

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month
Issue 313
November
2022

*"We are very loud
and have a natural
tendency to lean
towards big sounds"*

Kanadia

Optimism, anxiety and making
music as big as mountains, with
Oxford's stadium-sized rockers.

Also in this issue:

Introducing **SILENT WEAPON**

At work with **WE GOT TICKETS**

DIVINE SCHISM IS 10 - reviewed

plus

All your Oxford music news, previews,
reviews and gigs for November

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THE BULLINGDON

NOVEMBER 2022

GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Saturday 29th October
Rawdio X Bitter Pill
Dub Phizix and Strategy
Jazzy Lioness
Bruxley
Geo
Macular
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
The Bully Bailer
House, Techno & Garage
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

Saturday 5th November
Reggaeton Party
Doors: 11PM

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

Wednesday 9th November
Komuna - Glitch
Stacey and Tracey
Still Loading
Komuna Quartet
DJ Bekzpoz
Doors: 9PM

Thursday 10th November
Tankus the Henge
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 10th November
Call Me Maybe
2010s Party
Doors: 11PM

Friday 11th November
Imperial Leisure
Doors: 7PM

Friday 11th November
BANGERZ & LASH
Phat BANGERZ Edition
Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 16th November
Corky Laing
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 17th November
Tom McGuire
& The Brassholes
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 17th November
Non Stop Styles
Doors: 11PM

Friday 18th November
Drum and Bass
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 19th November
Musical Medicine
Daughters of Frank
Doors: 11PM

Monday 21st November
World Cup 2022
England v Iran
Doors: 12PM

Wednesday 23rd November
Billy Nomates
Iona Zajac
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 24th November
Semi Detatched
TBA
Doors: 11PM

Friday 25th November
World Cup 2022
England v USA
Doors: 6PM

Friday 25th November
Fred Stripe
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 26th November
NCTRN
Zoro x Mozey
x Cardinal Sound
Doors: 11PM

Tuesday 29th November
World Cup 2022
England v Wales
Doors: 6PM

Tuesday 29th November
Fluorescent Adolescent
Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 30th November
Kira Mac
Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 30th November
Haute Mess
Doors: 11PM

Thursday 1st December
The Brass Funkeys
Tiece
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 1st December
So Fetch
Xmas Special
Doors: 11PM

Friday 2nd December
Dreadzone
Doors: 7PM

Friday 2nd December
Raving Trippy
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 3rd December
Simple
Jossy Mits
Doors: 11PM

Friday 9th December
Kanadia
Doors: 7PM

Friday 9th December
The HAU5 Party
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 10th December
Reggaeton
Doors: 11PM

Friday 16th December
Mandrake Handshake
Doors: 7PM

Friday 16th December
Drum and Bass
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 17th December
Old Skool Oxford
Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 21st December
Krissy Matthews
& Friends Xmas Show
Doors: 7PM

Friday 23rd December
The Shapes
Peerless Pirates
Jody & the Jerm
Doors: 7PM

Friday 23rd December
Taylor Swiftmas
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 24th December
Reggae Xmas
Aleighcia Scott
Count Skylarkin
Destination DJs
Dasher and Wazzy
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 7th January
3 the Hardway
SNB
Freedom Sound
Cavalry Kartel
Doors: 7PM

NEWS

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JULIA-SOPHIE has two recent EPs released on vinyl this month. ‘y?’, originally released as a download in 2020, and ‘<3’, similarly released in 2021, are released on 175g pink vinyl by Brighton label **Third Kind** on the 4th November, featuring eight songs. Full tracklisting is: ‘And You Know It’; ‘CCTV’; ‘I Wish’; ‘Love Let You Down’; ‘Breathe’; ‘x0x’; ‘I Told You Everything’, and ‘I Left You’. A limited number of vinyl copies will be available from Truck Store, or you can order the EP at julasophie.bandcamp.com from the 28th October. Julia-Sophie’s most recent EP, ‘Feels Like Thunder’, was released in March this year.



THE SHAPES play their traditional Christmas show next month. The local r’n’b, soul, new wave and folk-punk faves play **The Bullingdon on Friday 23rd December**. Support comes from Peerless Pirates and Jody & the Jerm. Tickets available from wegottickets.com. Jody & the Jerm, meanwhile, release a new live EP this month. ‘Live at The Bullingdon’ features four songs recorded at the band’s

show in June and is available on vinyl, CD and download. The four tracks featured are: ‘Spinning’; ‘The Harder I Try’; ‘Never Going Home’, and ‘Get Me Out’. Get it at Truck Store or order at jodyandthejerm.com.

FOALS’ homecoming show at the **O2 Academy** in January next year has been postponed until May, along with the rest of the band’s tour. The new date for the show, in conjunction with Truck Store is **Tuesday 9th May**. The gig is sold out; all tickets for the original date remain valid with refunds available from point of purchase.

CATWEAZLE has returned with a new home. The long-running open night, which ran every Thursday at East Oxford Community Centre until the start of the pandemic, has found a new home at **The Handle Bar** in St Michael’s Street in the city centre, again **every Thursday**. Run by musician Matt Sage, Catweazle is Oxford’s longest running open night, showcasing local singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and performance artists for 25 years, including early performances from Stornoway and Foals’ Yanniss Phillipakis.

MELTING POT will be compiling and broadcasting a special **Best of Oxfordshire Music** run-down in December, with local music fans able to vote for their favourite tracks of the year, Melting Pot, on DAB station **Get Radio**, showcases and celebrates Oxford music on its fortnightly Thursday night shows hosted by Rich and Deadly. “In a homage to the great John Peel’s Festive 50, we’re asking the good music lovers of Oxfordshire to vote for their favourite songs of 2022,” said Deadly; “songs must have been released in 2022 and must be by an Oxfordshire based artist. Nominate your favourite three local songs by emailing info@getmeltingpot.co.uk by December 13th. The Top 20 will be announced on Melting Pot on Thursday 29th December.”



MEANS OF PRODUCTION have a new song included on a compilation of new electronic artists this month. Their song ‘Resuscitation Status’ appears on ‘Generation Blitz 3’, which is available on CD and as a download to pre-order at generationblitz.bandcamp.com/

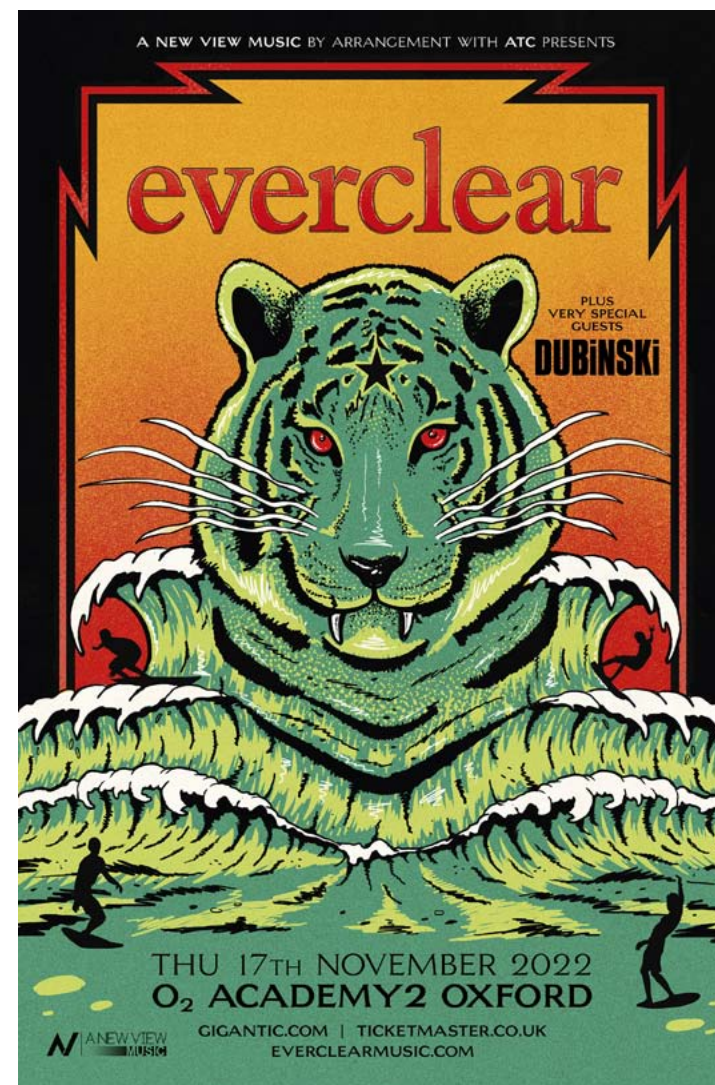
ARE YOU LISTENING? festival in Reading are inviting Oxford artists to apply to play their 2023 event. AYL? 2023, takes place on **Saturday 6th May** and marks the multi-venue festival’s tenth anniversary in which time it has raised over £70,000 for Reading

Mencap; it was recently nominated for Grassroots Champion at the inaugural Live Awards. This year’s event featured headline sets from Alfie Templeton, Pip Blom, Bob Vylan and Jockstrap. Acts interested should email info@heavypop.co.uk.

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

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

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



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A quiet word with

Kanadia



“I THINK ULTIMATELY WE are an optimistic band. We deal with some darker subject matter at times but we also have songs about overcoming things too, which can be empowering. Even on the more emotionally heavy tracks, I think there is something positive in creating something from pain. It’s better to be expressed and made into something, rather than to let it fester inside of you, remaining unspoken. Creating something out negativity is an act of optimism itself, because it shows you are trying to understand something or move forward in your life.”

SO SAYS JAMES BETTIS, singer and guitarist with local rockers Kanadia. The band have emerged from Covid lockdown with a new album set to be released next month – their second, and the follow-up to 2019’s eponymous debut. James formed Kanadia back in his native Devon in 2015 with keyboard player and school friend Melissa Marshall before relocating to Oxford, where they met drummer Tim Lucas and bass player Jack Ashworth via online adverts and discovered a whole new world of music awaiting them. Since then they have earned themselves a reputation as one of the most powerful live acts in town, with a stadium-sized sound inspired by the

lies of Radiohead, Muse, TV On The Radio and My Morning Jacket.

JAMES IS TALKING TO *Nightshift* about the issues that have inspired the new record, notably his own mental health, and Kanadia’s place in a post-pandemic world where rock bands have struggled to re-establish themselves. “Over the past five years things have become pretty bad for me in regards to mental health. I have the odd week or so where I feel normal but more often than not, I’m feeling ‘weird’, dizzy or convinced I must have cancer or blood clots. This may sound like a slight exaggeration but once this thing got a hold of me it started to spiral out of control to some terrifying places that I never believed it could reach. I’m at the point now where it largely rules my life. I recently refused to get on a plane home from Cyprus and overlanded home due to the layer cake of fear that flying now induces in me. I never used to have any of these problems at all so it’s a big loss. I allowed myself to become too stressed and something switched. At times I struggle to do things that most people do and when I do things like go to a gig or play one, it’s always a very big challenge for me. I’m fighting something all the time; my brain has basically learnt to work

against me and I have a very small amount of control over my body’s physiological reaction to fear and stress. I’m at the point now where it can largely rule my life and makes things difficult. It’s only natural that when we write and play music this is what filters through. It’s one of the only burning things on my mind and I lean on music to prop me up when things are bad. I see it as a way of combating it. Usually I’ll be going to those horrible places right before we play a gig but there is nothing as gratifying as having a wall of power and sound behind you and saying ‘Fuck you’ back to it all. It comes from a place of pure instinct and the rest of the band tap into it too. Each member has their own sense of connection to the lyrics.”

KANADIA’S NEW ALBUM, entitled ‘June’, and set for release at the beginning of December, continues the musical journey the band began back in Devon but is the result of all four band members’ creative input rather than a recreation of James’ early songwriting like their debut. It marries their love of big rock anthems with a tight grip on atmospherics, tenderness mixed with turmoil, elegance with all-out sonic excess. In short it’s an album made for big stages and big arenas. Little wonder the band were picked

to headline this summer’s Charlbury Riverside Festival 25th anniversary. “Our first album was predominantly based off of demos that I had brought up from Devon, whereas this album was formulated amongst the band and the material developed in our rehearsal room. You can hear that this music is more of a natural fit to the band. We worked on this album with Tom Leach between two studios, SNAP and Pony in London. Tom discovered us a few years ago from an advert on Facebook and reached out saying that he would like to work with us. He is an excellent producer; he’s about the same age as us and is very invested in the music. There are times when we think the tracks are finished and he has pushed us to add extra textures. His suggestions have really helped the tracks develop further. “Riverside was great. We were over the moon to be asked back for their anniversary event. It’s a proper grassroots event that showcases what’s going on locally. The organisers are very passionate about what they do and they do a great job. It was a brilliant audience and it was fun trialling some of the new album material.” You’re often cited as a band tailor-made for festival and arena stages. “We are very loud and have a natural tendency to lean towards big sounds.

It’s not something we ever planned to do though; those textures are just what interest us. When we write we get quite lost in performing and it often ends up in that stadium sound territory. The music could certainly work well on large stages but having said that, we also enjoy playing intimate venues just as much. We have a pretty simple set up and it’s sometimes more fun to create the same scale in a tiny room which is more in line with how we are used to rehearsing.” Aside from Riverside, Kanadia have found themselves sharing festival stages with some of the biggest acts around in recent times, notably Noel Gallagher and Bombay Bicycle Club. “We had the chance to play a new festival in Wales called In It Together. It was a really impressive festival, on par with Truck. The main stage closed due to high winds and we ended up sharing the second stage with some pretty notable touring bands which was quite surreal. They promised to invite us back again next year, so we can’t wait for that.”

THE OXFORD MUSIC SCENE has changed a lot since *Nightshift* last talked to James back in 2019, particularly as far as the venue situation is concerned; how does it look from his perspective now and what can a returning Kanadia bring to the local music table?

“It is a big blow to have lost some iconic venues, especially those that provided a platform for the band early on. It’s great to still have a range of good venues in town, but it can feel at times like bands cycle through the same venues quite quickly, which is difficult to avoid given the circumstances. We found it difficult to choose the right sized venue for our last EP launch, whilst still leaving room to build to a larger show for the album launch. In the end we just went back to where it all started and chose The Library, which was cool. It’s probably not something we would have thought to have done otherwise. I’m not too sure what we could bring, but we often put on our own shows and we are always open to new bands reaching out to us and having them perform on these nights. I think the way forward is to get some interesting and unconventional spaces on board to work alongside the venues.” Post-Covid, the Oxford scene has been increasingly dominated by either solo artists or electronic acts; how difficult was it keeping the band together during lockdowns and getting back together once things eased up? “To be honest we really enjoyed lockdown. We work really hard as a band; first comes the music, but we take what we do very seriously

and are completely self managed, which has its limitations and can be stressful. It’s very easy to become completely consumed by release plans, running social media, mailing out to the industry, planning and shooting videos and sending thousands of emails plugging your music. We do it primarily because we are passionate and proud of what we have created, but playing the game can be draining and disheartening at times. Lockdown refocused everything for us. All of the self imposed pressure evaporated and I had the clearest and purest approach to music that I’ve had since I was about 15. The band frequently stayed in touch and we worked on some lockdown sessions. It felt like people in general were more responsive to what all musicians were putting out because most activities had been taken away from them. Once lockdown ended it didn’t take long for everybody to return to the usual grind, which brings good but it’s a shame how quickly people begin

“I lean on music to prop me up when things are bad. I see it as a way of combating it”

to switch off and to start taking everything they missed for granted. I think bands will always be around, trends will always come and go but I think bands are a natural direction for musicians to head towards. Even most solo artists always end up seeking session players eventually.

WITHOUT DOUBT KANADIA deserve to be huge; they already sound like they’re global stars. What are the chief barriers to a band of their nature in moving up to a higher level?

“I think we grew up in a weird time. We are old enough to have lived through the days of major labels signing bands up on the basis of a rough demo they made at their parents’ house. As teenagers we oriented our vision towards this format. As unfair as those deals could be, it also helped to produce some phenomenal bands and albums. When it comes to bands, it’s hard to think of any acts who have achieved such dominating global success since that chapter closed. Don’t get us wrong, there are definitely some good bands around making good music, but I think the days of bands being on the scale of Radiohead, Muse or Kings Of Leon won’t be repeated. At first everybody was excited by how the internet revolutionised the industry, but as we move in to the days of Tik Tok it’s completely saturated and perhaps we were better off with the old set up. The industry has adapted and the message seems to be that artists

have to virtually break the market themselves independently before they receive assistance. This largely pulls an artist’s focus away from songwriting and means that they are self managing and contending with an industry championing Tik Tok cover versions due to content interaction. Social media trends evolve rapidly and it seems these trends dictate success and people’s attention spans. There will always be people within the industry and fans who create an exception to this rule, but you are lucky to tap in to that. This has all unfolded in the space of less than 10 years and for a band like us it can feel like you are always playing catch-up. It also doesn’t seem that large sounding alt-rock bands who write about internalised feelings are currently the ‘in’ thing.” The fact is, Kanadia already have the start of a decent global following thanks mainly to Spotify which has introduced them to pockets of fans as far as away as America; what does James think someone living

in Mexico for example hears in Kanadia, an unsigned band from Oxford? “When you land an editorial playlist it makes a huge difference. Having a couple of tracks subsequently sit on Discover Weekly constantly introduces your music to a wide audience. Our numbers are modest but Mexico and USA have always been quite responsive to our music. This year we received our first fan mail from a Mexican fan all the way from Guadalajara and we had fans around the world film themselves listening to one of our singles last year, which is very uplifting; it really motivates us more than anything else to continue, despite industry hardships. One fan cited ‘Poison’ as the track that got her through lockdown. As kids we used to dream that we could create music that resonated with people as our influences resonated with us. That’s all it was ever about. It’s difficult to say why fans in places like Mexico and Brazil latch on to what we are doing. I think rock music is much more in fashion in those regions.”

OF COURSE, ONE OF THE chief influences on Kanadia’s music and a big factor in James and Melissa’s relocation to Oxford was, and remains, their love of Radiohead. A song like ‘Big Nothing’ off the new album is obviously influenced by them; how do Kanadia take influences like that and make them their own? “Because we grew up listening to

these sorts of influences they will naturally make their way through to our playing and formulate our vision of what music is. I heard a lot of great music as a child but certain bands make your ears prick up and stay with you because what they are doing is that powerful and honest. I think we have each collected a bunch of those bands and when it all collides together it ends up a bit different to each individual influence.” You made Oxford your home after leaving Devon; do you still feel it’s a natural home for the band or could you imagine relocating to help the band progress? “Oxford feels like home for Kanadia. It’s great to still have that connection back in Devon too, though. I think if we were to relocate from Oxford it would be to another country in order to feel a substantial difference. There are great venues all over the place in UK and amazing gig-goers all over but no city that we have played so far has seemed particularly distinct in terms of its music scene. Some cities are better than others though, that’s for sure.”

KANADIA WILL RELEASE ‘June’ on the 2nd December and officially launch the album with a show at The Bullingdon on the 9th. The story behind the record’s title is touching and perhaps confirms James’ assertion that Kanadia are an optimistic band at heart. “June was the name of my Nan who passed away in 2019. I was really close to her and grew up in her house. She was like a second mum to me. She grew up in London during World War II and was evacuated to Somerset. About a month before she died I visited her and asked her about her life. She got out a box of photographs dating back to the 1930s and was telling me these gripping stories about bomb raids in London all like it was no big deal and just a part of everyday life. I had the basis of the idea for the song ‘June’ back in 2011. It was on a shelf for a long time, but I finally finished it the week she died. It poured out of me and some of the lyrics made me think of her. I liked the idea that the song had a history dating back to being in her presence and that I was probably tinkering with the track whilst she was in the same house. I couldn’t think of anything or anyone more worthy of tributing the album to. She was a kind and supportive lady who let me blast guitar in her house with early band members. She had the happiest name too: June Sunshine.”

‘June’ is released on the 2nd December. Kanadia play The Bullingdon on Friday 9th December.

RELEASED

LOW ISLAND

‘Life In Miniature’

(Emotional Interference)

Having released their debut album, ‘If You Could Have It All Again’, only 18 months ago, Low Island’s return with another full-length release shows a dedication to creativity, and it seems the quartet are currently mining a rich seam of electro-pop gold on the strength of this new record.

‘Life In Miniature’ follows closely on from their debut thematically as well as musically, dealing with grief, change and acceptance, both on a personal and global scale. Opener ‘Goodbye Bluefin’ sets the scene with its airy, lightweight electro-funk, the track building on a subtle tidal swell of jazz and dub. By contrast ‘Can’t Forget’ is pure 80s soul-pop with its lush arrangements, female backing vocals and the gentlest blizzard of swarming synths beneath Carlos Posadas’ honeyed vocals.

Other highlights include the funkier, more fidgety ‘Kid Gloves’, with its dance-friendly electro-pop groove; the dreamier, ‘Forever Is Too Long’, pulling Low Island into Radiohead’s orbit briefly, and the darker musical tones of ‘Words Are Out Of Reach’, which is almost Numan-esque in its synthetics but also carves out some lovely Talk Talk-style space.

What ‘Life In Miniature’ maybe lacks is a song like ‘What Do You Stand For’ to lend it some



muscle. That track was the high point of ‘If You Could Have It All Again’ and the middle of this album might have benefitted from something similarly propulsive. Instead tracks like ‘Robin’ and ‘Wasn’t For Nothing’ feel a bit too much like filler and add little by way of variety.

Low Island pull it round at the end though, and with interest. ‘Into the Blue’ brings some change and some sweet uncertainty to bear, but they leave the absolute best til last with the album’s title track, part hymn, part lullaby, almost folky in a way, Carlos at his most rarefied and tender, it’s a perfect way to close an album that wears its heart on its sleeve while keeping its emotional powder dry and its groove fluid throughout.

Ian Chesterton



MOTH DROP

‘It’s OK Let’s Decay’

(Self released)

Soon we’ll stop mentioning the pandemic in reviews but for a certain kind of artist, the gaping hole of the past couple of years has led to a real rise in productivity. As a self-declared purveyor of psychedelic techno, there has been plenty of opportunity for Moth Drop to come up with new tracks, presumably because the need for available venues, chunky amps, transit vans and guitars are unnecessary for the artistic process.

That’s been good for us; Moth Drop has built up a serious body of work since the release of his ‘Valis’ EP in 2016. Adopting a seriously eclectic

approach, there has been room for demonic laughing; Danny Dyer samples; industrial clanging; the feel of wooded raves at 2am on festival weekends; collaborations with the likes of Tiger Mendoza; head-expanding noodling, and Balearic daybreak chill across a range of impressive releases, mostly intertwined with an electronic beat that occasionally reaches out to embrace Orbital levels of bliss while sometimes retreating into bedroom-style ‘intelligent’ techno as per Boards of Canada, Ultramarine or Coco Steel & Lovebomb.

New six tracker ‘It’s OK Let’s Decay’ is quite a different animal. Sure, Moth Drop has explored the textures of ambient techno before – most notably on his eponymous LP from 2018 – but here the mood gets dialled down to become almost imperceptible at times. First track ‘Kiss Scene’ is a scene setter before ‘You’ll Miss the Rain’, an eight-and-a-half minute paean to Stereolab, Tim Hecker and early Blanck Mass at their most beatless, occasionally straying into dubstep but perhaps reminding the listener most of Fennesz in its scrappy lo-fi stylings. That’s a trend that continues across the whole release, save for a loose cover of Vashti Bunyan’s folkie 1970 track ‘Window over the Bay’, replacing trumpet with a thrumming electronic refrain. It’s an atmospheric but low key release in all and perhaps not one that hits the highs of Moth Drop’s previous work.

Rob Langham

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GIGSY

‘Modesta’

(Self released)

Having won *Nightshift* Top Track for her song ‘Déjà Vu’ recently, Gigsy – the artistic name of Kloë Flanagan – returns with a second EP of busy electronica and dextrous wordplay.

She quotes Lady Gaga, Charlie XCX, Twenty One Pilots, Rina Sawayama and Linkin Park among a host of influences and it’s easy to see how each fits into her scheme of things, though everything takes place at such a pace individual influences are rarely allowed to settle and this set of songs is very much hers.

The dirty electronics and whispered vocals of the frenetically paranoid ‘Bump in the Night’ has a touch of the Nine Inch Nails about it and impressively manages to unleash a stream of rhymes that takes in precision, opposition, demolition, volition, intuition, partition, superstition and disposition in a single verse. ‘Snakeskin’ has the most obvious debt to Lady Gaga but perhaps the EP’s high point is the dark, militant ‘I’ll Be The Bitch’ that takes a sizeable bite out of misogynist bullies (“So sick of social media telling us who we should be / Just let women be women, it helps us to feel free”, and “I’ll be the bitch to bring you down to your knees”) and feels like a sister act to fellow local electro artist Mila Todd’s excellent ‘Mouthy’.

It’s quickly equalled by the similarly upfront ‘The Art of InnoSINce’, taking righteous aim at the anti-abortion lobby, royalism, guns, wealth inequality, homophobia and anything else you got over a joyously grating electro frizzle; it takes a few listens to fully grasp everything Gigsy has to say given the velocity at which she fires out her lines but it’s worth the repeated listen.

Anyone who imagines this is a joyless tirade against injustice can suck on the fabulously poppy ‘A New Invention’, a roustabout rap/ electro-pop banger that’s crying out for a festival crowd to sing along to it, and overall ‘Modesta’ is a seriously well-drilled (and excellently produced) collection of music with a message and Gigsy is an artist has ample skills in her arsenal to make those messages stick.

Sue Foreman



BROKEN EMPIRE

‘Before the Fall’

(Self released)

Five years into their lifespan – five years during which they’ve released a succession of singles and EPs, gigged constantly and supported the likes of Phil Campbell and the Bastard Sons, Evil Scarecrow and Fallen State among others – and Broken Empire release their debut album, having honed a style that manages to draw on myriad strands of metal and heavy rock but mostly displays an aptitude for melody that can be missing among music’s heavier denizens.

While they spread themselves between traditional heavy rock, metalcore, NWBHM, thrash and even the odd moment of death-metal, what doesn’t change is an adherence to hook-heavy rocking, something that serves the band well across a dozen songs.

On the lighter side (it’s all relative), are songs like ‘One Last Time’, chugging melodic rock in the vein of Alter Bridge, and the heavy rock power balladry of ‘We Are Alive’. On the other end of the scale are the likes of recent *Nightshift* Track of the Month ‘Valediction’, which properly goes to town on the shredded riffage, sounding like a bruising encounter involving Thin Lizzy, Five Finger Death Punch and



THE GRAND MAL

‘The Grand Mal II’

(Self released)

It is always a joy to see a local act continue their success following a strong debut album, and The Grand Mal have done just that with this follow-up. Despite following the naming style of Led Zeppelin, they carry little similarity to them bar a strong focus on high quality guitar riffs across every track. Hardly a surprise when two fifths of the band also appear in local rock titans Desert Storm, and the band is rounded out by three members of Mother Corona.

The album opens with a distorted, downtuned guitar on the instrumental ‘Another Replicant’, recalling Lamb of God’s sludgy ‘Straight for the Sun’, but this band more closely follows the DNA of Kyuss and Monster Magnet, bringing rolling desert tinged riffs rather than heavy metal.

It’s refreshing to hear the band expand their influences to bring in elements reminiscent of various bands that have created a well rounded and hugely enjoyable record. ‘Shallow’ could



Venom. ‘Disguise’ keeps this side of the band to the fore, while, ‘Insanity (Is Reality)’ shows Broken’s Empire’s ability to bridge old school rock with metalcore adeptly. It’s properly anthemic stuff, making good use of the clean/ dirty dual vocals.

This is solid, slickly accomplished rock/metal purpose-made for festival-sized stages and should appeal to traditionalists as well as those who prefer their rock music on the slightly more abrasive side.

Lyndie Krause

easily sit on a Queens of the Stone Age playlist; ‘Seas of Glory’ is for fans of Mastodon, and the welcome surprise of the acoustic ‘Lost in Time’ has echoes of Slipknot’s ‘Snuff’: unexpected but a welcome palate cleanser sandwich between eleven solid tracks that should be played very, very loud.

Damon Boughen

THE SUBTHEORY

‘Camus & Sartre’

(Self released)

Having soundtracked BBC Sounds’ hit football podcast *Moment of Truth*, The Subtheory releases a sort-of-but-not-quite football song just in time for the World Cup.

In truth it’s a meditation on philosophy, self expression and challenging yourself against your closest rival, but we still get lines like “The final whistle blows / A game of to and fro” from singer Cate DeBu, here sounding like a doomed torch singer from a haunted jazz lounge over Andy Hill’s shadowy cyber-synths and a rhythm you’d expect to soundtrack a train cresting over frozen tundra at night. There’s a distinct 90s feel to it, and while Portishead are an obvious influence the song reminds us more of that decade’s cult dark-pop faves Curve, a feeling enhanced when rapper Bevs interjects in JC-001 style (though given the football motifs here, maybe more like John Barnes) for the middle-8, almost breaking the spell, but at least paving the way for a chanted denouement that would suit an end-of-tournament montage of World Cup players in various states of emotional distress.

Let’s just hope England’s players are in the happier assemblage come December.

Dale Kattack

MANDRAKE

HANDSHAKE

‘The Triple Point of Water’

(Glasshouse)

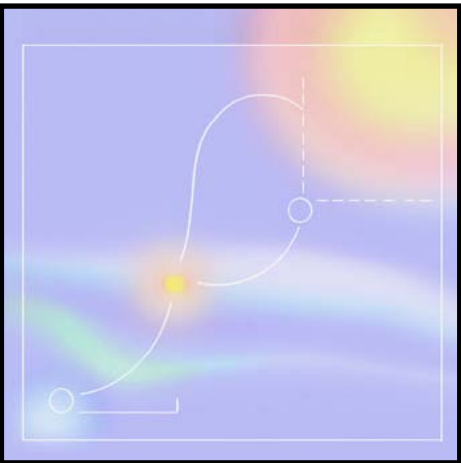
Mandrake Handshake have been on quite the trajectory of late. From their previous incarnation as Knobble Head on Oxford’s All Will Be Well Records, to their current form, they have gone from strength to strength, recently completing various tours across the country and France. Musically, though, the band have not strayed from their roots.

Opening track ‘Emonzaemon’ draws you in with a wondrous swell of hypnotic keyboard wizardry and hits you with an angular guitar lick reminiscent of early Sonic Youth. Lead singer Trinity continues the seduction as you forget where you are and what you were doing. It’s a welcome taste of psychedelia that seems to not tread old ground but takes you by the hand into a newer, happier place.

‘Vitamin Sunday’ is a less intense affair; band leader and guitarist Row has a wonderful ear for a lick and as Trin’s vocals sway past you, you blink and realise that you are in a chorus that won’t let you go. As the vocals and guitars echo each other, the tight production of Adam Ramsey is evident and only complements what the band are trying, and succeeding, to convey. Little sonic flourishes pan from one speaker to the other and ephemeral textures tap you on the shoulder and then run away further into the forest. It’s another trip, but the day appears to be getting ever brighter.

EP closer ‘Row’s Tinted Glasses//Diego Jota’ is as bonkers as its title. 70s-inspired funk guitar sings through a Dunlop Crybaby into a more groove-based number, Trinity’s voice almost working as an extra guitar here, and Shan Sriharan’s electronic tinkering lifts this beautiful closer to new heights. It’s not always possible to make out the lyrics but the track, as with its siblings on the EP, really lets go and as a consequence so does the listener, the coda offering a surprising change in time signature and leaving you tapping those platform shoes all the way to the next time this absolute behemoth of a band comes your way. Move over Tame Impala, The Shake are coming for your throne of phasers, flangers and trips to the far-out.

Caitlin Helm



RELEASED

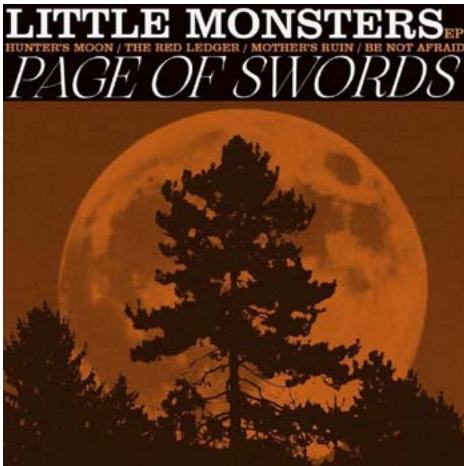
PAGE OF SWORDS

‘Little Monsters’

(Self released)

Autumn winds bring autumn songs and few among Oxford's songsmiths are as autumnal as Ian Mitchell. As part of gothic folk trio Little Red he led us into the shadows of the forests and children's nightmares, while with Master of None he fully embraced the darkness.

Lockdown led him back towards folk music and this solo EP comes shrouded in a sense of solemnity, lead track 'Hunter's Moon' a maudlin strum with a gothic edge and a hint of reverb around the edges, reminding us of tragic country-folk singer Jackson C Frank, although Jim White is perhaps a more deliberate influence, notably in Ian's fluid plucked guitar work and downbeat, reflective vocal and lyrical style. If 'Mother's Ruin' is bucolic and regretful, the best of the four



songs here is 'The Red Ledger', which sounds like late-life Johnny Cash and shows Ian at his strongest both vocally and lyrically. Dark songs for dark nights

Ian Chesterton

DOLLY MAVIES

‘Drawing Circles’

(Self released)

Possessed of the kind of whispery, slightly breathless voice that could calm the angriest toddler, Dolly Mavies builds up to the release of her debut album with another softly hymnal lullaby of a song, the musical equivalent of blossom caught in a gentle breeze but also catching enough sense of regret to suit its autumn release. It's not strictly a piano ballad since it rises above that level of intimacy but it carries a similar solemnity about it; it's pristine and polite but it's soulful enough to hold its own.

Bekti Manish

LOVEGOD AND THE

CHAIRMEN

‘Those Days’

(Self released)

If funk is your bag then this is for you: there's bucketloads of it, but I am talking rock-funk *a la* Jamiroquai and the less rocky parts of Red Hot Chili Peppers (146m album sales combined can't be wrong...err can it?), rather than anything hip from New Orleans or Detroit. 'Those Days' starts with backwards psych guitar intro but quickly becomes vocal led and dominated; the 80s-style female backing and shimmery accompaniments have a slightly spooky feel, but it just feels a bit repetitive and directionless. 'Spells Been Broken', by contrast, sounds Orange Juice inspired when it starts and it also has touches of 80s hitmakers Haircut 100 (in a good way); it's jumpy and lively and travels along at a rate of knots.

The last two tracks ironically are the strongest; 'Freaky Monster' starts with a cool funky drummer style beat and a Chic staccato duel of

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SILENT WEAPON

‘Purge’

(Blindsight)

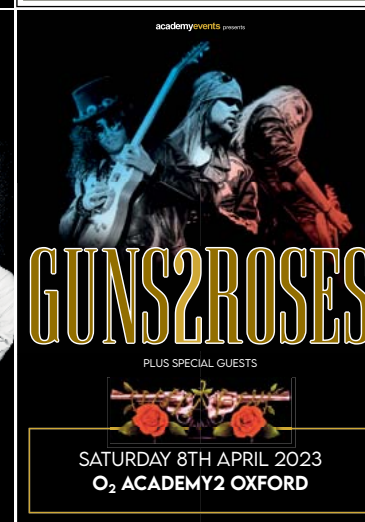
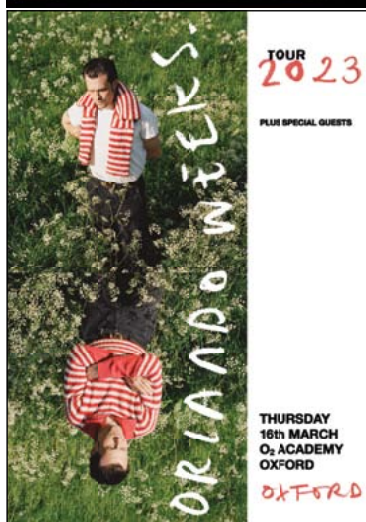
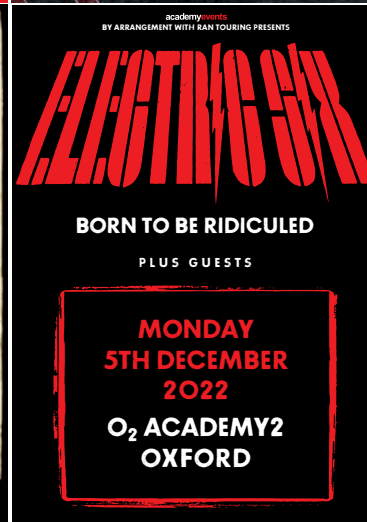
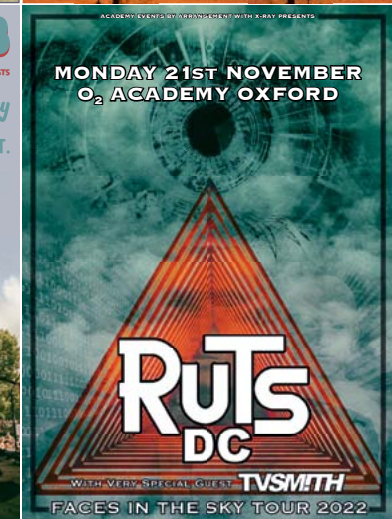
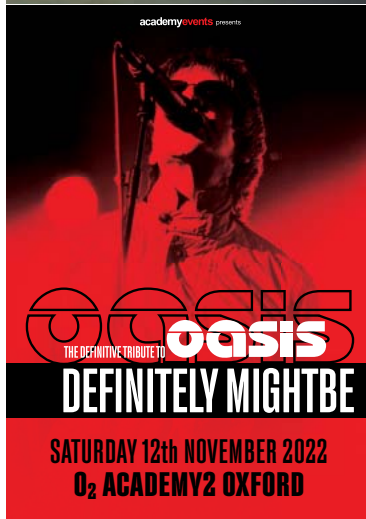
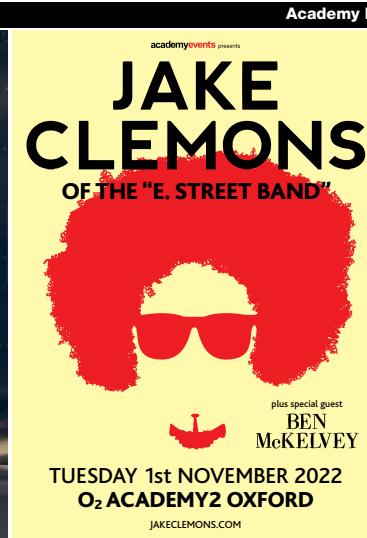
'Purge' is an apt title for Silent Weapon's debut album; listened to all the way through at the appropriate volume (one that causes local earthquake monitoring stations to go into panic mode and neighbours to up sticks and move next to active volcanoes for a bit of peace and quiet), it's a record that leaves you scoured, cleansed and feeling like the world has ended and you now live among the ruins and the demons. Umair Chaudhry, who has made it his life's work to create bleak musical landscapes, from *Abandon* to *Gift of Blindness* and *Walls of Freedom*, has reached his zenith with this new purely electronic musical project. His influences have barely wavered – hello, *Throbbing Gristle*, *Godflesh*, *SPK*, *Scorn* and *Whitehouse* – but these nine tracks condense the fury and nihilism of his musical vision to a peak.

'Purge' opens with 'Bats', a minute-long digital imagining of bats leaving their nests at dusk over ominous percussion, all of which sets the scene for the hellscape to come. Obviously the next track is titled 'The Revolving Doors of Hell', which throbs and pummels with industrial intensity, a relentless factory rhythm with the only shard of humanity, a disembodied death rasp.

'Eggshells' is bleak, post-apocalyptic rave music for cyborg soldiers returning from the frontline, while 'I Know I See' similarly feels like techno music made in hell and filtered through industrial death metal. In fact the whole album feels a bit like anti-ambient music: spa sounds for people who want to feel unnerved and forever on edge. 'Purge' closes with 'I'd Give Anything Not To Feel', summing up its nihilistic intent, a malevolent scourge of a track to follow the dirges, dissonance and death marches beforehand.

Anyone wanting feelgood singalong pop tunes should walk away now and keep walking; however, if the Devil fancies something to hum along to as he shovels sinners into the furnaces of Hades, 'Purge' just might be his jam. This is beautifully bleak music for end times.

Dale Kattack



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G1G GUIDE

TUESDAY 1st
JAKE CLEMONS: O2 Academy – A return to town for the E Street Band saxophonist, multi-instrumentalist and bandleader Jake Clemons – nephew of the late, great Clarence – leading his own band on a European tour to promote his solo album ‘Fear & Love’.

WEDNESDAY 2nd
NATIVE HARROW: Truck Store (6pm) – The folk act launch their ‘Old Kind of Magic’ album.
OWL LIGHT TRIO + THE BRICKWORK LIZARDS: Tap Social – Contemporary instrumental folk from Owl Light Trio, joined tonight by Egyptian and Turkish-infused folk and rockabilly ensemble The Brickwork Lizards.

Friday 4th
BOB DYLAN: The New Theatre
Whatever your thoughts on Bob Dylan, that he’s a musical legend is indisputable; he is quite simply, one of the most influential artists of all time and it’s hardly surprising this show – one of three tagged on to the end of his latest UK tour – sold out in a matter of seconds. While The New Theatre is hardly intimate in the scheme of Oxford venues, it’s a relatively small venue to see Dylan perform in. He’s touring ‘Rough & Rowdy Ways’, his 39th studio album and his first collection of original material in almost a decade; it’s an album in the vein of ‘Modern Times’ and ‘Tempest’, documenting the world around him, searching for and unearthing the mysteries at the heart of America, full of poetry and insight, as you’d expect from one of the greatest songwriters of all time, whose songs are famous in his own voice as well as the myriad covers over the decades. Now 81 and with so many years of live performance under his belt, you’d forgive him if he’d got comfortable but he rarely is: most of tonight’s set will come from the new record while older tracks are routinely twisted out of shape. Really, not much more we can say about Bob Dylan: he’s a legend and anyone with a ticket for tonight’s gig will know this is a rare event and they’re lucky to be here for it.



November

THURSDAY 3rd
CATWEAZLE: The Handle Bar – The long-awaited return of Oxford’s oldest open night, having found a new home following the loss of East Oxford Community Centre and continuing to showcase local singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and more every Thursday.
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon – Weekly open night hosted by local musician Tom Dalby.

FRIDAY 4th
BOB DYLAN: The New Theatre – A night with the living legend – *see main preview*
THE PEOPLE VERSUS: The Bullingdon – Pop with pizzazz from local ensemble The People Versus, mixing slinky funk, jazz and synth-pop and fronted by Alice Edwards, coming on like a cross between Cyndi Lauper and Marilyn Monroe.
THE BULLY BOILER: The Bullingdon – House, techno and garage club night.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with SELF HELP + QUARTERMELON + DADA PARADOX: Gladiator Club – KK’s monthly shindig brings melodically ferocious punk-pop crew Self Help to the party, joined by Witney’s funky indie troupe Quartermelon plus psych-rock and anti-folk from Dada Paradox.
ABSOLUTE BOWIE: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Bowie tribute night.
BON GIOVI: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Bon Jovi tribute.

SATURDAY 5th
LOW ISLAND: Truck Store (6pm) – The local electro-pop quartet play an intimate in-store show to launch new album ‘Life in Miniature’; pre-order the record to guarantee a ticket.
RABIDFEST: The Bullingdon – Kicking off a weekend of heaviosity with hardcore punk pioneers Discharge and more – *see main preview*
REGGAETON OXFORD: The Bullingdon – Reggaeton party.
WOOM + NATALIE EVANS + ROSA BONNIA: Modern Art Oxford – Divine Schism hosts south London four-piece choir WOOM, made up of members of the bands Babeheaven, Jerkcurb, Arlo Day, Teeth Machine and Thidius, together bringing their interpretations of songs by the likes of Frank Ocean, Angel Olsen and Outkast, as well as their own compositions to Modern Art.
THE SMYTHS: O2 Academy – The Smiths tribute celebrate 35 years since ‘Strangeways Here We Come’.
SABLE + THE BOBO: The Library – Ambient, minimalist electro-pop in a Japanese House / Christine & the Queens kind of vein

from Oxford/Berlin artist Sable.
THE ORIGINAL RABBIT FOOT SPASM BAND + OCTAVIA FREUD + JOHN HOUSTON: The Jericho Tavern – Stuart Macbeth leads his jump blues, jazz warriors into battle once more with support from electro-pop/rave poet and polemist Octavia Freud.
HIPSHAKIN’: The Harcourt Arms – 50s and 60s rhythm’n’blues, rock’n’roll, jump jive, jazz, boogaloo and early soul from the Hipshakin’ DJs.

SUNDAY 6th
RABIDFEST: The Bullingdon – Second day of the rock and metal weekender – *see main preview*
THE FLATMATES + HELEN MCCOOKERYBOOK + MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS: The Jericho Tavern – Bristol’s seminal mid-80s indie darlings come to town, still helmed by guitarist and songwriter Martin Whitehead, now fronted by Italian singer Lisa Bouvier who replaced original vocalist Debbie Haynes, the band still mixing up Ramones fuzz with 60s girl group harmonies and a sprinkling of Velvet Underground noise. Support from DIY scene veteran Helen McCookerybook, formerly of Brighton’s The Chefs and more, plus last month’s *Nightshift* cover star Moogiemán.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: Harcourt Arms – Weekly open night.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Tree, Iffley (3.30pm) – Funky swamp blues, hoedowns, psych-folk and more from the party-hearty crew.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon – Weekly Irish folk session.
OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (3pm)
DAMIAN DELHUNTY: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5.30pm)

MONDAY 7th
TUESDAY 8th
THE AUSTRALIAN PINK FLOYD: The New Theatre – They’re back.
INTRUSION: Kiss Bar – Monthly goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night.

WEDNESDAY 9th
THE FURROW COLLECTIVE + WE KNOW BY THE MOON: Holywell Music Room – OCM present an evening of traditional folk balladry from a quartet of folk luminaries – Rachel Newton, Lucy Farrell, Emily Portman and Alasdair Roberts.

THURSDAY 10th
KRS-1: O2 Academy – The hip hop poet and philosopher returns – *see main preview*
TANKUS THE HENGE: The Bullingdon –

Livewire New Orleans-style jazz, rock’n’roll, vintage r’n’b, funk, gutter blues and a whole heap of showmanship from the ever-touring London troupe, bringing a bit of carnival light to the live scene.
CALL ME MAYBE: The Bullingdon – 2010s retro club night.
CATWEAZLE: The Handle Bar
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 11th
BELLOWHEAD: The New Theatre – The return of John Spiers and Jon Boden’s groundbreaking folk big band – *see main preview*
THEA GILMORE: Holywell Music Room – A homecoming of sorts for the Oxford-born folk star – *see main preview*
IMPERIAL LEISURE: The Bullingdon – Ska and rap-inspired party rocking from

Saturday 5th / Sunday 6th
RABIDFEST: The Bullingdon
With Oxford’s rock and metal scene still struggling to emerge post-Covid, and deprived of its spiritual home with the closure of The Wheatsheaf, the annual Rabidfest provides a welcome oasis of heaviosity for local fans, with 20 acts across two days. Saturday’s headliners are legendary crust pioneers **DISCHARGE**, whose D-beat ferocity laid the foundations for hardcore and whose influence across the globe far outweighs their commercial success. They’re joined by Wellingborough’s savage, brutal death-metallers **KRSYTHLA (pictured)**; Manchester’s party metallers **FOOTPRINTS IN THE CUSTARD**; doom and desert sludge riffmongers **ALUNAH**; Northamptonshire grungers **SULVAIN**; Leeds’ rap and groove metallers **PULVERISE**; Desert Storm adjascent rockers **THE GRAND MAL** and more. Onto Sunday and topping the bill are thrash and metalcore crew **DIVINE CHAOS**, a band in the lineage of Pantera and Testament. They’re joined by tech-prog-deathcore crew **RED METHOD**; local psych-blues-desert rock heroes **DESERT STORM**; anthemic fury from **HARBINGER**; dark symphonic metallers **DRACONIAN REIGN**; beats’n’riffs duo **WALL** and yet more. It’s a suitably unholy line-up and perfect for welcoming in the darkest months of the year. Hopefully the local heavy scene will find its feet, and its home, again in the coming months and years but for now, this is a perfect celebration at the altar of the riff.



London’s enduring live faves, returning to action after briefly calling it a day in 2019.
BANGERZ & LASH: The Bullingdon – Club night
THE JOLLY GROGSTERS: The Harcourt Arms – Sea songs and shanties from the local vocal ensemble.
TONY WRIGHT: The Jericho Tavern – Solo show from the Terrorvision frontman.
RILEY DOWNING: The Listening Room, Cross Keys, Thame – Dusky, careworn country, r’n’b, soul, bluegrass and Americana from New Orleans’ Riley Downing at tonight’s Empty Room show, the singer touring his debut solo album ‘Start It Over’, after making his name with The Deslondes and Tumbleweeds.
KISS THE TEACHER: Fat Lil’s, Witney – ABBA tribute night.

SATURDAY 12th
SIMPLE with HELENA HAUFF: The Bullingdon – Dirty acid, Chicago house, electro and more from Hamburg’s acclaimed Helena Hauff at tonight’s Simple, the DJ and producer host of her own Birds & Other Instruments night in her native city, keeping the spirit of early techno primitivism alive on her album ‘Qualm’.
PEARL DIVER: Harcourt Arms – Timeless croon-pop and funk-tinged positive vibes from Matt Sage’s outfit.
DEFINITELY MIGHTBE: O2 Academy – Oasis tribute.
JOOLS HOLLAND’S RHYTHM’N’BLUES ORCHESTRA: The New Theatre – The enduring musical master of ceremonies, *Later...* host and all-round geezer brings his big band show back to town after closing the last ever Cornbury Festival in July, playing classic r’n’b standards from across the ages, Holland tinkling the ivories and joined on the night by Roland Gift from Fine Young Cannibals.
CHARLIE DON’T SURF + UNDERBELLY + KOKROACHEZ: The Jericho Tavern – After 25 years away, the local rock heroes return to the stage where they played so often in the 90s; they’re joined by fellow 90s reformees Underbelly, still cranking out a ferocious grunge-core noise, plus Witney’s young rock talents Kokroachez.
THE DONUT KINGS: St. Giles Church – Big band jazz as part of the Jazz at St Giles season.
ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE & DAVE PEGG + BRUCE GOMERSALL: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Wychwood Folk Club hosts singer-songwriter and raconteur Clarke alongside Fairport legend Dave Pegg.
IAN VAN DAHL: Delaney’s, Wantage
THE NURKS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Classic rock covers.

SUNDAY 13th
KATIE MALCO + FIGHTMILK + WIINCE: The Port Mahon – Tender, occasionally ferocious, soulbearing post-grunge rock from Malco, who’s previously been out on tour as support for Bob Mould, This Is The Kit, BC Camplight and more. Local eclectic post-punk, post-grunge, indie crew Fightmilk support.
NOTHING, NOWHERE + GUCCHI



Thursday 10th
KRS-ONE: O2 Academy
Hip hop has produced more than its fair share of philosophers, visionaries, pioneers and activists, but KRS-One is up there with the best. The rapper born Lawrence Parker in The Bronx has long seen hip hop not as a commodity, or even just a style of music, but as a widespread political movement bordering on a religion and a force for positivity and self-awareness. As part of this view he started the Temple of Hip Hop, and perhaps more importantly the Stop the Violence Movement. The latter came in the wake of the murder of his Boogie Down Productions partner Scott La Rock, as well as a young fan murdered at an early gig. La Roc was Parker’s youth counsellor when he was an aspiring teenage MC living on the streets and starting to discover the spiritualism of the Hare Krishna movement. In the wake of La Rock’s murder he carried on alone, his freestyling approach to rap, drawing on Jamaican influences, leading the way for subsequent generations of MCs, and while he didn’t enjoy the big hits of many of his 80s contemporaries, tracks like ‘Sound of da Police’ and ‘MCs Act Like They Don’t Know’ have remained classic rap anthems. For a man whose live battle cry remains “I want you to leave here inspired,” KRS-One has always walked it like he talked it. Inspiring indeed.

HIGHWATER: O2 Academy – Rock and grunge-informed hip hop from straight-edge Massachusetts singer/rapper Joseph Mulherin and his band, over in the UK to promote last year’s ‘Trauma Factory’ album.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (3pm)
THE ONE & ONLY MA BESSIE: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5.30pm)

MONDAY 14th
HOT SAUCE RHYTHM’N’BRASS + JESS CLUCAS + WEEKEND WARRIORS + SPACE PIGS + THE REPLAYS: The Bullingdon - Oxofrd City Festival show.
JOHN TAMS: Nettlebed Folk Club – The UK folk scene veteran and Home Service frontman returns to Nettlebed’s legendary folk club.

TUESDAY 15th



Friday 11th

BELLOWHEAD: The New Theatre THEA GILMORE: Holywell Music Room

Tonight is quite the night for fans of Oxford-birtherd folk music; in fact there are likely to be a few fans out there fretting about who they’re missing even as they enjoy their show. Over at the New Theatre is the return of John Spiers and Jon Boden’s groundbreaking folk big band Bellowhead, who formed in Oxford, previously headlined Truck Festival and who got their first ever live review in *Nightshift* from the Oxford Folk Festival. After five albums and myriad sold-out tours the eleven-strong crew split in 2016 (with a farewell show at Oxford Town Hall where it all began) before reforming in 2020, carrying on where they left off and tonight’s show is long sold out. A very big welcome back. And a welcome back to town too to Thea Gilmore, who began her life in Oxford and North Aston before moving away. In the 24 years since the teenage Thea released her first album, ‘Burning Dorothy’, she has worked with and won the admiration of Bruce Springsteen; Joan Baez; Martha Wainwright; John Cooper Clarke; Billy Bragg; Steve Earle; Beth Orton, and The Waterboys among many others. Her landmark 2011 album ‘Don’t Stop Singing’ was a collaboration with the late Sandy Denny and her music featured in the BAFTA-winning film *Bait*, as well as *Blithe Spirit*, starring Judi Dench. Whichever you have tickets for, have fun, they’ll both be nights to remember.

WEDNESDAY 16th

CORKY LAING: The Bullingdon – The legendary Canadian drummer brings his band back to The Haven Club, having started his career playing with The Ink Spots before forming metal forerunners Mountain and later playing in bands with John Cale, Bo Diddley, Mick Ronson, Noel Redding and Ian Hunter along the way.
PROGRESSION: The Bullingdon

THURSDAY 17th

TOM McGUIRE & THE BRASSHOLES: The Bullingdon – Brass-heavy funk from McGuire and his band. We won’t mention they remind us a bit of Jamiroquai.
LANDE HEKT + NERVOUS TWITCH + JADE HAIRPINS: The Port Mahon – Self-searching fuzz-pop from the Muncie Girls

singer – *see main preview*
EVERCLEAR: O2 Academy – First Oxford show in almost a decade for Art Alexakis’ enduring Oregon post-grunge rockers, the singer, who’s revived the Everclear name after a period of going out under his own, leading a revolving cast of bandmates through over three decades of down-home noisy rocking that has both soundtracked and sometimes stood at odds with his often turbulent personal life.
MEANS OF PRODUCTION + THE BOBO: Modern Art Oxford – Double dose of electronic music at MOA tonight with post-punk synth-pop duo Means of Production alongside lysergic electro-popster The Bobo. There’s also performance poetry from Arthur Osofsky, while DJ Octavia Freud is on the decks, plus student performance art.
LOST IN MUSIC: The New Theatre – A night of disco classics.
CATWEAZLE: The Handle Bar
TIM FRIERS & THE MERCENARIES + MONTMORENCY + JACK HALLS: Cannon Brewery Tap Room, Abingdon – Make Music In Abingdon monthly showcase.
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 18th

BOSSAPHONIK with AFLA SACKEY & AFRIK BAWANTU: Cowley Workers Social Club – The monthly world jazz dance shindig welcomes explosive Ghanaian Afro-funk and hi-life drummer Afla Sackey to town with his eight-strong orchestra. On the decks, host Dan offer spins a mix of Latin, Afro, Balkan and nu-jazz.
ORLANDO WEEKS + FOLLY GROUP: O2 Academy – The former Maccabees frontman returns to Oxford after his instore set at Truck in January, touring new album ‘Hop Up’, a buoyant, optimistic set of mostly synth-led songs inspired by parenthood.
MOONAROON: The Harcourt Arms – Traditional Irish songs and dance tunes from the local trio.
THE GEEES + BEAVER FUEL + NEON TEEPEE + MARK BOSLEY BAND + MAISY’S RAINBOW DREAM: Florence Park Community Centre – A local bands showcase to open this year’s Oxford City Festival, organised by It’s All About the Music.
DRUM&BASS NIGHT: The Bullingdon
SUPERNAUT: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Black Sabbath tribute.

SATURDAY 19th

MUSICAL MEDICINE with DAUGHTERS OF FRANK: The Bullingdon – DJ and producer sisters Ruby and Lily London bring their romantic, soulful mix of r’n’b, Latin, jazz, house and garage set to the club night.
THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE + MEANS OF PRODUCTION + O MOON + THE SUBTHEORY + THE FOAM HEADS + THE FACTORY LIGHTS: Florence Park Community Centre – Psychedelic and acid house-infused surf rock from the superb Pink Diamond Revue headling today’s Oxford City Festival show. They’re joined by post-punk synth-pop duo Means of Production; indie trio O Moon; trip hop duo The Subtheory; new

wavers The Foam Heads, and soulful balladeers The Factory Lights.
DAN RAWLE: The Harcourt Arms – Relaxed pop vibes from the local singer-songwriter.
ELLIE GOWERS: Harwell Village Hall

SUNDAY 20th

RED RUM CLUB: O2 Academy – Anthemic indie rock from the Liverpool sextet.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: Harcourt Arms
THE SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Bullingdon (3pm) – Free afternoon of roots, folk, country and pop in the front bar.
SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Port Mahon (3pm) – Free afternoon of roots, folk, country and pop.
THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Tree, Iffley (3.30pm) – Rock and blues classics from the veteran local singer and guitarist and chums.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (3pm)

Thursday 17th

LANDE HEKT / NERVOUS TWITCH / JADE HAIRPINS: The Port Mahon

Probably better known in DIY music circles for her band Muncie Girls, Lande Hekt’s solo career has seen her leave that band’s more satirical protest-punk behind for the most part to explore more personal issues, notably gender identity. Not that she’s left the politics behind, but her conversational, self exploration is more inward looking now with heart worn firmly, and proudly, on sleeve. She’s out on tour to promote her second album, ‘House Without a View’, which came previewed by the sweetly aspirational single ‘Gay Space Cadets’, typical of her daydreaming fuzzpop and sad-eyed indie jangle, envisioning a life away from the humdrum everyday experience of being a tiny part of an unfriendly capitalist system when what you really want to be is on a big gay space adventure. Musically Lande’s music is in the lineage of acts like Heavenly, Vivienne Girls and Slumber Party but it’s her lyrics that are the centrepiece of her songs – simple, emotional but with plenty of room for hope amid the confusion. Great support at tonight’s Divine Schism from fuzzy new wave synth-pop outfit Nervous Twitch, plus Jade Hairpins, the pop-punk outfit fronted by Jack Goldstein alongside members of Fucked Up and Es.



NICOLE ALLAN: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5.30pm)

MONDAY 21st

RUTS DC + TV SMITH: O2 Academy – Punky reggae party with the original West London punk legends, back in town after their show here back in 2019, the band, still featuring Dave Ruffy and John Jennings, who rebuilt the band in the wake of singer Malcolm Owen’s tragic death in 1980 and more recently guitarist Paul Fox’s. Expect ‘Babylon’s Burning’ and ‘Staring at the Rudeboys’ as well as a masterclass in punk-reggae fusion. Support from The Adverts’ legendary TV Smith.

TUESDAY 22nd

RICH RAINFORD + BEN JACOBS + BEN AVISON + DANIEL MA’ANI + SARAH DERRICK: The Bullingdon – Local singer-songwriters showcase as part of Oxford City Festival.
NEW ACCELARATOR + SPINNER FALL + LIFE UNDERGROUND: The Jericho Tavern – Oxford City Festival show.

WEDNESDAY 23rd

BILLY NOMATES: The Bullingdon – Tor Maries sets the world to rights in rhyme – *see main preview*
JIMBOB: O2 Academy – Effusively scabrous alt.pop from the former Carter USM singer, who’s forged a prolific solo career in the wake of that band’s demise, tonight touring his latest album, ‘Who Do We Hate Today’. Song titles like ‘Shona Is Dating A Drunk Woman Hating Neanderthal Man’ and ‘Mrs Fucking MacMurphy (Teaches Food Technology)’ suggest he hasn’t lost his touch with a witty observational lyric.
TARA CLERKIN TRIO + FLIGHTS OF HELIOS: The Port Mahon – Experimental, often abstract jazz-electronic-trip-hop minimalism from the Bristol trio at tonight’s Divine Schism show. Support from local electro-psych ensemble Flights of Helios.

THURSDAY 24th

GONG + OZRIC TENTACLES: O2 Academy – The current incarnation of the enduring psychedelic prog ensemble return to town with newer members continuing to explore the Flying Teapot world after the deaths of founders Daavid Allen and Gilli Smyth. They’re joined by crusty psych-prog-jazz-dance survivors Ozric Tentacles.
EMMA HUNTER + DARKGNOSS + LONDON GRAFFITI + 16 SHADOWS: The Bullingdon – Dark-folk, surf, loops and flamenco from Emma Hunter as part of Oxford City Festival.
STEPH PIRRIE: The Harcourt Arms – Live jazz from the singer and trumpeter and her band.
PAPA NUI: The Jericho Tavern – Groove-led fusion pop from the local outfit as part of Oxford City Festival.
CATWEAZLE: The Handle Bar
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 25th

OSPREY & THE OX4 ALLSTARS + KOKROACHEZ + THE AUTUMN SAINTS + FIREGAZER + THE IVY CHAINS: O2 Academy – Oxford City Festival show with local legend Osprey leading his funky blues ensemble alongside Witney indie rockers Kokroaches, epic alt.country crew The Autumn Saints, contemporary folksters Firegazer and more.
A NIGHT WITH ADELE: Delaney’s, Wantage – Tribute night.

SATURDAY 26th

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with IN FLIGHT MOVIE + THE NATURE CENTRE + BLC MIRROR CLB: The Port Mahon – Another goodly mixed bag of sounds at this month’s GTI with In Flight Movie mixing 80s electro-pop with the darker tones of post-punk, kind of where Depeche Mode meet Joy Division. Flowery psych, scratchy punk and weird pop from Birmingham’s Nature Centre, drawing comparisons to XTC, Cardiacs, Cate le Bon and Field Music, plus dark-hearted rock from France’s BLC Mirror CLB.
MODERN RITUALS + OTHER HALF + SINEWS + YOGZI: The Jericho Tavern – Post-grunge noise rock, post-hardcore and shoegaze somewhere between Sonic Youth, Dinosaur Jr, Fugazi and even Radiohead at times from London’s Modern Rituals, out on a co-headline tour with volatile, sardonic post-punk and hardcore crew Other Half. Local Shellac-inspired noisemakers Sinews support.
CMAT: O2 Academy – Glam-pop-infused country, blues and folk from Dublin singer Ciara Mary-Alice Thompson, touring her debut album ‘If My Wife New I’d Be Dead’, somehow finding a bridge between Dolly Parton and Katy Perry.
BOTLEY CRUE: The Harcourt Arms – Indie, new wave and Britpop covers from the local outfit.
NCTRNL: The Bullingdon – Club night with Zoro x Mozy x Cardinal Sound.
DJ CHRIS HALL + ART LAGUN: The Bullingdon (4pm) – Free DJ session.
FALLEN ANGELS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Rock and pop covers.

SUNDAY 27th

STARBELLY + ECHO4FOUR + LILYBET + DECOVO: The Bullingdon (4pm) – Oxford City Festival show with goth-glam outfit Starbelly, plus Sabbath-inspired rocking from Echo4Four, jazz-soul from Lilybet, and indie rocking in the vein of Foals and Arctic Monkeys from Decovo.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: Harcourt Arms
FRANKLIN’S TOWER + FIREGAZER + TONY BATEY & SAL MOORE: The Tree, Iffley (4-7pm) – Klub Kakofanny host a free afternoon of live music, including Grateful Dead tribute Franklin’s Tower and folksters Firegazer.
SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Port Mahon (3pm)
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)
FLICK: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5.30pm)

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Wednesday 23rd

BILLY NOMATES: The Bullingdon

Acerbic, cynical, biting... just a few of the descriptions used to describe Billy Nomates’ songs, and not inaccurately, but perhaps missing the innate poppiness of her music, even when she’s dealing with class and gender politics in the most direct fashion. Having grown up in Leicestershire before relocating to Bristol via Bournemouth, the musician born Tor Maries was re-inspired to get creative by seeing Sleaford Mods in concert; they then invited her to join them on their single ‘Mork & Mindy’ which brought her to wider attention. One eponymous album and an EP on Geoff Barrow’s Invada label later she feels very much like the musician these times need: a voice for those left behind, be they working class, women, or those who care about the planet. Her semi spoken word style lends a sparse, direct style to songs like ‘Heels’, but tracks like ‘Hippy Elite’, ‘Supermarket Sweep’ and ‘Petrol Fumes’ show she’s more than capable of creating great pop songs with a voice to match. Like Self Esteem she’s uncompromising in her message but can get folks dancing and singing along too. Live she’s earned a reputation as a magnetic, livewire performer and her turn at Glastonbury this summer was a highlight, so tonight’s show is likely to be one of the year’s must-see shows.

MONDAY 28th

DERVISH: Nettlebed Folk Club – Traditional Irish songs, tunes and dances from County Sligo’s folk icons, back in the Shire.

TUESDAY 29th

SCOUTING FOR GIRLS: O2 Academy – The purveyors of anodyne indie rock and should-be proscribed musical drizzle are back. Will we never be set free?
FLUORESCENT ADOLESCENT: The Bullingdon – Indie club night.

WEDNESDAY 30th

HAUTE MESS: The Bullingdon



DIVINE SCHISM 10

Saturday

Florence Park Community Centre

Today’s all-dayer is the second act of promoters Divine Schism’s three-day celebration of their 10th anniversary and **BEDD** start the day off perfectly; their well-crafted songs having a dreamy, timeless feel and satisfying air of maturity. Main man Jamie Hyatt has been at the helm of so many great local bands that the city really owes him an apology, for not making him a star; today they rock out more than we expect from last year’s ‘1½’ EP, and sound all the better for it. **LORD BUG**’s solo performance is similarly dreamy but holds our attention with some strong and confident songwriting. **SALVATION BILL**, AKA Ollie Thomas and his small band, tread a more poignant and delicate path, with his intricate guitar work recalling Jim O’Rourke or even the old master John Fahey. Even if it’s better enjoyed at home no-one is complaining, as this turns into a day of rare treats. Next up, **BELL LUNGS** is the solo project of Ceylan Hay,

who’s travelled down from near Glasgow to support today’s celebration. Using haunting vocals, loops, effects pedals and various instruments, she mixes psychedelia, traditional Scottish singing and futuristic sounds to make music that defies categorization, bringing the room to complete silence. Her CV is vast, encompassing soundtracks, collaborations and workshops with disadvantaged groups. She’s entirely unique and the highlight of the day. **CALEB NICHOLS** and his band of rotating members join us from California, by way of a short tour with only three UK dates. Also a poet and creator of a new queer rock opera called *RAMON*, his band play punchy, upbeat US indie a little short on originality, but they get credit for staying long after their set to catch the acts that follow. As **TRUST FUND** begins a sizeable group of young, tall men with short, neat hair appear in the audience, caught in utter rapture

and singing along to many of the songs. What we actually have is Ellis Jones solo, the Bristolian, via Leeds, who released four albums as Trust Fund between 2015 and 2018 before supposedly coming to a halt. The songs are intense and personal, but also rather whiney, particularly presented as here with only an acoustic guitar for accompaniment and no band. As someone who lists his own themes as “listlessness, disavowal, and the fetishisation of regret” it’s hard to know how seriously to take it, not that the tall men seem in any doubt. File under Marmite, or next to it. With Trust Fund done his fans melt away like the autumn mist, not to be seen again, which is a shame because **GOOD GRIEF** are a very decent power pop – they call it punk – trio from Liverpool, and a welcome change of gear. The noticeable shortage of experience and polish only adds to the air of fun. **GEMMA CULLINGFORD** is no stranger to these parts, as

half of ace Norwich duo Sink Ya Teeth. Playing solo, she showcases her new album ‘Tongue Tied’, more funky and even more 80s influenced than that outfit. The simplicity of her bass playing is a diversion from the fractal-like complexity of the songs, once you start to lose yourself in them. The understated drum parts only help us focus on the really rather wonderful songs lurking beneath. Today’s headliners, **JENNY MOORE’S MYSTIC BUSINESS**, are all about communal singing and the power of the human voice, in particular women’s voices. Playing drums standing up is not easy but she does it with power and perfect timing, accompanied by bass, keyboard and xylophone, a stripped-back line-up compared to earlier live outings. But the performance starts and ends with the singing, and her railing against elites, male power and capitalism. ‘We Want Our Bodies Back’ is a rallying call but also a celebration, and there’s plenty of laughter along with the serious stuff. They are the perfect choice to round off a perfect day. *Art Lagun*



DIVINE SCHISM 10

Sunday

Various venues

The vagaries of the Oxford bus service mean we arrive just in time to hear **EB** thanking the crowd at BSM Social. So, the first set we catch is **APHRA TAYLOR** in the same venue, a gentle opening to the day that does come packed with plenty of emotional turbulence. The melodies might be delicately picked out but the self doubt and ruminations on toxic relationships are solid. From intimate to epic and **THE AUGUST LIST** at The Bullingdon, who continue to confirm their place as the best band in Oxford. If Aphra’s set was confessional, this feels like a full-on exorcism, the band’s music full of drama, droning violin and slide guitar creating a malevolent atmosphere within and above which Kerraleigh Child’s voice soars and swoops, her tambourine a rattlesnake in her hand. It’s such an intense set that emerging into daylight afterwards feels like a serious shock to the system. A dose of optimism is in order and we get it in the form of **LIUCÉ** at

The Port Mahon. Like a Lithuanian Joni Mitchell Liucé mixes sunny-side-up folk – often sung in her native language – with upbeat acoustic pop, while also wearing the best knitwear of anyone today. Having missed EB earlier, it’s good to catch her teaming up with **YAY MARIA** at The Library. The washes of synths create an almost *Twin Peaks*-like vibe at times with misty vocals, to which EB adds her more assertive poetic vocals on a couple of songs, though the high point is an impressive closing cover of ‘Tainted Love’. Today’s line-up is strong on female and non-binary artists, many of whom have come through The Young Women’s Music Project, so it’s fitting that the project’s leader **ZAHRA HAJI FATH ALI TEHRANI** gets her turn, performing as a trio, including Julia Meijer, these days eschewing the electronics and loops of her previous work for organic percussion and voices – chants and ethereal harmonies that crest over the gently propulsive

rhythms. Zahra jokes in between songs about them being so sad and downbeat, but it’s hardly a musical misery fest – the subtle parts creating a powerful whole, although it would have been good to let a couple of the tracks build for longer to fully unleash their hypnotic potential. Rhythm-driven sounds from **GIGSY** too who somehow makes songs about losing friends, misogyny and the cycle of government corruption and war sound like cheery bangers, notably the excellent ‘Déjà Vu’. Here is where Depeche Mode meets Lady Gaga at a hip hop-electro-pop party, Gigsy herself an effusive and animated host. That mood carries over into **PECQ**’s slick, accomplished set where euphoric electro-pop gets a soulful 80s pop injection, pauses for occasional downbeat intermissions and manages to get some of the first dancing of the day going with a cover of Empire of the Sun. After which, **CIEL**’s monstrous post-punk chime and thunder, all bold John McGeoch-style guitar and driving bass, is a shock – albeit a very pleasant one. Initially the vocals don’t quite match

the anthemic wall-of-sound but it comes together soon enough and an energising set is further enhanced by the singer looking unnervingly like local MP Layla Moran. It’s nigh on impossible to get into The Library for **BREAKUP HAIR**, but what we can discern suggests enthusiasm and energy win out over technical prowess. Both are equally matched for **SELF HELP** though. This is the first time we’ve seen the band since their major line-up overhaul but they’ve lost none of their militantly frenetic sense of purpose, every song a wash and a wall of busy melodic punk with just enough pop edge to suggest some serious radio play should be theirs if justice prevailed. Silliest set of the day comes from **DREAM PHONE**, though we offer that as a compliment of their cartoonish electro-pop and pitch-shifted vocals that’s warped and wobbly and sounds like Suicide and Britney Spears abducted by Alvin & the Chipmunks. Songs rarely outlast the 90 second mark and they fittingly close with a cover of ‘Oops, I Did It Again’. Everyone leaves with a broad grin on their face. Smiles and silliness are definitely not the order of the day for **FOXCUNT**, but it doesn’t make them any less enjoyable. In fact they’re up there with the best of today’s acts: agitated avant-punk that leans towards The Slits and Au Pairs, references Jilted John, takes sharp-toothed bites out of sexism and The System and ends up sounding like Crass given a bloody good pop polish by Girls At Our Best. Brilliant. As ever with such a hectic all-day line-up it’s impossible to catch everything we want and we hear enthusiastic mentions from others about **LEATHER.HEAD** and **MUMBLES** in particular, but we finish our day in the company of **POZI**, today playing their third show for organisers Divine Schism. The simple act of replacing guitar with electric violin in a classic trio set-up means the South London band are unlike almost anyone else around, Rosa cutting relentlessly unusual shapes with her bow, or plucking the strings to create their own rhythms; they’re less gothic than we’ve heard on record but no less engaging and make for a suitably inventive end to a suitably fun and varied celebration, not just of Divine Schism but grassroots live music more generally. *Dale Kattack*



MARYSGARDEN / THE MIGHTY REDOX / EMMA HUNTER / MILA TODD / SIXTEEN SHADOWS

The Gladiator Club

Klub Kakofanny open their 30th birthday celebrations with exactly the same kind of anything-goes attitude that’s sustained them over the past three decades; in this case a seven-year-old boy playing a techno set while wearing a digital mask. And while it’d be easy to patronise Sixteen Shadows, we don’t need to since this is hugely enjoyable stuff, from minimalist, glitchy electronica to portentous witch house. Who knows, by the time Klub Kakofanny are celebrating their 40th, the lad could be Oxford’s answer to Aphex Twin.

Mila Todd spent the summer in Berlin learning about electronic music, though last year’s ‘Pepper’ EP suggested she was already highly adept. Tonight she mixes that technical edge with an almost folky sense of melody, the moody, atmospheric ‘Khali’ proving she has one of the most versatile voices in town, and if ‘Bluebird’ finds her wandering a bit, she leaves the very best to last with ‘The Stage’, where her melding of folk and trippy electronic reaches its zenith. Emma Hunter properly brings the bleak with her dark tales of

drink and doomed characters; one song is even the Italian for To Die, but it’s no party pooper of a set, instead bringing an often epic sense of occasion to the packed room, inventive use of loops and understatedly powerful percussion from Tom Bruce adding to Emma’s midnight surf guitar shapes and phenomenal voice to create an expansive sound that belies their two-piece set-up. From lysergic children’s stories (‘Treacle Well’) to cautionary tales from the bottom of a bottle (‘Snake’), this is gloriously black-hearted fun,

utterly enthralling: so ignore the health warning and drink deep. It seems a bit strange that a music night built on a firm ‘enjoy yourself’ foundation should be celebrating its birthday in the company of some of Oxford’s finest mood merchants but hosts The Mighty Redox are on hand to redress the balance; their glass is forever not so much half full as overflowing, from opener ‘Carry the Light’ to songs about “Blue skies and sunshine”. They bring good vibes; grooves; positivity and a bit of silliness, as well as a whole lot of funky, upbeat blues, which stretches from the swamp to the railroad and back across Australia’s Bullaburra mountains for a hoedown, to fully take off with some great space rock from their forthcoming album. It’s their party and they’ll fly if they want to.

And back into the black – literally and figuratively – with MarysGarden, with Laima Bite resplendent in PVC and feathers, leading her band into the world of pensive yet billowing gothic pop, a sense of euphoria always tempering the shadows, though you feel they should be shrouded in stage smoke for full effect. ‘Freeform’ marries The Cure with Wolf Alice, while the synthy ‘Gasoline’ is just glorious: vampiric but soulful, the sort of sound that would fill arenas in Germany or Italy given the chance.

It’s a black celebration on a night where glasses are raised to one of Oxford’s most endearing and enduring institutions and spirits are raised even higher, even when the music walks the dark side of the street.

Dale Kattack

PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING / PALE BLUES EYES

The New Theatre

With their debut ‘Souvenirs’, Devon’s Pale Blue Eyes have released a contender for album of the year and while their name might suggest they wear their influences too firmly on their chest, The Velvet Underground are a small part of their sound, which mixes the gentle motorik propulsion of Neu! with OMD’s spangled pop nous and the ornate elegance of Galaxie 500; in fact singer Matthew Board bears a striking vocal similarity to Dean Wareham at times with his wracked falsetto; it’s a wonderful warm-up set from a band who should be headlining venues across the land.

The trio are joined for part of their set by EERA who is, for the majority of tonight’s show the fifth member of Public Service Broadcasting, adding vocals to tracks from ‘Bright Magic’ and older material as well as playing synths. It’s her voice on the newer tracks that help separate it from what has become the PSB trademark of old Pathé-style narratives over their cinematic instrumentals. ‘Bright Magic’ is PSB’s love letter to Berlin. It’s no coincidence the band take to the stage to the strains of Bowie’s ‘Sound & Vision’; his Berlin trilogy is a chief influence on this music, along with Germany’s electronic elite, notably Neu! And Kraftwerk, although Vangelis perhaps holds as much sway on the big synth swells and piano lines here as anyone.

They open with a trio of tracks from the new album – ‘The Visitor’, ‘Im Licht’, and ‘Der Rhythmus Der Maschinen’ – which set the scene for tonight’s show, where stirring

atmosphere and euphoria go hand in hand with spectacular visuals to make for an incredible, immersive experience that often goes well beyond what you expect from a gig. The last of those three is PSB at their absolute best, recreating the rhythms of industry as light towers, lasers and Mr B’s interactive filming provide footage of past, present and future worlds on a giant scale. In fact the setlist almost becomes redundant as Public Service Broadcasting take flight and dig deep – from outer space to deep underground, celebrating human endeavour in all its forms – invention, industry, science and pure indomitable human spirit – from funky brass, courtesy of a trio of lively players, to futuristic filmscores. But tonight’s set spans their career – the emotive ‘They Gave Me a Lamp’, to the celebratory, chant-along ‘Go!’ via the reflective ‘Everest’ and the heroic ‘Spitfire’.

But the absolute pinnacle of tonight’s phenomenal show is a wonderful – *wonderful* – ‘Blue Heaven’, with EERA on lead, twisted terpsichorean videos playing out behind the band whose grasp of musical dynamics is nothing short of awesome.

Seriously, it’s difficult to describe a Public Service Broadcasting gig without recourse to streams of superlatives: this is theatre and spectacle at its very best; for a band who move little and say even less, they give us everything and leave us breathless. **Dale Kattack**

THE UNDERTONES O2 Academy

When The Undertones reformed in 1999 without singer Feargal Sharkey you probably didn’t envisage them lasting over two more decades and playing bigger venues than they did in the first flush of their revival, but tonight they’re playing to the largest crowd they’ve faced in Oxford. Sharkey possessed such an individual voice that replacing him was always going to be a difficult task and it’s perhaps to Paul McLoone that he doesn’t simply try and ape his predecessor, even if it does mean some of the sweeter nuances in the vocals get lost and there’s no chance of hearing something like ‘Julie Ocean’. Instead The Undertones go flat-out for ninety minutes, banging out each and almost every hit, a few choice old album cuts and a sprinkling of post-reunion pop-punk along the way.

Perhaps understandably the band’s eponymous debut album gets the biggest slice of the setlist cake, but who’s going to argue with ‘Jimmy Jimmy’ and ‘Teenage Kicks’, even after so many decades of hearing them on a regular basis. If the latter is almost the epoch of teenage boy-

meets-girl tales with lyrics so simple and powerful it’s little wonder the late, great John Peel had them etched into his gravestone, the former is evidence of the small personal stories The Undertones told so well, with just enough tragedy to balance out the sheer exuberance of the tune in hand.

If there’s a criticism to be made, it’s maybe that The Undertones are maybe too happy to play the nostalgia card: the fans might want the old hits but even the newer songs fail to stray far from the blueprint the band laid down back in the late-70s and perhaps just the odd detour into something different could have broken up the set a bit.

Those now middle-aged thrill seekers yearning for their own teenage kicks won’t care one jot, though and when The Undertones close a frenetic, flawlessly executed set with ‘My Perfect Cousin’, the crowd sing it line for line in unison to the point the band are nearly rendered redundant. A classic pop anthem that is sure to go to heaven. **John Leeson**

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FRANK TURNER & THE SLEEPING SOULS

O2 Academy

“Welcome to show two thousand, six hundred and eighty seven,” Frank Turner proudly proclaims. It’s the number of gigs he’s played since his hardcore outfit Million Dead called it a day in 2005.

Frank’s last appearance in Oxford was in 2018 in this very venue. During lockdown he played weekly acoustic livestreams with voluntary donations going to the Music Venue Trust to help grassroots venues with the myriad financial issues they faced. This UK leg of The Never Ending Tour Of Everywhere was rescheduled due to Covid and comes soon after a tour of America where the frankly bonkers idea of playing 50 states in 50 days was triumphantly accomplished.

The wonderful ‘Four Simple Words’ from 2013’s masterpiece ‘Tape Deck Heart’ kicks things off triumphantly with the lyric “Somebody told me that music with guitars was going out of fashion and I had to laugh”.

However, the last laugh was to come nine years later when the blisteringly guitar heavy ‘FTHC’ topped the album charts. ‘The Gathering’ from said album is up next – this anthemic ode, concerning the joy and life-affirming feeling of returning to gigs after lockdown, throws a unity net over all attending: a catch so heart-warmingly unifying it brings a tear to *Nightshift’s* eye.

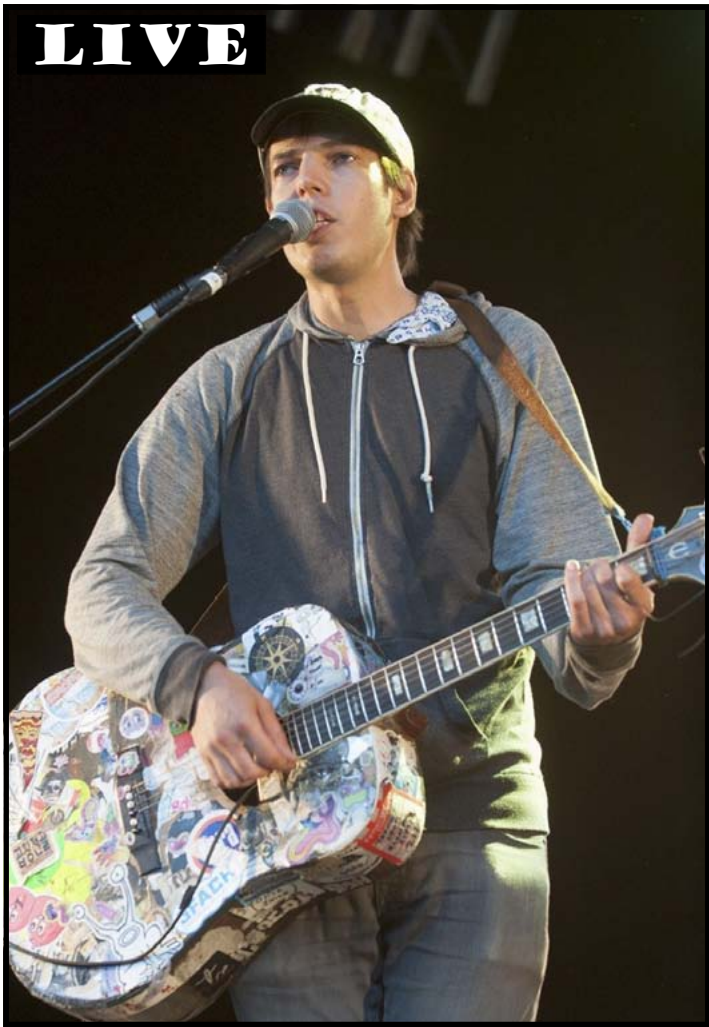
Any cuts from the fan-dividing ‘No Man’s Land’ – an album of stories told about fascinating women in history – are absent tonight. The aforementioned ‘FTHC’ is the polar opposite, being the closest material to the hardcore (it’s in the title) of Million Dead that Frank has ever got, with the breakneck live blast of ‘Non Serviam’ being a prime example.

It’s not all fast-paced bangers though, as the tear-inducing ‘A Wave Across A Bay’ can attest. Concerning Frank’s dear friend Scott Hutchison

of Frightened Rabbit, who sadly took his own life, the transference of emotion to the entire room is staggering. Just after Frank gives a speech and before he takes the mic, he can be seen physically and mentally reliving the day he heard the tragic news.

The evening has added worth with Turner’s connections to Oxford running deep: the video for penultimate song ‘Try This At Home’ shot in South Park, half of The Sleeping Souls being in Oxford band Dive Dive and ‘FTHC’ recorded at Oxfordshire’s ARC studios. To end this most joyous of nights satisfactorily, during ‘I Still Believe’ a man can be seen sitting with a crutch aloft punching the air. Music as a means of communication, a transferring of emotions... a necessity. Can something as simple as rock’n’roll save us all? You better believe it.

Gary Davidson



JEFFREY LEWIS & THE VOLTAGE / MAX BLANSJAAR / DUMPLINGS

Florence Park Community Centre

Jeffrey Lewis has a method of accompanying tunes
With a bunch of rhyming couplets and some Powerpoint cartoons,
And with these micro-TEDx talks he gives us the straight dope
On the birth of NY punk acts, and on *Star Wars: A New Hope*;
Also covered, just to show the breadth of scope that Jeff’s got
Are the second *Evil Dead* film and the great Fitzgerald, F. Scott.
These poems are instructive and they entertain just fine
Even though there are sometimes far more syllables than can comfortably
fit into a single line.
His songs are also playful, and are certainly conducive,
All new wave lo-fi antifolk with rhymes like Dr Seuss’s.
Lewis’s guitar-playing is neither big nor fancy,
But listen closely and you’ll find it’s sweet, and quite Bert Jansch-y
(Although it must be said he is not wary of the joys
Of extended abstract passages and grating feedback noise).
The lyrics touch on common themes with open honesty,
Like the pains of breaking up or taking too much LSD.
The backing band is hot, but know not to get in the way
Of the neat melodic songs nor all the witty things they say –
In this respect he’s mirrored by Max Blansjaar, his support,
A young local songwriter who has definitely sought
Some of the best musicians to be found in Oxford city
But they never overshadow any quirky little ditty.
(We also saw The Dumplings whom we’d hardly say were tight
But those who don’t enjoy it must have hearts of anthracite.)
Some of the show is clownish, and some of it even loonier,
Like a song on getting ghosted borrowed from Ray Parker Jr.
But for all we’re painting Lewis like a wacky old gag-vendor,
The lyrics often turn out to be touching, sad, or tender,
And the jokes end up quite moving, must have been the way he told ‘em .
And walking home through Florence Park we swear we saw Will Oldham.
David Murphy

LYR / MEGAN HENWOOD

Florence Park Community Centre

The wealth of music that has been made with just
a guitar and a voice is near enough immeasurable,
and yet every so often you can still stumble upon
someone new and a very pleasant surprise. Megan
Henwood has been making music for quite some
time, but we’ve somehow missed her around for
Oxford till now and are definitely reconsidering
our life choices. The territory Henwood occupies
is not groundbreaking but as fellow formerly
Oxfordian songwriter Jess Hall would say, “it’s
in the tiny details”, and it’s here Hendwood more
than succeeds. Poetic similes flow like honey
from her delicate alto voice, and the guitar is there
just enough to support but never gets in the way.
Between songs, Megan claims she’s having “a
weird day”, but if this Laura Marling-level sincere
intimacy is her on a “weird” day, I suggest getting
tickets for her next show pronto.
LYR (pronounced as the letters, not as liar) is an
unlikely musical endeavour; one-time stalwart
troubadour Richard Walters on guitar and vocals
– tick; multi-instrumentalist and frequent Walters
collaborator Patrick Pearson on keys and synths
– tick, and on lead vocals? Simon Armitage the
Poet Laureate. Yes, that Simon Armitage. As
Megan Henwood put it “[I] did him at GCSE”;
pretty sure we did too.
Whatever you’re imagining (if you haven’t heard
LYR) is probably pretty far from the mark. This

is no vanity project or mid-life crisis rock star
fantasy, this is beautiful, and entrancing. Eerie
soundscapes and lo-fi wobbles serve to bed
down Armitage’s monotone verses and Walter’s
trademark soaring vocals as response. The subject
matter is certainly not uplifting; we wouldn’t go
as far as saying it’s dour, but it’s certainly sombre.
The tension is broken every so often by deadpan
Yorkshire humour between the songs, bringing
the room back to reality for just a moment before
once again we are swirling in metaphor, and
tumbling through catharsis.
Mat Chapman Jones

FOLKATRON SESSIONS

The North Wall

They might as well be called the Folkatron
Orchestra. Or Yard Sale. All eight members of
the band are multi-instrumentalists; the stage of
the North Wall is littered with at least half of a
string section, a welcoming tangle of analogue
and modular synths, and a minor tectonic plate of
guitar pedals. Somehow an accordion manages to
appear during the second half.
But sonic eclecticism does not mean disarray.
Folkatron Sessions’ approach to folk is
experimental, yes – they bill themselves as
such on their Bandcamp, citing reviews of their
‘genre-bending’ and ‘unique soundscape’ – but
they are as much marked by their discipline as an
omnivorous attitude to the traditions they pick up.
So the lilt of an Ulster traditional (‘The Flower of

Magherally’) is played against by two insistent
ostinati at acoustic odds, one plucked on an
amplified cello and the other a prickling electronic
arpeggio; later, a loop of a fiddle interpolation of
an Estonian bagpipe tune grapples with layers
on layers of cool modular synth (‘Juhan’s Night
Train’). As if interailing, we then stop by Sweden
for a *slängpolska* (“feel free to do it...sitting
down”) and wind up somehow in Appalachia. But
the result is enrapturing.
This is more than unique. The lyricism of
vocalist Hannah Jacobs (also of Oxford’s
Pecq) stacks up to her named influences, Anne
Briggs and Jean Ritchie; more importantly, it
constellates this incredible diversity of sound
without ever dominating it, pointing the audience
through and back to the narratives that the songs
unfold. Folkatron Sessions are clearly more
devoted to their material than themselves; their
inter-song anecdotes explaining the provenance
and composition processes of their work are a
joy. Like all good folk music, half the pleasure is
in the history.
After the first half, which sees them play
through their most recent EP, 2021’s ‘Home No
More’, the only reference point I can think of
during the interval is the tenderness of Floating
Points and Pharoah Sanders’ ambient orchestral
jazz on ‘Promises’; I would, and have, just as
easily listened to both records. Let’s not forget
that ‘Promises’ has the LSO on it. Folkheads
in town, go to their next show; you will hear
something familiar, and something entirely new.
I enter a well-wisher and leave a fan. Bridget St
John will surely be smiling down on all of us.
Shaw Worth

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WHAT’S MY LINE?

A monthly look at jobs in local music.
This month it’s STEVEN ENDERSBY from WEGOTTICKETS and he’s a TICKETING MARKETING MANAGER.

How long have you worked in this job? “I’ve been the Marketing Manager for five or six years, but I’ve been at WeGotTickets for almost 15 years in various roles. I think I’m a lifer now.”

What is one thing you have to do as part of your job that the average person might not know? “I’ve done my fair share of scanning barcodes in the rain.”

What’s been the single biggest highlight of your career so far? “We ran a campaign called INDIE50 highlighting 50 amazing individuals who worked in the background of their local or independent music scenes: promoters, venue owners, sound techs, fanzine writers etc. It got loads of national and regional press all around the UK and was even on the front if the iPaper. I loved shining a light on those people.”

And the lowlight? “Being ripped off by a guy who used to run pop-up cinema events and now owns a trendy cinema elsewhere in the UK. He must have thought he was sticking it to the man and taking down Ticketmaster or something, but really, he just stole from another small, independent business.”

How much and how did Covid affect your job? “It wasn’t much fun. We had a month where everyone from every department in the company was just helping our Support team cancel thousands of events and issue refunds. We helped promoters and venues raise money by collecting donations on the site, and then spent 18 months mostly in hibernation. I should shout out our CEO



Laura here, because she never failed to make the right decision at the right time during 2020 and 2021. It’s largely because of the work she did, and the decisions she took, that WeGotTickets survived that period. We’re all incredibly grateful to her.”

Who’s your favourite ever Oxford musical artist? “The Edmund Fitzgerald. I knew Yannis before we moved to Oxford and when him, Jack and Lina started The Edmund Fitzgerald they used to practise in our garage, so I’d gatecrash rehearsals sometimes. I’ve never seen a better live band.”

What’s the single most important piece of advice you’d give to someone wanting to do your job? “Bookmark thesaurus.com. Without it you’re going to struggle to find new ways to say a band, promoter, venue, or ticket company is nonpareil.”

Who’s the most awkward person you’ve ever

had to deal with in your job? “No comment.”

When was the last time you heard genius? “Musically, in the WeGotTickets office we’ve been listening to a lot of cosmic Americana lately, and ‘If I Could Only Remember My Name’ by David Crosby blew me away. Hot tip there, all the way from 1971.”

Have you ever compromised your integrity in the course of your work? “I once wrote 100 words about how great Towers of London were to encourage people to buy tickets for their tour.”

Would you swap your job for any other and if so, what? “I’d like to be an essayist and/or football writer, spending my days in a cute little writing shed with a good view.”

Are you rich? “As long as I can pay the bills, money isn’t important to me.”

Do you consider your job glamorous? “I once met Noddy Holder and Stormzy at the same time. Does it get more glamorous than that? But no, most of the time I sit in an office in Botley opposite a plumber’s office and a hairdresser’s training school trying to think of new ways and new places to say “buy tickets now!” or “ticket your event with us!”.

What’s your favourite thing about Oxford’s music scene? “The support. It’s why I moved here. At university my best friends were the guys from Youthmovies, and we decided that when uni ended, we’d all move somewhere together. We chose Oxford because of the great people we’d already met here like Chloe and P-C, then of Truck; Ady at Vacuum Pop; Stu and Simon of OxfordBands / Audioscope; Terri Bonham; Alan Day; *Nightshift*, and a few others who all supported each other. I see it now too in Aiden and Rich at Divine Schism; Zahra and the Young Women’s Music Project; the BSM guys; venues like The Bully, The Jericho; Port Mahon; The Library and more recently Florence Park Community Centre, and a new wave of local bands who all lift each other up. Believe me, that’s not always the case in other cities.”

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SAT 12TH
PEARL DIVERS

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Dr SHOTOVER: Meets his Waterloo

Ah there you are, Young Jackfruit. Welcome to the East Indies Club bar. Finally made it through the Oxford traffic, eh? I *told* you not to use the ring road. Better make mine an extra-large one, as we’ve waited so long for the pleasure of your company. Now, where were we? Oh yes – the wonders of privatisation. As we have seen recently vis-à-vis the traffic situation in our fair city, nothing succeeds like excess. Turn up the prices to 11, award yourself a nice Xmas bonus, leave the pipes to rust, and **** the paying public. Of whom do I rant? 80s revivalist band of the moment, obviously – the Thames Waterboys. This is the Sea? It certainly is around Heyford Hill. You wondered what Glib Truss meant when she invoked ‘Trickle Down Economics’? Look no further. Amazing what one burst water main can do to the Oxford traffic. From Ring Road to Ring of Bright Water. This is why I have cracked open the

Shotover Patent Acme Water Bicycle to get around. Cheers! (Trickle) Down the hatch! **Next month: One Ring Road to rule them all**



Dr S keeps the economy afloat

INTRODUCING....

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

SILENT WEAPON

Who are they?

Didcot based electronic/industrial/noise project Silent Weapon is Umair Chaudhry, also known for being in Xmas Lights, Abandon, Gift of Blindness etc. Umair made music under the name Full on Empty throughout his 20s, and this latest project draws on the same influences but with a more powerful and experienced production. Silent Weapon was officially born in 2022, inspired by the plethora of solo electronic artists in Oxford at the moment, and due to Umair’s desire to “unleash harsh sonic destruction and sub bass havoc onto live audiences once more.” An EP titled ‘Eggshells’, featuring remixes from Octavia Freud and Black Tish, was released last month, with an album, ‘Purge’, out on the 11th November.

What do they sound like?

Umair is not nicknamed Oxford’s Baron of Bleak for nothing. By us, but it still stands; his music tends towards the punishing end of bulldozing and in the purely electronic Silent Weapon, he captures the spirit of future war, cyborg factories on fire and the imminent end of everything you hold dear. It’s a grim sludge of technological assault and battery and it’s great.

What inspires them?

“I engineer a lot of gigs in Oxford, and I’ve really been inspired by watching some of the great solo electronic acts that have been emerging lately. Being in bands can be tough and a lot of aggro sometimes, so it’s been quite liberating to know I can perform alone with a laptop and still have people be into it. I’m inspired by anything that breaks the rules and re-invents what music should sound like. Anyone who is able to transmit energy, intensity, total self conviction and catharsis.”

Their career highlight so far is:

“My first gig at the Jericho Tavern, insofar that I was nervous due to not having played for so long. But the outburst of energy and emotion during the set was almost transcendental, and has set me on a path to play as many gigs as possible. That and Osprey yelling ‘kill us Umair!’ before a gig.”

And the lowlight:

“Being turned down by lots of labels and thus exposure to new audiences.



In the meantime, my own label Blindsight Records will be home to Silent Weapon until it finds a new one.”

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

“I do have many but my favourite in the same genre is Black Tish. Bob is a creative genius as far as I’m concerned, I’ve not heard anything quite like it and his guitar sounds are ungodly.”

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

“Killing Joke: ‘Extremities, Dirt & Various Repressed Emotions’. It’s raw, painful, self-examining, spiritual and furious. Everything you need really.”

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

“Nothing definite in the diary at the moment, but expect hypnotic, trance-like total sonic annihilation. And then some.”

Their favourite and least favourite thing about Oxford music?

“I love that audiences open minded and accepting, at least in my experience. I despair at the loss of grass roots venues and lack of places for new bands/artists to really blossom. We desperately need new venues!”

You might love them if you love:

Techno Animal; Scorn; Throbbing Gristle; Skinny Puppy; Whitehouse; Merzbow; Author & Punisher.

Hear them here:

blindsightrecords.bandcamp.com

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

Plenty going on the local scene in November 2002, with the main news being that **Goldrush** had left Virgin Records “by mutual agreement,” singer Robin Bennett explaining to *Nightshift* that “since the people who signed us to Virgin got sacked last year, things haven’t worked out, so we asked to be released from our contract six months early as we thought we could do a better job ourselves.” In more positive news for the Bennett family sister Katy, playing under the name **KTB**, was shortlisted for the BBC Young Folk Musicians of the Year on the back of her acclaimed debut album, ‘All Quiet In Dreamland’. Elsewhere Oxford was named as the UK’s sixth best musical city in a BBC survey, with Liverpool topping the poll. Local garage-metallers **Winnebago Deal**, meanwhile, pulled off a coup when they were invited to support **Fugazi** at the Kentish Town Forum this month.

The main interview in this month’s *Nightshift* was with **The Young Knives**, their first interview anywhere, which found them declaring, “We’re inspired by Frank Black because he’s fat and plays rock, and so are we; Pavement because they’re clever and funny and we try to be, and Steely Dan, because they made rock music into amusing shapes like we try to do.” *Nightshift* declared that meeting the band was “like entering another world, where visitors have to be forever on guard for the understated and absurd humour that flies around.”

10 YEARS AGO

It’s always sad to report the death of a local musician and in November 2012 we paid tribute to **Pete Galpin**, who had died, aged 62, after battling mesothelioma. Nicknamed ‘Mr Chillout’ for his laidback blues and jazz style, the guitarist and singer had been a regular performer on the local scene since he was 14.

In happier news **Chad Valley** released his ‘Young Hunger’ album – “a collection of incredibly well constructed songs heavily and unashamedly indebted to mainstream 80s pop music,” according to *Nightshift*’s review. Joining him on the release front were **Wild Swim** with their ‘Echo’ single, the core of the band re-emerging as current electro-pop darlings **Low Island**.

Highlights of the gigging month were soon-to-be Mercury winners **Alt. J** at the **O2 Academy**, as were **Katzenjammer**; **Mystery Jets**; **Imagine Dragons**; **Gojira**; **Akala**, and a sold-out show by **Frank Turner**. **Jack Savoretti** was on his way up, with a show at **The Jericho Tavern**, as were experimental folk stars **Lau**, and **Michele Stodart** from The Magic Numbers, going solo.

Over in the demo pages, **Camena** topped the pile for their unseasonably summery harmony pop, while down in the Dumper **Torn Like Colours** were “the sort of band the phrase generic battle of the bands regional heat runner-up was invented for,” and “torn like a new arsehole, more like.” They haven’t been back since. Maybe we upset them.

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

5 YEARS AGO

More sad news in November 2017 when we learned that local photographer, sage and all-round champion of local music **Pier Corona** had passed away from cancer, aged 61. As well as a regular contributor to *Nightshift*, Pier was a fixture down the front of so many gigs – the more leftfield and esoteric the better. The dad of local musicians Taz and Loz Corona, he was fondly remembered by a huge number of Oxford musos and gig goers.

In other local music news it was reported that **The Cellar** was safe for the time being as planning permission by the building’s owners for retail storage space was turned down; it was to be temporary reprieve as history will tell.

Meanwhile **Little Red** were *Nightshift*’s cover stars, talking about their dark, gothic folk music: “I am terrified of being lost in the woods and get genuinely anxious when my children make me play hide and seek,” said singer Hayley Bell, adding “music that comes from the dark parts of our lives has more depth and resonates more.”

Coming town town this month were **Ghostpoet**; **Akon** with **Konvict Kartel**; **Cradle of Filth**; **Billy Bragg**; **Nelly**; **Newton Faulkner** and **Scouting For Girls** (who always seem to be coming to town), all at the **O2 Academy**, while **The Bullingdon** hosted **Wire**; **Marika Hackman**; **The Stray Birds**, and **Ben Haenow**; **Bananarama**, **Alison Moyet**, and **John Mayall** were at **The New Theatre**; **Goat Girl** were at **Modern Art**, while **Girl Ray** and **Brix Smith** were at **The Cellar**.

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TRACKS

Yin & Yang Audio

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

TOP TRACK CHOLLY

Having almost made it to the top of the pile last time round here and then charmed us with a short but sweet set at The Library opening for Gemma Cullingford during which she managed to sample pretty much every member of her immediate family, Cholly does the business again with two new songs, both of which provide some kind of residual summery balm to the encroaching winter. ‘Are You Real’ carries a bit of autumnal sadness about it but is, at heart, airy, bubbly electro-pop that offers to lift you, light as air, to a higher plane, all the better to appreciate it very slightly warped and wobbly nature, like it’s been recorded on a faulty cassette player that’s stretched the tape slightly but only enough to add a hint of strangeness to the otherwise simple melody. While we don’t notice any obvious dad or kid brother samples, there is a neat old-school Nintendo squiggle at the end. ‘The Swimming Pool’ is similarly wafty and euphoric, breathless electro-pop that is only about two-thirds awake and probably needs another large Mojito before it’ll properly be ready to dance the day away, but like a sleepy-eyed Grimes it oozes wooze and *Nightshift* is all too ready and willing to throw another couple of logs on the fire and daydream of meadows and sunshine.

BERRY & BALLOON TWISTER

And talking of summer, here comes Little Miss Sunshine herself, Berry Brown, once of Eynsham popstrels The Big Sun and a regular bringer of blue skies and general pop cheer to these pages over the last few years. ‘Dream Tangerine’ here is full of jangly, shimmering pop exuberance and relentless, wide-eyed meadow flower gaiety, like Edie Brickell and The Sundays decided to go on a picnic in a woody glade and danced weightlessly all the way there. “I’m a skydiving pinball machine” sings Berry, sounding like she’s almost too excited to be able to catch her breath properly. It doesn’t do anything particularly clever, but it doesn’t really need to, being such unfettered, simple angelic jollity in

tune form and by the time the horns parp in towards the end we’re marching hand-in-hand with a passing bunny rabbit and imagining the scene from Snow White where all the woodland animals clean the cottage. In case you hadn’t noticed, there hasn’t been a vast amount of stuff to be cheery about in the news lately; even the relentlessly catastrophic ongoing Tory shitshow has failed to cheer us too much given its fallout on millions of people across the UK, but between them Cholly and Berry have infused us with uncharacteristic joie de vivre. Be careful dear reader, *Nightshift* in a good mood is a terrifying thing to behold.

SO LONG, SPACE GIRL

So how about a slice, not of delicious pie, but of vaguely emo-ish rocking to rein in all that happiness? ‘Peaches & Cream’ here kicks in with some nicely militant post-grunge guitar and sounds decidedly cross about stuff, albeit in less of a petrol bomb-chucking kind of way and more of a Paddington hard-stare kind of fashion, but Paddington is alright with us and who in their right mind would take on a bear in a scrap anyway, especially one with a full-grown Aunt Lucy to back them up? Anyway, we digress; this is decent stuff; not quite a full-on noise-rock banger but meaty, beaty, big and bouncy enough, although a few of the lyrics are a tad suspect, notably “You complete me / Like a river to the sea”, which doesn’t really make sense, while “I know you feel the same but I’m too shy to tell you” is probably a bit too... well, emo, for our tastes and it’s to the song’s credit it doesn’t sound nearly as sorry for itself as that opening gambit might have suggested.

LUIS MALDONALLE

Maybe So Long, Space Girl could join forces with Luis here, who knows how to shred a guitar and definitely has no truck with shyness, coyness or really anything less than full-on manly posturing. There he is, all hairy and beardy, stood in the centre of a derelict warehouse cutting granite slabs of epic battle metal interspersed with pictures of Vikings slaughtering hapless peasants and a re-enactment of a solemn Norse pagan ritual of some kind (it seems to involve a big paint brush and either blood or wood, but beyond that we’re lost). Anyway, back to the music and onward riffage! Onward! It’s just Luis and his guitar and dreams of Viking conquests from now til tea time (his album is called ‘Viking Heart’, apparently). And it’s all highly exhilarating even if there’s no tune or seemingly any point to it all other than to provide an excuse for Luis to play out his Ragnarok fantasies in an abandoned

building, even though he’d probably run a bloody mile if a real Viking charged at him, dirty great chopper swinging about.

MAARIYAH KHAN

No Viking fantasies here, but possibly a fantasy about being Amy Winehouse from Maariyah, one she re-enacts with some degree of success, although we spend most of her song thinking more of a cruise ship Lily Allen than the Queen of Soul-Jazz, and while her one song is actually pretty laid-back, as befits its jazz lounge vibes, it sounds more in pain than emotionally scared. Nice, but we can’t remember anything about it pretty much the moment it finishes

ARROWS OF THE SUN

Just like last time round Arrows of the Sun present us with an untidy selection of links to individual tracks rather than one simple link, but then, that’s pretty typical of them and sums up the slightly unkempt nature of their music, and anyway, having somehow managed to find our way to their Soundcloud page we find they’ve recorded about a million songs, half songs and things that might only be songs in particularly fevered cheese dreams. But hey, we like a bit of ramshackle amateurism here at *Nightshift* – far better than dead-eyed professionalism any day, right kids? – so we’re not going to damn them for it. Less a band, more a collective of friends and neighbours in Forest Hill centred on singer John Bond, Arrows of the Sun do good, bad and ugly in various measures. The best of their songs include ‘Still Seeing Ghosts’, a wistful but perhaps slightly overlong song that sounds like it fell out of the boot of a car marked 60s Folk Rock and got bruised in the process, and particularly the more purposeful ‘Arrows of the Sun’ itself, which carries a bit of emotional heft about it, with its sense of regret and sombre trumpet. On the flipside, ‘My Righteous God’, which by its title alone should be a raging black metal anthem, is more of a tipsy pub rock meander, which seems to fizzle out mid-song, all awkward and ungainly, before rousing itself with a second wind and continues to trip and tumble towards the bar like a 10-pint drunkard desperately trying to appear sober. A mess overall but a not unlikeable mess. Next time though, send us a single link to what you want us to hear. We’ve done enough wild goose chasing after boozy mates for a lifetime.

NIPPY HAVOC

There’s a reasonable chance Nippy Havoc ate all the cheese before constructing these pieces of music in their sleep – and we mean that in a good way, since it’s pleasingly abstract, atmospheric and strange, like lysergic minimalist techno made from discarded synth parts and old milk bottles. Luke Vibert would probably

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

be a reasonable reference point but something about the primitivist nature of ‘Shellac Man’ makes us think of The Human League’s earliest sound explorations, or even Throbbing Gristle’s more ambient soundscaping. Good music for low-budget TV sci-fi series written by weird acid casualties. Again intended as a compliment.

PARALLELS

Parallels start off playing hopscotch on the pavement in their oddly retro-looking video, which isn’t something we can imagine Lemmy or Joan Jett doing with their spare time, and so seems like a stick we can use to beat the poor sods with. Further in they pose in tracksuits beside their car like Kevin & Perry, run through fields of poppies, and look moody beneath electricity pylons, the last of which at least suggests something approaching rock and roll behaviour. All of which can’t detract from the fact that their song, the aptly titled ‘Ordinary’, simply never seems to get going, a woozy but oddly laborious jangly kind of shuffling soft-centred rock with the very merest hint the band might be trying to make a dance track. Guitars strum, the singer mumbles a bit, anything resembling a hook or a chorus fails to make itself known and the whole thing drifts to an inconsequential end which ties in with one of the band riding a kid’s scooter along a country lane – something else the great beasts of rock music were never renowned for. The song ends and the scooter gets chucked in a ditch. Whoah! Keith Moon eat yer heart out.

TOILET TRACK MICHAEL VALENTINE

“Hello, my name is Michael Valentine and I’m fucking desperate” begins Michael’s email. It doesn’t of course; instead it begs us to watch his video “at least once” to get his Youtube views up. Cheap, Michael, cheap. But hey, we’re nothing if not dutiful here at *Nightshift* so we stick it on and it turns out to be a video made up of clips of pretty much every great dance scene in Hollywood history – from *Singing In the Rain* through *Grease* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* to *Cabaret* – all the better to provide a backdrop to his song titled ‘Rockin’ Steady’. And of course he’s made a song to do this panoply of terpsichorean glory justice, right? Like fuck he has. Dear God, this is a trawl. It’s about as energetic or balletic as a slug slowly making its way across a tiled kitchen floor, and seems to leave a similarly slimy residue as it goes. It actually reminds us a fair bit of The Beloved’s tortuous early-90s hit ‘Hello’ but without its modicum of funkiness. Michael sings about “getting sweaty” (pronounced “swearedy”) but it just makes us think of middle-aged men in leather trousers watching reformed Britpop bands rather than hot young things getting their groove on. As sexy as piles.

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