon one of the star turns across an eclectic line-up – *see main preview*  
**FAIRPORT’S CROPREDY CONVENTION: Cropredy** – Steve Hackett revisits his Genesis heyday in today’s headline set, joined by Turin Brakes, Sharon Shannon, Martyn Joseph, Slambovian Circus of Dreams and more.

**PINK MAC: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Pink Floyd and Fleetwood Mac double tribute.

## SATURDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**SUPERNORMAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden**  
**AVATAR: O2 Academy** – Melodic death-metal, groove, progressive and avant-metal from Gothenberg’s heavyweights, drawing on In Flames, Gojira, Iron Maiden and The Haunted as influences.  
**FAIRPORT’S CROPREDY CONVENTION: Cropredy** – Fairport Convention play their traditional epic set with special guests aplenty and a finale of ‘Meet on the Ledge’. Support comes from Seth Lakeman, Richard Thompson, Matthew’s Southern Comfort, Rosie Cunningham, The Barsteward Sons of Val Doonican and more.  
**FIREGAZER: Harcourt Arms** – English contemporary folk.  
**REGGAE REDEMPTION: Tap Social** – Reggae, dancehall and more with Count Skylarkin.  
**THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Tree, Iffley** – Rock and blues classics with the veteran local guitarist and chums.

## SUNDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**SUPERNORMAL: Braziers Park, Ipsden**  
**SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Bullingdon (3pm)** – Free afternoon of live electronic, including The Subtheory.  
**OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms**  
**FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon**

## MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

## TUESDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

## WEDNESDAY 17<sup>th</sup>

## THURSDAY 18<sup>th</sup>

**THE ISIS CITY ROCKERS: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock**  
**DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon**

## FRIDAY 19<sup>th</sup>

**BOSSAPHONIK with SOMA SOMA: Cowley Workers Social Club** – The world jazz dance club night celebrates its 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a live set from Soma Soma, mixing Boss nova and samba with Ghanaian highlife, and groovy soul-jazz tinged with Brazilian beats from Azhaar & Global.  
**LUIS MALDONALLE BAND: The Bullingdon** – Heavy rocking in the vein of Stevie Vai and Eddie Van Halen from the Brazilian guitarist.  
**BEIGE PALACE + UHR + IRAN IRAN + GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS: Port Mahon** – Dark, stripped-back art-rock, noise-rock and post-hardcore taking inspiration from Deerhoof, Slint and Richard Dawson among others, from Leeds’ Beige Palace ahead of their set at Arctangent this weekend; support from Bristol’s math/noise rock trio Iran Iran, art punks Uhr, featuring former members of Cornershop, Common Cold, and Formula One, and local shoegaze/post-rock instrumentalists GITP.  
**HIPSHAKIN: Harcourt Arms** – Traditional Irish folk songs and dance tunes.  
**HI-ON MAIDEN: Fat Lil’s, Witney**

## SATURDAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**STICKY DISCO feat. D.A.V.E. THE DRUMMER: The Bullingdon** – Acid house and techno club night.  
**OSCAR & DEAN: Harcourt Arms**  
**DOG OF TWO HEAD: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Tribute to early Status Quo.

## SUNDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

**THE RUMJACKS + SHANGHAI TREMOR + THE MISTAKES: O2 Academy** – High octave Irish folk-punk from Sydney’s Rumjacks, touring their fifth studio album ‘Hestia’, the band having hit the global big time with now St Patrick’s Day anthem ‘An Irish Pub Song’ after making their name supporting the likes of GBH and Gogol Bordello in their early days. Pour yourself more beer and whisky, your presence is required in the moshpit.  
**KLUB KAKOFANNEY AFTERNOON SESSION: The Tree, Iffley (4-7pm)** – Mark Bosley, Delta Hardware and Laima Bite play Klub Kak’s free afternoon sesh.  
**OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms**  
**FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon**

## MONDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>

## TUESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>

## Friday 12<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>

## SUPERNORMAL: Braziers Park

We long ago ran out of superlatives for Supernormal – the most perfectly malformed festival in the kingdom. Since it began just over a decade ago it has brought a special kind of strangeness, invention and anything-goes to a corner of rural Oxfordshire. Curated by a collective of artists and volunteers it pays no heed to commercialism, only artistic adventure, and *Nightshift* has had some serious adventures there over the years, whether in front of the main stage or in the surrounding woods, where weird offshoots of the event happen. This year’s event is sold out again – more than deservedly – so if you have your ticket, enjoy the ride; if not, get in early next time. Chief among the musical thrills on offer is industrial techno godhead **SURGEON** (*pictured*) who is joined by a cast that spans all manner of genres and genres that don’t even exist yet. Names? How about **ABSTRACT CONCRETE; ALL HANDS ON DECK; CURRENTMOODGIRL; HUMAN LEATHER; TRACENDENCE ORCHESTRA; THEE ALCOHOLICS; PENANCE STARE; INFINITE SPIRIT MUSIC; MISTER LIZARD; NIGHTSHIFT**. What do they all sound like? We’re off to find out; it’ll be an adventure. We know what Nightshift sound like of course – they’re a brilliant, wonky post-punk act from Glasgow. How could any band sharing a name with us not be brilliant? Supernormal is brilliant. Did we mention that?



**SPORTS TEAM: The Bullingdon** – Angular hysteria and literary lyricism from the Middle England exploring crew – *see main preview*

## WEDNESDAY 24<sup>th</sup>

## THURSDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**DEBBIE BOND: The Bullingdon** – Powerful, soulful blues from the veteran Alabama singer-guitarist, inspired by Bonnie Raitt and Maria Muldaur, at tonight’s Haven Club show.  
**KRANIUM: O2 Academy** – Reggae and dancehall from the New York-based Jamaican singer, best known for his 2013 global hit ‘Nobody Has To Know’.  
**DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon**  
**DOUGIE McLEAN: Nettlebed Folk Club** – Nettlebed’s legendary folk club celebrates its 47<sup>th</sup> birthday in the company of one of Scottish music’s national treasures.

## FRIDAY 26<sup>th</sup>

**IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC SUMMER FESTIVAL: Secret location** – First day of the local music festival with over 50 bands and DJs performing across three days at a location to be announced.  
**THE BIG FEASTIVAL: Alex James’ Farm, Kingham** – Cheese of every kind at Alex James’ annual food and music festival. Opening night headliners are synth-pop godheads The Human League, joined today by the reformed original line-up of Sugababes, fresh from their Glastonbury showing, plus Alfie Templeton, Jax Jones, The Sherlocks and more.  
**NIGHTS OF GRIEF & MYSTERY: Jacqueline du Pre Building** – Spoken word and song from Stephen Jenkinson, drawing on his work in palliative care, with musical backing from Canada’s Gregory Hoskins and his band.  
**FALLEN ANGELS: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Rock and pop covers

## SATURDAY 27<sup>th</sup>

**IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC SUMMER FESTIVAL: Secret location**  
**TERRAFORMS: The Bullingdon** – Drum&bass club night with Metalheadz’ Madcap.  
**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with HAINTS + DEAD ANYWAY + HE DIDNT: Port Mahon** – Quality mixed bag of sounds again at this month’s GTI with Oxfordshire’s Haints mixing power pop, and punk into a Lemonheads, Rise Against! and Jawbreaker-flavoured broth alongside Gloucestershire’s Dead Anyway, making their live debut tonight and blending influences of Lamb, Sleaford Mods and Dry Cleaning into a trip hop-poetry-punk gumbo. Bleakly entrancing instrumental guitar noise in a Slint vein from he didnt.  
**THE BIG FEASTIVAL: Alex James’ Farm, Kingham** – Second day of the food and music festival, today with headliner Anne Marie, joined by Eurovision hero Sam Ryder, Basement Jaxx DJs, Dylan, The Lottery Winners and more.  
**BEER & BEATS ALL-DAYER: The Up In Arms (12-midday)** – The Up In Arms host an all-day mini-fest in conjunction with Truck Store with sets from Jonny Payne & the Thunder; Self Help; Joely; The Jolly Grogsters; Max Blansjaar; Tiger Mendoza; Dolly Mavies; Little Brother Eli, and Steady Habit.  
**SLEEPY FOLK: Harcourt Arms**

## SUNDAY 28<sup>th</sup>

**OCEANATOR + LUCY LEAVE + APOLLO**



## Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup>

## SPORTS TEAM:

## The Bullingdon

Much like either of the Gallagher brothers, when Sports Team frontman Alex Rice opens his mouth it’s unlikely he cares too much what anyone out there thinks. Unlike Liam or Noel, Rice – along with most of the rest of his band – went to Cambridge University, so his digs at other bands like Idles, Shame and in particular HMLTD have been thrown back at him as posh-boy petulance however light-hearted, and have tended to overshadow Sports Team’s music in many reviews. And the music deserves to be heard on its own terms, mixing an angular hysteria – equal parts Blur, Pavement and Parquet Courts – with literary lyricism about middle England mundanity – Wetherspoons, motorways, going fishing – written by Rob Knaggs, all married to an energised, sometimes chaotic live show. Having built a ragged army of disciples via coach trips to seaside resort gigs, the band’s debut album ‘Deep Down Happy’ hit Number 2 in the big boys charts and earned them a Mercury nomination and tonight’s gig sees them touring follow-up ‘Gulp’ which, along with Rice’s quotability will doubtless see them moving up the indie rock league tables.

**GHOSTS + JUNK WHALE: Florence Park Community Centre (2.30pm)** – Scuzzy, sludgy post-grunge power pop, melodic punk, Americana and beyond from Oceanator, out on their first UK tour to promote new album ‘ Nothing’s Ever Fine’, continuing to explore Elise Okusami’s apocalyptic storytelling on a personal level at today’s Divine Schism matinee show. Support from local avant-rock, jazz-grunge explorers Lucy Leave, playing their first live show in over two years, plus Canada’s Apollo Ghosts and fuzzy emo crew Junk Whale.

**IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC SUMMER FESTIVAL: Secret location**  
**THE BIG FEASTIVAL: Alex James’ Farm, Kingham** – Third and final day of the food and music fest, with Stereophonics’ headline set affording everyone an early getaway. They’re joined by Gabrielle, Jake Bugg, Lola Young, Stallaggh and more.  
**SELF HELP: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – raucous pop-punk from the local faves as part of Windrush Radio’s Riverside Rhythms series of shows and live broadcasts.  
**OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms**  
**FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon**

## MONDAY 29<sup>th</sup>

## TUESDAY 30<sup>th</sup>

## WEDNESDAY 31<sup>st</sup>





## CORNBURY FESTIVAL Great Tew Country Park

In the end the heatwave and fireworks ensured Cornbury bowed out in a blaze of glory rather than fizzled out. If the gathered throng are wilting in the sun come Sunday afternoon and we wish the line-up could be as extreme as the weather, we continue to be pleasantly surprised by a festival that has, over its 18 year lifespan, become a by-word for Middle England at play. There are still some shockers, mind, not least the first act we witness on Friday, **AMY MONTGOMERY**, dressed in catsuit and thigh-length boots and backed by what appear to be Droogs from *A Clockwork Orange*, who honks out a set of overbearing power-soul like a cruise ship Bonnie Taylor, including a genuinely upsetting fusion of ‘Tomorrow Never Knows’ and ‘I Feel Love’. It’s like being assaulted by the Bodyform advert for half an hour. Thankfully the worst is rapidly followed by the very best and a first live show from **THE AUGUST LIST** in over two years on the Riverside stage that serves as a reminder they are quite simply the best band not just in Oxfordshire but for several counties and countries beyond, Kerraleigh Child’s sensationally piercing vocals battling it out with Ben Heaney’s violin drones for the title of stand-out moving part of a quite simply imperious set. If **THE DARKNESS** are essentially a toddler’s cartoon imagining of a rock band, that doesn’t

make them any less entertaining. Justin Hawkins’ hysterical castratto rendition of ‘Fade Out (Street Spirit)’ is an undeniable abomination but it’s impossible not to warm to his self deprecating pronouncements or a song as wildly ridiculous as ‘I Believe In a Thing Called Love’. They’re so unabashedly kitsch they even get away with playing their Christmas song amid the glorious summer sunshine. Even at Cornbury an anti-Boris Johnson song goes down a treat and so it is with **THE SHAPES**’ ‘Oh You’, typical of their way with a feelgood song that carries a political message or poignant memory; they finish with the rousing, Pogues-y ‘Til They Put Me In The Ground’, a spirited reminder to keep partying while we’re still able and the sun hasn’t completely wilted our energy supplies. Anyone familiar with his Twitter output knows not to mess with **JAMES BLUNT**, so we won’t. Turns out he does have more than one hit we recognise and manages a passable rendition of Slade’s ‘Coz I Luv You’ and generally manages to be as humanly likable and musically inoffensive as we hoped and expected. Saturday turns out to be even hotter than Friday with temperatures on the Cornbury Facebook fan page close to boiling point after a nearby property held a rave til 4.30am overnight; the festival itself puts out a statement expressing its

annoyance, which might well be the first time a music festival has made a noise complaint about a neighbour, but that’s Cornbury all over in a way: respect the rules and don’t get too wild. Glorious sunshine and simmering resentment is probably the right place for **2 TONE ALL SKAS** to kick out their now traditional hitlist of ska classics, while another set of Cornbury regulars **POLICE DOG HOGAN** surely smooth out any residual ire with their trademark good-time suburban bluegrass and what might almost be Cornbury’s own anthem by now, ‘Shitty White Wine’. Everyone feeling better about the world? Good. At least until **BEANS ON TOAST** any road. A regular visitor to Oxford over the years we’ve somehow managed to miss his every gig until now and 15 minutes listening to his rasping cod-philosophy and political rallying cries reminds us to miss all of his future shows too. **GET CAPE. WEAR CAPE. FLY** manage to do political-yet-emotive music far better, with an uplifting, deft touch that simply adds extra sunshine onto an already bright day. So we’re properly in the mood for **MARY’S GARDEN**’s glowering flowering gloom-pop, that sounds as gloriously sultry as it did when the band – fronted by singer-guitarist Laima Bite – first made their presence felt in town a decade and more ago; neither Laima nor the music seems to



have aged a day in the interim and their return is as welcome as a patch of shade in a sun-scorched field. Much like his set here in 2018, **ANDY FAIRWEATHER LOW** avoids festival-style indulgence in favour of a set of his greatest hits – ‘Wide Eyed & Legless’ and ‘Bend Me Shape Me’ among them – that’s pure nostalgia but no less welcome for it. Even on such a bright day **EMMA HUNTER** brings a bit of darkness. That said, a slightly sub-aquatic sound mix makes the drama and claustrophobia of her songs feel almost languid as the sun begins to set gently behind the stage; ‘Snake’ is as gorgeous as any ode to the bottle has a right to be; loop-heavy closer ‘Treachle Well’ is beautifully strange and haunting, while new single ‘Love Is Not a Choice’ is suitably exotic and over half an hour we feel cooler and refreshed. As with Andy Fairthweather Low, **BRYAN ADAMS** gives the crowd what they came for: hits. Lots of hits. More than we ever knew he’d had. We don’t own a single record of his but seem to know the words to a dozen of his songs, plus a cover of ‘Can’t Take My Eyes off You’. ‘Cuts Like a Knife’ is the high point, though we’re slightly disappointed that Mel C doesn’t appear for ‘When You’re Gone’. Whatever, it’s a quintessential headline set, everyone gets to sing along lustily to ‘Summer of 69’ and ‘Everything I Do’ and there isn’t even a late night party to disturb the campsite’s slumber.

It’s Sunday and it’s even hotter. It’s almost too hot to drink beer, though we’re very brave on that front even at an almost criminal £6.50 a pint. There’s someone or something on the Riverside stage called **JOFFIN**, which sounds like an activity that perhaps should be criminal but walking uphill has become a Herculean task, so we head downhill for **ALTERED IMAGES**, which turns out to be the set of the weekend, Clare Grogan the most ebullient, enthusiastic person in the whole arena, happy as a clam to be on stage, lapping up the love of the crowd, sending her own love out to John Peel (“without whom I wouldn’t be on this stage”) and smacking out pure, unrefined pop bangers like ‘Insects’, ‘Don’t Talk To Me About Love’ and new single ‘Mascara Streakz’ like she’s Ben Stokes hitting sixes. We get a spiky cover of Ting Tings’ ‘That’s Not My Name’, while ‘Change of Heart’ shows just what a superb voice Grogan has, sounding like a lost Motown classic. Even then, ‘Dead Pop Stars’ steals the show, phenomenally cool guitarist Gillian Bickerstaff almost eclipsing Clare with her superbly crafted playing, capturing that great hollowed-out early-80s sound. And of course they finish with ‘Happy Birthday’ and of course we’re hopelessly in love and of course we’re too shy to go to the signing session in the Rapture tent afterwards lest we accidentally propose marriage. Instead we head over to see **GENO WASHINGTON** who looks like the genial but wise high school janitor in every great teen



horror film and indulges in sweet-natured teasing of the crowd in between kicking out some seriously raucous r’n’b that’s seriously fun even if we’re now too sun damaged to dance. The honour of final ever set at Cornbury goes, probably appropriately, to **JOOLS HOLLAND**, whose show is preceded by an emotional speech from festival founder Hugh Phillimore and followed by fireworks and a poignant airing of ‘No Regrets’, but it’s **RONAN KEATING**’s set that sums up the spirit of Cornbury for us: an artist we’d never normally have much time for but who ends up being hugely enjoyable with a hit-stacked set and a way with political statements – notably about the treatment of live music workers during Covid lockdown – and funny anecdotes – getting stood up by “feckin’ Uber” which scuppers a collaboration with LeAnn Rimes – that makes him immensely likeable as well as a natural heir to Van Morrison that we’d not really considered before. Heck, we’re even singing along to ‘Life is a Rollercoaster’ and ‘Love Me For a Reason’ by the end, which makes us wonder if the heat has got to us more than we realised. The sun is going down on Cornbury, both metaphorically and literally, with a sky full of cirrocumulus clouds making for a glorious sunset. *Nightshift* has been to each and every one and we’ll miss it, so cheers Hugh and everyone involved in making it happen over the years: we’ve had a blast – may the sun shine on whatever you do next. **Dale Kattack**

All photos: Ben Phillips





## JULIA-SOPHIE / MARIA UZOR / OCTAVAIA FREUD

### Modern Art Oxford

Those of us who’ve been following Octavia Freud for a few years will have noticed that something has changed. It’s not the slinky, pulsating collision between banging electronica and post-punk introspection, and it sure as hell isn’t Martin Andrews’ hat which we’ve never seen him without, but the foregrounding of humour to the performances. Tonight, Andrews doesn’t precisely tell jokes, but

there’s a wry, sly absurdity, which fits into a particularly Northern comedy continuum. Opener ‘When I Was A Kid’ tosses out laconic, waggish non-sequiturs over a cheeky beat like a Frank Sidebottom reworking of ‘Thou Shalt Always Kill’, and there are moments when a drawingl Andrew embodies the spirits of Alan Vega and Ted Chippington at once, especially in set highlight ‘Tappin’, a co-production

with Adventures In Noise. Of course, it’s not all sardonic aphorisms and knowing winks, there’s ‘Hot Nights’, a neon disco sweatbounce which sounds like a back-alley twist on an 80s Diana Ross single. With a knowing wink. Maria Uzor has visited Oxford a few times as part of the excellent duo Sink Ya Teeth, bringing a New York\* new wave punk funk spirit. This solo set eschews the SYT minimalism

and instead we are swept up by a euphoric, insistent show. If the tempo has been upped a little, so has the reference period: gone are the sparse early 80s bass drums, and in their place are gnarlier loops and rhythms, nodding towards Detroit techno, early Aphex cymbal patterns, and even some big old Prodigy stadium breakbeats. However, there is a little clutch of children at this gig, who presumably aren’t *au fait* with dance music history, and they seem to be getting into it, running about and headbanging, so we conclude: “fuck cross-referencing, let’s dance”.

Julia-Sophie, previously known as Juju, Jules and many other variants, says she is “getting close to accepting my name”. This seems fitting, as she also looks more relaxed onstage than we’ve ever seen her and is making the best music of her life. Tonight’s set is testament to what you can achieve with interesting synth parts, some good ideas, and a hell of a voice. The music is twitchily busy, yet friendly and hook-laden; dense but spacious; melancholy but uplifting. It’s like a Zen koan that you can nod along to. ‘Telephone’, the last song before an unexpected solo guitar encore, is simple but heart-wrenching, a teen movie credits theme being sucked slowly into the void, and sadly waving goodbye. But, just possibly, with another knowing wink.

\*Actually Norwich  
*David Murphy*

## PAPA NUI

### The Plough, Long Wittenham

It’s only the 1<sup>st</sup> July, and to our knowledge this – Wittfest – is already the third festival of the summer for Papa Nui. They have a song referring to fun and it’s easy to see and hear why they are a top pick for festival organisers as their recipe of ska, blues and reggae comes with lashings of added groove and bounce. It’s a sure fire certainty they’ll get people dancing just as they did at WOOD festival a few weeks earlier.

Lest we give the impression that they are just a good dance band, they are more than that and would deserve attention even if they never got another bum off another seat. They not only have good melodies but often are cleverly arranged with bursts of brass adding both warmth and punch to the appealing lead vocals and harmonies. For example, if they play a blues or reggae based number it isn’t the standard formula; there’ll be a twist giving it an original feel. It could be this in part is because at least one of their line-up has jazz in his musical DNA. Tonight, their opener about “Going to the river to wash away your blues,” couldn’t be more apt as the Plough’s grounds stretch down to the Thames, though you have to clamber over a couple of cabin cruisers if you want to plunge in. They continue with hardly a break, building the atmosphere then keeping it going including with

a touch of Mariachi. We particularly enjoy the staccato ‘You Go Where I Go’, and the potential anthem, ‘Carry On’.

The enjoyable set flies by and suddenly it’s over, the dancers relax and head for the ice cream stall and the bar, and we think Papa Nui could brand itself as a band that comes with a smile in their music.

*Colin May*

## SELF HELP / DOGMILK / THE BOOYAH SETTLEMENT

### The Port Mahon

A common theme for all three bands tonight seems to be an obsession with having a lo-fi setting on their microphones; there’s an old fashioned 1970s crisp echo and bluesy twang which heavily wraps the vocals from all of them and we’re unsure whether it’s a new trend or two of the acts simply saw how well it worked for the other.

The Booyah Settlement’s brand of psychedelic rock has every head nodding wistfully along from the off, and if it never becomes a full-on wig-out the general general murmurs of appreciation going around the room suggest unanimous enjoyment.

Dogmilk totally ignore any attempt to blend their set with that mellow opening and leap instantly into the banger that is ‘Deep End’. The mood in the room is instantly changed, and they keep the energy going through their set, throwing dangerously dancey and infectious riffs in with their aggressive beats. The songs have an angry young-man feel of rock combined with an optimistic disco beat and it makes you think they’ve figured out what life is actually all about.

Self Help’s huge musical personality dominates the tiny upstairs room of the Port and the crowd swells and becomes increasingly excited with their arrival; straight off one guy is already head-down dancing hard and the guitarist jumps into the crowd to join him, instantly breaking down the invisible wall between artist and audience; the ceiling begins to drip sweat as Self Help deliver both polish and ferocity in unison. New single ‘Bamboo’ has crackling lyrics that sound like a future anthem with the inviting opening line “Hey you!” punching over a swelling synth and hard beat. But it’s ‘Milkshake’ that really gives us the shivers, a dark and daring song that simultaneously makes you scared to be alone and demands you dance. It is a masterpiece. If Self Help feel a bit too polished at times, and some of that dark excitement seems to be missing in some of their newer songs it doesn’t make them any less enjoyable and they remain one of Oxford’s most exciting live bands.

*Jake Winter*

## THE ETHICAL DEBATING SOCIETY / BLOOD-VISIONS / SINEWS

### The Library

Sinews play their first ever gig to a reasonable turnout, though down one member and playing as a trio. The name could suggest tense, taut, muscularity but instead they seem relaxed and unphased by the occasion, indicating this isn’t the members’ first time on a stage. Broadly punk/metal in their approach, the vocals are harsh and uncompromising, the songs loose and in need of honing down. The short audio clip available online indicates a deeper, more complex, doomier side though we’ll have to wait for a showing from the full line-up to experience that.

Northampton’s Blood-Visions are hyperactive and in-yer-face, making full use of all the space in the sweaty confines of The Library. Aligning themselves with “classic US alt-punk” only tells part of the story, as there’s definitely something of English Midlands here; echoes of alienation, industrial decay and boredom seeming to permeate the set. But singer Joss Kieran is fighting back, launching himself around the room and manically singing into any face he comes across. Formed at age 14 they’re also a lot of fun and display a fondness for their

hometown that comes up frequently in interviews. ‘01604Ever’ is a good example, referencing their local dialling code, along with clear echoes of original UK punk such as Stiff Little Fingers.

Talk of long histories brings us neatly to headliners The Ethical Debating Society. Formed in London around 2009, their roster has undergone various changes before settling on the current line-up of Tegan, Kris and Lu. For once the term DIY seems like an accurate moniker, the two guitars, drums and vocals format fitting in nicely with the unpretentious, ramshackle music they produce. Though often aligned with punk and riot grrrl they seem more in tune with post-punk bands like Swell Maps, though they very much inhabit their own world. Tonight’s show displays a more restrained and controlled side than that featured on their only album, 2015’s ‘New Sense’; it also gives us the chance to hear the words better, rich with wry observation and fingers pointed at those who offend them. “Don’t bring your dick to the razor party” from ‘Razor Party’ may be the best advice some of us get all day.

*Art Lagun*

## KING PANIC / FAST TRAINS / CITIES AND MEMORIES

### Port Mahon

Even by Gappy Tooth Industry’s high standards this month’s cast is an eclectic assemblage. Stuart Fowkes selects from the vast Cities and Memories on-line library of found sound field recordings from around the world, and creates muscscapes with a wide range of ambiances. Though the accompanying visuals don’t grab our attention, the muscscapes do.

There’s no obvious theme uniting Fowkes’ selections, which is fine; among his starting points are revving Indy race car engines; the steam pipes of New York, which he turns into a cinematic symphony; the build up of chatter to an intolerable level in the Sistine Chapel, and our favourite: traffic chaos in Kingston, Jamaica which becomes (inevitably?) a boppy rave, giving us a far



photo: Alan Betteridge

better time than the drivers stuck at that cross-roads. That leaves Stuart’s creativity only 9.99million achieved pieces of found sound to work. Get on with it; we want more.

One muscscapes is of someone’s rising panic when trying to catch a train, and is it just coincidence that Fast Trains is next up? This is Portsmouth-based Tom Wells, tonight minus his band. An eloquent and clever lyricist, a not bad guitarist and a very good whistler, his voice gets stronger as the set progresses and he relaxes, and it’s good to see him enjoying himself. Hopefully this train will stop in the city again soon.

The four guitars and drums of King Panic are much more than another loud band. Yes they do the traditional shouty vocals, hammering guitars and drum kit loud thing as well as anybody we’ve heard lately, but also they give us some delicious harmonies, a number that could be from Dreaming Spires’ Americana songbook, and lyrics that could have been written by Leonard Cohen. They and William the Conquer are from the same gene pool of post-rock excellence. It’s a compliment to the promoter to see all three acts and the audience having a good time and enjoying the friendly lo-fi atmosphere. Tonight shows once more that in our city the Gappy Tooth Industries monthly is the place to be if you want to hear left-field music and end the evening with a big grin on your face.

*Colin May*

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# WHAT’S MY LINE?

*A monthly look at jobs in local music. This month it’s VEZ HOPER and she’s a FREELANCE PR & MARKETING ‘BOD’.*

**How long have you worked in this job?** “I’ve been in marketing and PR 28 years. Fuck, how did that happen!?”

**What is one thing you have to do as part of your job that the average person might not know?”**In marketing you often end up finding you get right in the thick of creating or organising the thing you have been asked to PR. I was heavily involved in the A&R, event programming and product production side of things when it came to the musicians I was representing when I worked for the record label.”

**What’s been the single biggest highlight of your career so far?** There’s so, so many amazing highlights I’ve been so lucky. The thing that blows my mind the most was running the Cellar Crowdfunding campaign, which was successful in case anyone new to Oxford wonders what happened. I still miss having the place around: talk to the landlords to find out why we had to return all the money we raised – sorry, I’m still fighting! Back to why it was a highlight – because of my work running the social media accounts and crowdfunding page, I was so fortunate to be on the receiving end of all the social media messages and posts. I’ll never ever forget the incredible outpouring of love, support and coming together of so many generations of people who so strongly loved and needed that legendary place in their lives. I’ll never ever



forget how honoured I felt to have read every single one of them.”

**And the lowlight?** “UTE breaking up. I managed them for a bit and I honestly went through a period of grieving. Even now I give a big gulp when I think of what a loss to music it is that that incredible band are no longer together.”

**How much and how did Covid affect your job?** “In terms of PR, people always need to know about good things...so I was lucky there too. I just focussed on that and kept working throughout.”

**Who’s your favourite ever Oxford musical artist?** “Impossible to say. Utterly impossible.”

**What’s the single most important piece advice you’d give to someone wanting to do your job?** “Do what you love, go for integrity, take no bullshit and your job will constantly reward you and keep you energised. No matter how hard it gets, or how unfair it feels at times, you’ll always have something you can genuinely be proud of and feel positive about and you’ll attract similar minded company. There’s nothing better!”

**Who’s the most awkward person you’ve ever had to deal with in your job?** “DJ Shadow. Ha haaa... that took me a nanosecond to answer, and I’ve worked with some super awkward people.”

**When was the last time you heard genius?** “Esther Joy Lane, but I’m not sure what she’s up to at the mo. And I know if I went to see Salvation Bill I’ll be guaranteed a true genius at work every time.”

**Have you ever compromised your integrity in the course of your work?** “No.”

**Would you swap your job for any other and if so, what?** “Yes: spender for the super-rich so I can give that money back to those that truly deserve it.”

**Are you rich?** “No, utterly broke.”

**Do you consider your job glamorous?** “Sometimes. I’ve certainly found myself in extraordinarily glamorous situations and then quite the opposite too. Laughably so.”

**What’s your favourite thing about Oxford’s music scene?** “*Nightshift*. The Oxford music scene would be buggered without it. Seriously, I’m not just saying that because this interview is in *Nightshift*. You know how much I fight you if ever you consider giving it up. It’s a lifeline to our scene, it’s its central hub and it takes no bullshit too!”

## HARCOURT ARMS AUGUST

THURS 4TH  
STEPH PIRRIE JAZZ NIGHT

SAT 6TH  
HIPSHAKIN'

SAT 13TH  
FIREGAZER

FRI 19TH  
MOONAROON

SAT 20TH  
OSCAR & DAN

SAT 27TH  
SLEEPY FOLK

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## Dr SHOTOVER: con Comic Conned

Ah, there you are, Young Jackfruit. Welcome to the East Indies Club Bar & Batcave. Fire up a cosplay app and order us all another Kryptonite Cocktail. Where were we? Ah yes, planning the September Comic Con. Guest stars? So far we have Katee Sackhoff, Peter Capaldi and – oh dear – a variety of candidates for the Tory Party leadership, e.g. Skeletor, Penny ‘Mordred’ Mordaunt, Mr Burns, Liz ‘Barbiecore’ Truss, The Mekon, Tom ‘And Jerry’ Tugendhat, Davros, Rishi ‘Posh Kermit’ Sunak. The good news is that all but two of these will have been ditched by then, in a frenzy of *Daily Vile* inspired bloodletting – there’s nothing a Tory hates more than another Tory who is not right-wing enough. The bad news is that Boris ‘The Spiderman’ Johnson will doubtless STILL be squatting in Number 10 Clowning Street, throwing cake-and-jelly parties for his cronies, while footage of his Smegzit ‘achievements’ (*Suicide Squad* 3) is endlessly projected on the taxpayer-funded gold wallpaper. But, my friends, we will get BOR-EXIT done eventually. And then – one day - TOR-EXIT. And if they still won’t go, we’ll send the Avengers round. (Not THOSE Avengers – the 1960s ones, fool). Cheers! Down the post-apocalyptic hatch!

**Next month:**  
**Skeletor-ies out**



‘Another Avengers? You’re joking, Mrs Peel!’

## INTRODUCING....

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

# The Foam Heads

**Who are they?**  
Oxford indie band The Foam Heads are Gareth (*bass/vocals*), Nick (*guitar/vocals*) and Mark (*drums*). Originally formed by Gareth and Nick as an acoustic duo in 2019, as their sound developed, they added Mark on drums in 2020 and recorded a couple of tracks at Glasshouse Studios with Jamie Hyatt. Unfortunately, that coincided with the first lockdown, so things slowed down. They manage some virtual mixing and produced a Korg remix of one of their tracks. In September 2021 they joined the MAS Records artist development scheme, helping with distribution and publishing, and in October 2021 they finally played live, including a support slot with The October Drift. Most recently they have returned to the studio, recording with Kyle Mundy at Oxfordshire Music Rooms and their new single ‘Waste Of The World’ is out now, with a full EP due later in the the year

**What do they sound like?**  
Heroic, chorus pedal-laden new wave mixed with jangly indie pop, which immediately reminds us of cult heroes The Chameleons, while the trio’s anthemic closing number could have TARDIS-ed in from the first U2 album.

**What inspires them?**  
“Lyrically we write a lot about modern life and ecological issues, which is a natural thing if you write about what affects you. ‘Waste of the World’ is inspired by the illegal UK waste trade. The video has some drone clips of waste sites that are impressive to see, but it’s just all the stuff we throw away.”

**Their career highlight so far is:**  
“Getting a couple of unexpected live reviews in *Nightshift* We were supporting Peerless Pirates and then also October Drift, so we weren’t expecting a mention. And meeting Osprey O’Brien who, like he’s done for many local bands, gave us our first opportunity to play in Oxford.”

**And the lowlight:**  
“Probably the MAS Records Artists scheme we were on folding three months after we started on it. It had been running for many years but the funding got cut just as we were about to record some new tracks.”



**Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:**  
“We have played on the same gig with In-Flight Movie a couple of times and they have a great sound. Our drummer Mark rates their drummer Simon as the best on the Oxford music scene. Don’t argue with your drummer!”

**If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:**  
“As an Oxford band we settled on Radiohead’s ‘The Bends’; it has everything, from quiet subtlety to loud and harsh.”

**When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect?**  
“We are next playing the Oxford Summer Festival 2022 on the August bank holiday weekend. Always expect some new songs in our set as that’s how we develop and write them. If you like guitar sounds, you’ll be in the right place.”

**Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:**  
“Best is there’s a great set of original art-rock, psychedelic bands, guitar bands, and electronic music and they all have something different and special. The worst thing is the loss of venues. There are still some great ones, but not as many as before.”

**You might love them if you love:**  
The Chameleons; The Cure; U2; The Smiths; Teenage Fanclub

**Hear them here:**  
www.thefoamheads.net

# ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

## 20 YEARS AGO

**LAB-4** were the featured stars of August 2002’s *Nightshift*, the band trailing behind only Radiohead and Supergrass as Oxford’s most commercially successful act of the time. Having shifted some 30,000 albums, played in front of 25,000 ravers at the Netherland’s Dance Valley Festival, toured Japan five times and soundtracked ads for Reebok, Polaroid and Bacardi, the heavyweight trance duo, who were based above a tea shop in Abingdon, were set to release a compilation of singles, ‘Devilution’, as well as their third studio album, ‘Virus’, this month. The interview revealed they’d recently been arrested in Sweden and been ripped off and stranded by a crooked distributor in Japan but looking ahead with renewed vigour after a sold-out show at Tokyo’s Liquid Room.

In news, **East Oxford Community Centre** had its live music curtailed by noise complaints from local residents, temporarily putting paid to the regular **Arawak** reggae sessions and **Klub Kakofanney**’s all-day mini-festivals. In Abingdon, **The Skittle Alley** was forced to move – and not for the first or last time – due to its host pub being turned into flats, while **The Swan** in Wantage was stopping all of its live music for the foreseeable future.

The twentieth Your Song party was held at **the Zodiac** and featured **Meanwhile, Back In Communist Russia**, **The Young Knives**, **Smilex** and **Shouting Myke**, while a typically quiet August gig guide saw **Biohazard**; **McAlmont & Butler**; **The Bellrays**; **Dressy Bessy**, and the recently reformed **Hell Is For Heroes** playing the Zodiac.

## 10 YEARS AGO

“I’ve suffered from nightmares, night terrors and sleep paralysis since I was five years old, so lots of ideas for lyrics and musical feel come directly from that,” said Hel Sterne, co-singer/guitarist with uberdoom rock wraiths **Undersmile** in the band’s first front cover feature for *Nightshift* back in August 2012. The band, who had just released their debut album ‘Narwhal’ on Future Noise, talked about touring with Billy Anderson, being able to clear a venue before their first number was finished, and how their kids would slam the door on their rehearsal sessions and tell them to shut up.

No less desolate was the new release from **Vienna Ditto** this month, the duo’s take on Blind Willie Johnson’s ‘I Know His Blood Will Make Me Whole’ a reverb-heavy voodoo blues hammer blow that ranks among the finest cover versions to come out of Oxford. Other local releases included **Glass Animals**’ ‘Leaflings’ EP and **Peerless Pirates**’ ‘Thieves and Miscreants’.

This being the height of summer, festivals dominated the local gig calendar, with the second **Wilderness** boasting a line-up that included **Wilco**, **Spiritualized**, **Rodrigo y Gabriela**, **Grant Lee Buffalo** and **Field Music**, while at the other end of the county, the reliably eclectic and esoteric **Supernormal** played host to Warp Records heroes **Seefeel**, alongside such household names as **Hey! Colossus**, **Bilge Pump**, **DJ Scotch Bonnet**, **Joeyfat** and **Raagnarok**. Oh, and Undersmile, just to give the whole thing a bit of a summery pop vibe. At the northern tip of the Shire, meanwhile, **Cropredy**

## THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

saw sets from **Bellowhead**, **Joan Armatrading**, **The Saw Doctors** and **Squeeze** while **Fairport Convention** put in a wholly unexpected appearance on the Saturday night. Who saw that coming, eh?

## 5 YEARS AGO

Festivals again dominated the gig horizon in August 2017 with **Supernormal** welcoming noise rock godheads **Wolf Eyes** to Braziers Park; they were joined across the weekend by **Sacred Paws**; **Plague Dogs**; **Bruxa Maria**; **Eric Chenaux**; **Sharron Kraus** and **Aggressive Perfector** amongst myriad other oddities, although Ouija board-driven sound art crew **Automatic Writing Circle** probably out-stranged the lot of them.

**Towersey** – back then still based in Oxfordshire – featured **KT Tunstall**; **Newton Faulkner**; **Show of Hands** and **Jon Boden** across four days of folk and more, while on a slightly smaller scale the **OXROX Weekender** at Abingdon United’s **Northcourt**, featured **Blaze Bayley**; **Desert Storm**; **Hell’s Gazelles**; **Black Bullets** and **Guns2Roses** across two days of the heavy stuff.

**Death of Hi-Fi** were this month’s *Nightshift* cover stars, the hip hop trio talking about their second album ‘Follow’, an electronic trip into the darker reaches of the human mind and mental illness. “We all want to know we’re understood in our struggle and find a way to make room for hope; I think everyone can relate to that,” said producer Andy Hill, nowadays making music under the name **The Subtheory**.



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# TRACKS

## Yin & Yang Audio

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## TOP TRACK

### BROKEN EMPIRE

As *Nightshift* sits down in an iced bath to review this month’s batch of tracks it’s hotter than Hades, a loaf of bread now costs about ten quid and the line-up of candidates to be our next prime minister could be a poster for a sequel to *The Usual Suspects* titled *The Usual Shysters*. Frankly we’d be better off with Martha the *Nightshift* cat running the country – at least she makes no pretence about only caring for her own stomach and personal comfort. So, all things considered, Broken Empire’s song ‘Valediction’ is a perfect soundtrack to this molten shitshow, sounding as it does like the hordes of Satan leading Boris Johnson out of 10 Downing Street and into the seventh circle of hell with copious use of brimstone and pitchforks. And riffs. Big, nasty, gnarly riffs. And vocals that sound like Balrogs vomiting up the souls of the damned they ate for breakfast. Or possibly vomiting because even demons of the underworld are disgusted by the greed, corruption and pitiful incompetence of our erstwhile leader. This is death metal served on the blackened side of well cooked and comes with an epic power-metal chorus that culminates with a cry of “Goodbye”. Yep, off you fuckety well fuck Boris; don’t let the door hit your ample arse on the way out, you bloviating bellend.

### MORPHYL HATE

Hey ho, as one hellspawn departs, another pops up to take its place, and thus it is with Tory leaders, we guess. And local music too since hot on the heels of Broken Empire come Morphyl Hate who are another death metal band, this time from Didcot which might actually be the seventh circle of hell we were talking about just now. This is a bit of a bizarre one since the songs here were apparently recorded in 1993, so God knows why we’re only just being sent them; maybe the internet only just made it to Didcot, or the band, who are actually demons of the netherworld, have just been re-awoken by the sulphurous stench of Liz Truss’ plans for us all? Anyway, this is this month’s set of songs most likely to have been recorded inside

a giant cardboard box since it’s barely audible on a metal scale of noisiness, or perhaps aware of the eternal hell that heatwave Britain is right now after a dozen years of Tory mismanagement, they don’t want to further traumatise people and so are keeping the volume down a bit. There are inklings this could be a lot of fun if next time round they record it in an actual studio with actual knobs and buttons in; cardboard boxes are best served with a litter of kittens in, or twelve bottles of cooking vodka.

### ECHO VECTOR X

Sticking with an early 90s theme here are Echo Vector, back after their impressive debut a few months back that had us enthusing about 80s Italian synth-pop and the like. Those synths are still here, but this track, ‘Metallic Heart’, feels more like a hark back to The Lightning Seeds’ breezy, breathlessly blossom-strewn pop, albeit with more than a hint of early U2 guitar spangle about it. It bubbles along sweetly, some kind of musical balm after those previous two sonic assault and batteries, everything neat and simply layered as the best synth-pop is, melody the main intent and purpose of it all, and all topped off with a nicely epic synth middle-eight that could have been nicked off of Ultravox when they were being too moody in one of their videos to notice back in 1981. All in all, really rather lovely and suddenly this sunshine seems a little less oppressive. Vote Echo Vector X to rule the country, at least til summer’s over.

### JEM BOSATTA

“*Jem Bosatta doesn’t do background. He’s the kind of performer for whom you stop in your tracks, put down whatever you’re holding, and just listen,*” runs the rather giddy introduction to Jem Bosatta’s song ‘Father’. Worse, his Soundcloud profile picture finds him wearing a sleeveless white shirt with a heart drawn on his, erm, heart, and a tear drawn under one eye. If he starts weeping and wailing about lost love we’re going to pop across the road to where some big burly blokes are digging up a neighbour’s driveway, borrow their pneumatic drill and use it to demonstrate to Jem precisely what we think of his lovelorn wailing. And, if we’re honest, this is a bit of a drip of a demo with its heart not so much worn on sleeve as nailed to forehead but as a song it reminds us a fair bit of Leonard Cohen’s ‘Suzanne’: tender, hushed balladry with a rustic folk edge and a hefty hint of Cat Stevens’ ‘Father & Son’ chucked in for extra measure. It’s horrifically mawkish, lyrically erring towards cod-spiritual guff, but sweet enough as a song probably aimed square at middle aged late night drinkers filled

with life regrets (no comment). We have to laugh, though, at the line, “Father, everything I get I’ll pass it on.” Hopefully that doesn’t include Chlamydia.

### VAPOUR TRAIL

Not, as you might expect from an Oxford band, a loving tribute to the classic Ride track, Vapour Trail were frequent visitors to these pages back in the Noughties, recipients of both critical lashings and faint praise damnings, all of which they seemed to take in good humour, but since this new batch of songs arrives some 13 years after their last set, we wonder if they were maybe brooding murderously or simply licking their wounds in the interim. Truth be told, we can’t really remember what they sounded like back then, so we only have these four tracks to go by and they’re not bad at all: from the banjo-led soft bluegrass of ‘Straight Ahead’, to the 60s psych-tinged folk-rock of ‘The White House’, and on to the airy electro-pop of ‘Science’, it’s a mixed bag of styles, a pleasant enough woodland grove where Pentangle hang out with Blur and Thomas Dolby. It’s mostly wistfully executed, which can slightly work against them since it could be taken for a lack of conviction, but then not everyone needs to scream rude stuff about Tory corruption as soon as a microphone is stuck in front of them, and nowt wrong with that. Like fellow folk-tinged local crews Bewarethisboy and Firegazer, we’ll file them in the ‘probably a nice bunch to share a few pints with’ corner; take that as a compliment chaps – we don’t share our company with any old bunch of ragamuffins.

### ORAGEORANGE

And what we really need right now is an album-length set of tracks starting with one called ‘Whale Song’ that features, oh yes, whale song. *Nightshift*’s idea of a relaxing spa day is sitting in the back garden with a litre bottle of Absolut and a straw with The Antichrist Imperium on the stereo loud enough to give our weird DIY-obsessed neighbour a rectal haemorrhage, so ambient music of this nature tends to be wasted on us, but this is actually quite inventive in a soothing kind of way, neo-classical electronic Gamelan wanderings, ticks and clicks and flurries and scurries scattering the gently expanding musical horizons in a late-night Radio 3 kind of way, the whole thing mostly sounding like the soundtrack to footage of sunsets over deserts. It’s probably composed to turn otherwise misanthropic industrial hardcore fans into simpering hippies and next month’s *Nightshift* will in all likelihood be dedicated to yoga and cloud formations but you’ll just have to bear with us: right now this is soporifically distracting us from a nightmare we had where people genuinely believe Rishi Sunak or Penny

*Send tracks, downloads or streaming links for review to [editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk](mailto: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.*

Mordaunt are cuddly moderate contenders for the position of prime minister. Maybe the chemtrail conspiracists had it right all along. More vodka!

### THE NAIVES

Talking of the sun and stuff, imagine getting up early to watch a summer sunrise only to see the glorious golden globe just give up and piss off down the pub before it’s broken the horizon. That’s the feeling we get listening to The Naives, whose opening track ‘Pandora’s Box’ kicks in in fuzzy style, sounding ready to explode, and then sinks into a sluggish indie-tinged soft rock with all the danger of a flaccid, deflating party balloon. “We promise not to get smashed” groans the singer half heartedly as if sensible sobriety is the beating heart of great rock and roll. Their second song is called ‘Hallucinate’, which at least promises some kind of madcap musical redemption but once again fizzles into inconsequentiality, damp squibs all round, after a semi promising opening chug. Naives sound like a clan of timid hamster-like creatures who dream of rock glory but, having stuck their furry wee faces out of the front door to get a scent of excitement, decide that such wild *outré* bands as Foo Fighters or The Courteeners are far too scary and dangerous for them and so retreat back into their cotton wool-lined snuggle boxes to dream of muddy ditches and a world without fun or colour. This sounds like rock music that’s two-thirds of the way to suffocating itself to death, and it’s welcome to its fate.

## TOILET TRACK

### HOGERS WOLF

The Naives are positively feral compared to this, though. Hogers Wolf is a weird old name – it looks like it’s missing an apostrophe for starters. It’s also missing any kind of grit, gumption or get-up-and-go. The song here is called ‘The Fountains Of Bimini’; it’s an acoustic dirge and trudge fuelled by lethargy and morbid self-pity, a strangled bloke wailing in plaintive style over a lazily strummed acoustic guitar and tambourine; a man without hope going down with a ship built with no hull, only at the very end raging against the dying of the light like a drunkard in a pub toilet cubicle realising too late there’s no loo roll. How the guy behind this decided Hogers Wolf would be an appropriate name we can barely comprehend. Wolves are wild, noble creatures with a sense of purpose. Hogers Sea Slug would be a better name. And as for the song title: ‘The Fountains of Bimini’? A fountain of bum gravy, more like.

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