

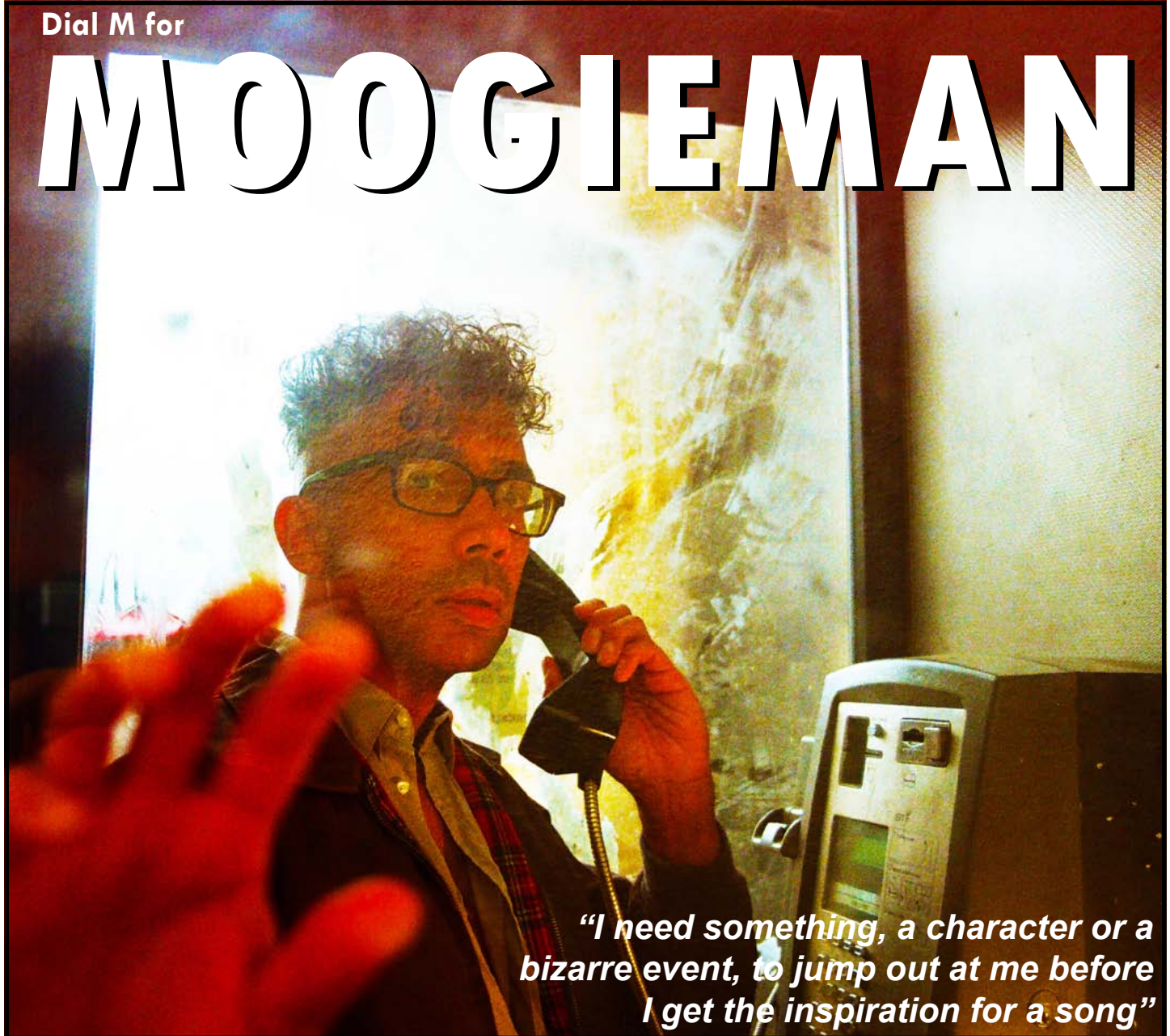
NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month
Issue 312
October
2022

Dial M for

MOOGIEMAN



*"I need something, a character or a
bizarre event, to jump out at me before
I get the inspiration for a song"*

Going solo, going synth and
going down rabbit holes, with
Oxford's King of Esoteric Pop

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At work with **GARAGE ROCK BADGES**

KLUB KAKOFANNEY turns 30

DIVINE SCHISM turns 10

plus

All your Oxford music news, reviews, previews and gigs for
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THE BULLINGDON

OCTOBER 2022

GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

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

Sunday 2nd October
Divine Schism 10
Doors: 2PM

Tuesday 4th October
Refresh FM.
Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 5th October
Ben Poole
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 6th October
Non Stop Styles
Doors: 11PM

Friday 7th October
Cut Capers
Doors: 7PM

Friday 7th October
Drum and Bass
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 8th October
Reggaeton
Doors: 11PM

Sunday 9th October
Elf Lyons
Doors: 7PM

Monday 10th October
The Skinner Brothers
The Mez
Garden Party
Doors: 7PM

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

Wednesday 12th October
Oxford Science and Ideas Festival
The Breakup Monologues
Doors: 7PM

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

Thursday 13th October
Semi Detached
James Haskell
Doors: 11PM

Friday 14th October
Drink and Jive
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 15th October
Simple
Sherelle and Yung Singh
Doors: 11PM

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

Wednesday 19th October
Oxford Science and Ideas Festival
Toxicology Mixology
& **Stories of Maths**
Doors: 7PM

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

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

Friday 21st October
Troy Hawke:
Sigmund Troyd!
Doors: 7PM

Friday 21st October
Raving Trippy
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 22nd October
Musical Medicine
Ruby Savage
Doors: 11PM

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

Wednesday 26th October
Space Elevator
Doors: 7PM

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

Thursday 27th October
Haute Mess
Doors: 11PM

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

Friday 28th October
Cut the Trap
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 29th October
Rowdia 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
Bangerz and Lash
Doors: 11PM

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

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

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
Tracksuit and Trance
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 12th November
Simple
Helena Hauff
Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 16th November
Corky Laing
Doors: 7PM

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

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
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 24th November
Semi Detached
TBA
Doors: 11PM

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

Friday 25th November
Fred Stripe
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 26th November
Drum and Bass
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
Jassy Mitsu
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
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
Taylor Swiftmas
Doors: 11PM

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

Tuesday 10th January
Big Joanie
Doors: 7PM

Monday 30th January
Kris Barras Band
Dea Matrana
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 9th February
Tom Ward: Anthem
Doors: 7PM

Friday 10th February
Broken Empire
Doors: 7PM

NEWS

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HEAVENLY will reunite to play their first gig in 28 years next year. The Oxford indie-pop pioneers will play the one-off show at Bush Hall in London on the 20th May 2023 as the band re-release their four albums on vinyl, beginning with 'Heavenly vs Satan' on Skep Wax in November this year. 'Le Jardin de Heavenly' will follow in early summer 2023; 'The Decline and Fall of Heavenly' and 'Operation Heavenly' will arrive in 2024. Special edition T-shirts will go on sale alongside each album.

Heavenly formed in the wake of Talulah Gosh's demise in 1988, featuring singer Amelia Fletcher, guitarist Pete Momtchiloff, bassist Rob Pursey and drummer Mathew Fletcher. One of the pivotal bands in Oxford's music history, they became a major influence on subsequent generations of indie bands.

Talking to *Nightshift* about the show and the re-releases, Amelia, who now plays in Catenary Wires alongside Rob, said: "when Heavenly played their first ever show at the Jericho Tavern, I never imagined that anyone would be the least bit interested in us 30 years later. But it turns out they are, and that the vinyl versions of the albums are now hard to find. So we thought we would re-release them and play a gig to celebrate too. It's only been 27 years since I played a guitar on stage. What could possibly go wrong?"

A NEW FREE LEGAL CONSULTATION SERVICE FOR MUSICIANS takes place each month in **Truck Store**. Barrister **Mark Wilden** is offering musicians the chance to ask legal questions about copyright, contracts and other points of music law. He will be at Truck Store on Saturday 22nd October and again on Saturday 19th November for the drop-in sessions between 11am and 2pm. Talking about the service he wants to offer, Mark said: "For most musicians talking to a lawyer is a low priority and the last way you'd want to spend your time. However, if you're in a band that's been paid for a gig, had a record released or been played on the radio, every member of the band has rights that can be protected and exploited. Even if you don't know what they are, someone else will – and could benefit from you being kept in the dark."

"If you want to understand your rights, or if you have questions about how the law and music work together, then you can talk to a musician and qualified barrister who can answer your questions at a free musicians' rights clinic. No appointment needed; just turn up."

Mark Wilden is a barrister at 3PB Barristers. He played in many bands on the Oxford scene from 1997 until the early 2010s, including The Evenings; he was called to the bar in 2018 and specialises in intellectual property litigation.

SHAKER HEIGHTS re-release their album 'Magna Doors' in a deluxe edition this month to mark the 15th anniversary of its release. The remastered album features ten previously unreleased songs from the album recording sessions. Shaker Heights last played live in 2018 but have more recently been



KLUB KAKOFANNEY belatedly celebrates its 30th anniversary this month with a weekend of live music. The long-running monthly music club was due to mark its 30th birthday last year but was unable to due to being without a venue after the closure of The Wheatsheaf during the Covid lockdown. Instead they will mark the milestone over the weekend of the **7th-9th October** at their new home, **The Gladiator Club** on Iffley Road.

Friday night sees Pandapocalypse (*pictured*), Alcon Blue and Darkgnoss performing, while Saturday features Mary's Garden, Emma Hunter and Mila Todd. On the Sunday Klub Kakofanney relocate to The Tree in Iffley for a free afternoon of music, featuring Puppet Mechanic, Tony Batey & Sal Moore and The Mark Bosley Band, starting at 4pm.

Talking about the anniversary, Klub Kakofanney hosts Phil Freizinger and Sue Smith said: "The Klub Kakofanney crew has been promoting independent local music since 1991. It's a not for profit collective of local music lovers. We moved to the Wheatsheaf in 1999, from the legendary Joe Ryan's Elm Tree. At the 'Sheaf we presented over 500 bands, duos, and solo artists playing their own original sounds on the first Friday of the month. Then came the painful Covid epidemic, and we were unceremoniously kicked out of the Wheatsheaf. These were two very heavy blows that almost KO'd us and other Oxford promoters. However, the spirit of music is indomitable and we have re-emerged at the amazing Gladiators Club, where we will be celebrating our belated 30th anniversary, with acts old and new. The bands and fans remain our support and inspiration. It's a privilege to be part of this rich tapestry of Oxford grassroots music, where famous acts like Little Fish and Stornoway have played alongside young bands doing their first ever gig."

recording new material with live shows due for 2023. The album is available now at **theshakerheights.bandcamp.com** as well as on Spotify and Apple Music.

CHARLIE DON'T SURF will play their first gig in 25 years in November. The Banbury rock band, who featured on the cover of *Nightshift* precursor *Curfew Magazine* in 1993 before splitting in 1997, will headline The Jericho Tavern on Saturday 12th November when they'll be joined by fellow 90s reformees Underbelly, plus

young Witney rockers Kokroachez.

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

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

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



BOB DYLAN comes to Oxford in November. The music legend plays **The New Theatre** on **Friday 4th November** as part of his worldwide 'Rough & Rowdy Ways' tour; it is Dylan's first UK tour for five years. The show, which unsurprisingly sold out in a matter of minutes, is one of three shows tagged on to the end of the UK leg of his tour to promote his 39th studio album, which reached Number 1 in the UK charts, and is his first album of original songs in a decade.

The show will be a phone-free event with all fans expected to have their phones locked into a Yondr bag for the duration of the gig.



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A quiet word with

MOOGIEMAN



“HUMANS DO LIKE A challenge, don’t we,” says Shan Sriharan, aka *Moogiemán*, talking about the song ‘Blue Hole’ on his new album. “Those things can definitely be driven by a self-destructive urge but I think it’s often more about being prepared to risk serious harm in order to chase another goal, whether that’s trying to escape great psychic pain or achieve an elusive physical feat. In the case of the Blue Hole near Dahab it’s perhaps something a little different, or there is an additional factor – the siren call of extraordinary natural beauty that makes us forget ourselves and our instinct for self-preservation.”

THE SONG IN QUESTION IS about a natural ocean phenomena off the Sinai peninsula that has claimed the lives of hundreds of scuba divers and yet continues to attract people for all its risks. “Is the natural archway 55 metres below the surface, leading into the open sea, an irresistible lure to those who may already be suffering from nitrogen narcosis, pulling them beyond the range of their stowed oxygen? Or is it the imperceptibly resisting current?

THE SUBJECT MATTER OF ‘Blue Hole’ is entirely in keeping with *Moogiemán*’s ongoing explorations in song of historical, scientific and general human esoteria, one that has, over the years, seen him singing about everything from Wolf Rayet stars, through arcane camera technology to obscure historical figures like Otto Runge. ‘Blue Hole’ is one of the songs on *Moogiemán*’s new semi-solo album

‘Dial M For *Moogiemán*’, written and recorded during and immediately after Covid lockdown and released this month on All Will Be Well, the communal record label Shan helps run. “I was very fortunate in not having any particular difficulties beyond the general isolation and uncertainty that affected most people,” he says of the lockdown period. “In a strange way, although horizons narrowed, they also expanded. Another world was glimpsed and a different type of existence could be imagined in a way that’s hard to properly recall now. So with that, and having more undisturbed time at home to work on music, it was a creative period.”

MOOGIEMAN HAS ALWAYS been a restlessly creative chap, from his earliest solo demos over a decade ago, to his more recent releases with his band The Masochists, with whom he last appeared on the cover of *Nightshift* back in 2018. Claire Heaviside and Claire LeMaster from The Masochists make appearances on ‘Dial M For *Moogiemán*’, but for the most part it is a solo record, Shan aided by his new modular synthesisers, which dominate the overall sound of the new record. Did going back to writing and recording by himself feel at all like going back to his early musical roots for him? “Not really, as I’ve generally written songs with some kind of solo foundation and then added other parts in. With a more electronic approach that foundation could be a lot more complex but it was more a case of adding extra layers than a complete

change of approach. “The new synths have created more live possibilities, mainly. A lot of the modules are for function generating, sequencing, clock dividing, that sort of thing, so they affect how the signal varies over time. Over short time periods that allows some nice timbre variations, but over longer periods it allows the equivalent of knob twiddling that would require a spare hand or two. So that allows me to play guitar or twiddle other knobs at the same time. They also invite you to play around and create more random elements when writing.”

WHILE ‘DIAL M...’ HAS ITS roots in lockdown, Shan has been keen to stress it’s not “a lockdown album,” although elements of that time have obviously leaked into it and some of the songs and stories told will echo with those who lived through isolation. “Hopefully I’ve avoided the obvious pitfalls, like blaring out in a cracked voice about loneliness and the end of the world, and the songs are all definitely about something else. It’s just occurred to me that four out of the eight songs are about fictional or historical or religious characters – or a combination – forging a singular path and then you have ‘My Connection’, which is a reflection on personal experience, and ‘Lone Wolf’, which has it all in the name. So I certainly didn’t manage to write the joyous party album I was intending. I’ll let the listener decide if it reminds them of lockdown, or merely other dark events that have occurred since, or something more nuanced.”

Unusual and untold – or at least

lesser told – human stories have always formed a big part of *Moogiemán*’s songwriting; did lockdown allow him to explore new areas of history or science? “All that time not spent going to gigs was more time I could spend going down various new rabbit holes. I’ve always been fascinated by Cold War history – the Operation Gladio network; nuclear retaliation protocols; the strange economics of the titanium trade – it’s all so crazy, yet grimly logical and of course has become very pertinent recently. However, I still need something, often a character or a bizarre event, to jump out at me before I get the inspiration for a song.” *Nightshift* made a comparison between *Moogiemán* and last month’s cover star Ally Craig on that score; is he an artist Shan particularly enjoys or admires and could he envisage working with him at any point? “I did actually appear in Ally’s video for ‘Nicholas Ray’, although I’ve never met him. I have seen him perform a few times and his recent album ‘Star Stuff’ is definitely right up my street with electronic arrangements, sardonic, partially spoken vocals, a strong theme running through it, and a genuine love of the subject matter. They’re all things I aim for so I’m sure it would be interesting to collaborate, although maybe we’re too similar.”

ONTO THE NEW ALBUM itself; it is a characteristically eclectic and somewhat eccentric set of songs with a neat, home-baked feel about it, Shan’s half-sung, half-spoken narratives in his rich, almost

transatlantic burr over chattering, bubbling electronics and beats, occasional guitar or the female vocals of the two Claires intruding on its strange retro-futurist sound bubble. It is also often a very pop album by *Moogiemán*’s standards. The song ‘My Connection’, for example, reminds *Nightshift* a bit of ‘I’m Too Sexy’ by Right Said Fred. That band’s dodgy politics aside, they strike us as exactly the kind of band who might be a semi-secret influence on *Moogiemán*.

“I really hadn’t considered that but you’re entirely correct. I must have been repressing that. They were definitely something I really enjoyed at the time and love dancing exaggeratedly to whenever I get the chance. I’ll need to drastically intensify my weight training programme before the gig now.” And there’s a bit of a Vangelis feel to ‘Heavenly Beings’ and ‘Light of the World’; is that a conscious influence?

“I was going for a *Blade Runner* vibe, so yes, but both were written and mainly recorded before his death, so it wasn’t a deliberate tribute, though I’m glad to put out something that serves as a bit of a reminder.” The starkest track on the new record is ‘Anti’, which feels like a classic late-70s electro-pop song, in the vein of Cabaret Voltaire or early Human League; is that what you were aiming for? “Pretty much, If you’re playing around with analogue synths, especially experimenting with drum sounds, you almost fall into that kind of thing.”

The last track, the ominously hypnotic ‘Lone Wolf’, meanwhile, is based on a choose-your-own-adventure book, where readers get to decide where the plot should go; is Shan a fan of such things? Could he envisage a similar set-up for a song or album?

“I was into role playing games a bit as a teenager but now it’s more of a sociological interest – where did the idea of those kinds of games or books come from, what was happening in society to make them attractive and how do people actually interact when they play them? A musical version of that sounds interesting, but quite a challenge. Ideally it would be on vinyl with multiple parallel tracks on multiple sides.”

That particular song is inspired by a protest in Singapore – where Shan was born – a couple of years back; it’s another example of him finding less reported events to write about. With the recent crackdown on peaceful protests around royal events in the UK, it feels particularly pertinent. “In November 2020 Singaporean, Jolovan Wham, was imprisoned

for standing on the street holding a piece of cardboard with a smiley face drawn on it. It inspired others to take pictures of themselves with smiley faces too. Protest without a permit is illegal in Singapore but there is obviously some background to the imprisonment. Wham has been in trouble for protesting about other issues before, such as action on climate change and the general right to protest. In a way the smiley face was a test to see if the authorities would regard it as a protest. It’s all quite surreal but it’s a scenario that doesn’t seem too far off here.”

ARGUABLY THE HIGHLIGHT of ‘Dial M For *Moogiemán*’ is the opening track, ‘Psychotronic World’,

“I’ll let the listener decide if the album reminds them of lockdown, or merely other dark events that have occurred”

a whirr of technology and sparse guitar that sounds like lo-fi futuristic clockwork pop. It explores the idea of a future world where physical activity has been replaced by purely telepathic communication. “It started with imagining this silent still world, which at the time wasn’t that hard to imagine during lockdown, but I wanted to explore other possible reasons for that. One idea was something like social media taking over the need for people to interact physically, and taking this to an extreme: a society endowed with telepathic and telekinetic powers could be the ultimate manifestation of this. Alternatively, you could imagine artificial intelligences – as in proper new forms of generalised intelligence – taking over as an evolution of humanity. As you start to speculate on the future in terms of billions of years and the demise of the solar system, or even something like 10 to the power 100 years when most black holes have decayed and Sun-sized stars have fused into iron but can still provide residual energy to an entity that can just carry out processes very slowly over extremely long timescales, then the horror of human-made catastrophes starts to recede as a concern. The idea of culture or even love persisting at some level is very comforting. Obviously, there are no guarantees and the chances for us look pretty slim. Maybe there’s something else out there doing it better though.”

IN THE REAL WORLD SHAN is a keen gig goer as well as a performer; how does he see the local scene post-pandemic? “It’s not looking great. Promoters are now back, making huge efforts to put on shows, but the loss of some key venues means there still seems to

be less going on than before. There’s also been a bit of a turnaround in acts. Some musicians who were very prominent have moved away from Oxford or just changed their priorities. There are plenty of exciting newcomers but they haven’t had much of a chance to get established yet. Playing quite a lot of gigs outside Oxford from day one of the ‘grand reopening’ in July last year it does feel as if larger cities bounced back quite quickly while Oxford has taken another nine months or so to get to that point. I have faith in the tenacity of our music scene, though. Even if it shifts in style and the kinds of venues people are playing. I hope for a new era of DIY punk venues in squatted empty shops.”

“I’ll let the listener decide if the album reminds them of lockdown, or merely other dark events that have occurred”

Moogiemán & the Masochists have, of course, been back in live action regularly over the past year and they’ve been a great reminder of the pleasure *Nightshift* takes from watching local bands grow and keep writing better music; the likes of ‘Psychotronic World’ and ‘Heavenly Beings’ are up there with the best Shan and his bandmates have made. Does he feel he’s still growing as a writer and musician? “I think I’ve grown as a songwriter but not necessarily as a musician, technically anyway, as I seem to do less and less and rely more on technology or other people. But I suppose it does feel like I’m making better music, I think by having a better overview of the possibilities, and making more deliberate choices. During the earlier part of the pandemic I was participating in a small online group that worked a bit like a weekly open mic so I had an incentive to try preparing a new song every week or couple of weeks. That gave me a lot of material I was able to work on or select from to try to maintain a consistent feel and quality on the album. Being online, I was able to use whatever equipment I was able to operate by myself so the songs emerged with fairly complete arrangements, which again helped with consistency.” As regards his songs the ever-prolific Shan has always seemed very anti-nostalgia, happiest with his newest songs and to let older ones go by; is there any place for nostalgia in *Moogieland*? “I’m very happy if I’ve managed to avoid too much of the sentimentality that comes from nostalgia. It can be quite powerful though and since a lot of my songs involve outmoded technologies or historical periods it must be in there. But I hope it’s in

a more ironic or thought-provoking way. I’m a big fan of the future. If it looks too bleak, we’re probably not looking far enough ahead. And I’ve learned to let old songs go. They’re not lost. A part of them – hopefully the good part – will return in something new. I don’t believe in the transmigration of souls but the reincarnation of our ideas is definitely a thing.” Any old songs you’d like to revisit, revive and maybe remodel? “There’s quite a few but I think you mainly have to accept that you only get one shot at a release. Having said that, I was having a go at an electronic version of ‘The Evangelist’ recently and it developed into a full-on house remix so that might reappear some time. ‘Mister Curator’ is also a live favourite and it’s evolved as I’ve brought in more synths and electronics, so it would be nice to record a new version at some point. I think it could do with some more time to evolve though. We probably all could.”

WITH ‘DIAL M FOR *Moogiemán*’ out this month, what comes next; is there a new full Masochists album already in the pipeline? “There was – in the early stages of the pandemic I started recording the songs we’d been playing in our live set but it took a lot longer than expected to be able to get band members in the studio to track their parts so I just ended up cutting my losses. Things had moved on for me, musically, and some of those songs felt a bit dated after two years. But hopefully some of that material will find its way into a future album.” Saying that, the new album sounds pretty fully formed to *Nightshift*; does Shan really need the rest of The Masochists anymore? Couldn’t he just sack them and keep all the money that goes with being a DIY grassroots artist for himself? “I don’t think I could handle the psychological impact of all that wealth. But yes, it does feel like I could do a lot of what I want to solo. On the other hand, I also want to do stuff that has that element of chaos from having other people do their own thing, and there are textures I can’t produce myself, like female vocals and sax. So I envisage the solo and band sets and recordings diverging a bit more. Some of the songs will certainly be the same but they’ll be more like different acts rather than one being a stripped-down version of the other.”

Moogiemán plays at The Port Mahon on Friday 7th October. ‘Dial M For Moogiemán’ is released on All Will Be Well; listen at moogiemán.bandcamp.com

RELEASED

MOOGIEMAN

‘Dial M For Moogiemán’ (*All Will Be Well*)

Moogiemán – AKA Shan Sriharan – is no stranger to these pages, through his own work as well as membership of psychedelic collective Mandrake Handshake. Here we have a new solo album, with some input from his backing band The Masochists, and first impressions are that it’s an understated affair, slow and uncluttered with plenty of space, but not without some challenging, even unsettling moments, partly related to the story-driven lyrical content. Much work has clearly gone into details like the electronic snare and kick drum sounds, different on every song, and the layered, unconventional keyboard lines. And like all proper albums it takes you on a journey, with a definite start, middle and end.

‘Psychotronic World’ marries minimalist drums, sci-fi keyboard squiggles and some almost delta blues guitar, resulting in a satisfying sense of forboding. ‘Heavenly Beings’ starts rather sparsely but some sweeping keyboard lines add some welcome three-dimensional richness, while retaining the album’s sense of unease.

‘Becket’ is a curious, talking blues style tale about the 12th Century Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket, excommunication and angels, again driven by insistent, dense keyboard lines. ‘Anti’ has a by now familiar structure but frustratingly ends before reaching a satisfactory resolution, but ‘Blue Hole’ breaks through the glass wall of minimalism



and becomes almost chaotic, his deep, crooning vocal style working nicely with the almost David Lynchian atmosphere it creates. The closing ‘Lone Wolf’ is another odd tale, possibly about The Joker, with multiple choice options offered throughout the song.

There’s plenty to discover in these 36 minutes, often weighted towards the lyrical content. The music, intriguing and well crafted as it is, can sound a little sparse, tentative and self-conscious compared to his earlier releases. ‘The Light of the World’ bucks this trend, the closest we get to experiencing much passion and urgency, but ultimately the record doesn’t quite attain its early promise. There’s no surprise in learning it’s the brainchild of a single person, often a curse as much as a blessing, so it will be interesting to see the songs performed live with a band.

Art Lagun



SILENT WEAPON

‘Eggshells’

(*Blindsight*)

Oxford’s Baron of Bleak, Umair Chaudhry wears many musical monikers but at their heart all carry a sense of end-of-days desolation about them. From his time in the magnificent Xmas Lights, through Abandon and Gift of Blindness, his music tends to sound like what we would hope a Friday night party in Hades sounds like. Under his new Silent Weapon guise, he might

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METAL HORSES

‘Bruiser’

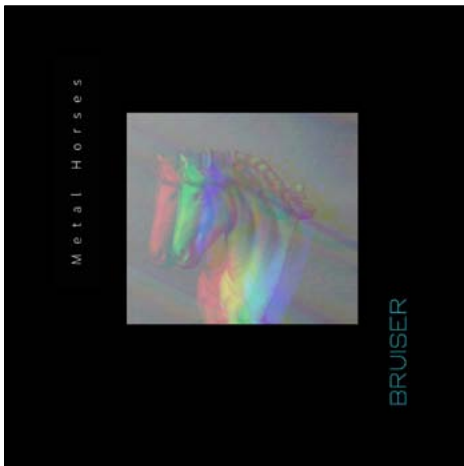
(*Self released*)

A regular visitor to the Released pages over the years, both under his own name and Metal Horses, Paul Emery’s path is straight and clear: for him the sunny side of the street is to be avoided at all costs.

Instead he lurks in musical shadow, atmospheric synth hums casting none-more-black shapes upon his songs, the electronic beats the sound of the inner workings of a star ship or cyborg factory. And for a dyed-in-the-wool goth like this reviewer, such darkness is welcome. But it comes with reservations. Album opener ‘Mesopotamian Dirt’ shows what Paul can do at his best, the ominous electronics setting a bleak scene, his vocals gloomy in the extreme. But having set out his stall he can seem reluctant to stray far from its comfort, which means across the course of a full album, as here, things can become a bit samey, even ponderous when the dark aim misses its target, as on ‘Everything Falls Apart’, or ‘Swan Neck’, which brings to mind Peter Gabriel trying his hand at late-80s Depeche Mode with decidedly mixed results.

There’s much to enjoy here though, even if ‘enjoy’ isn’t really a word in the Metal Horses dictionary. When he takes a lighter touch (if not lighter mood), as on ‘House of Rain’, we’re reminded a little of Talk Talk, while Paul does a decent approximation of Karl Hyde from Underworld’s vocals on songs like ‘Sufferer’, a title that does much to convey the overall tone of the record. There are some neat, Numanesque synth bits here and there, like on the instrumental ‘Bruiser’, which brings a steelier, more industrial vibe to bear but might do well to build on its promising premise rather than fade out in under three minutes. ‘Wild Winter Screaming’ at the end brings the full gothic Depeche Mode effect back and is perhaps the album’s high point. As with his previous albums, there’s a feeling the best ideas here would make for a great EP; stretched to a full album, some of that gets diluted, but anyone looking for the darkness in local music would do far worse than investigate Metal Horses.

Ian Chesterton



MICHAEL DIAMOND

‘Third Culture’

(*Self released*)

Michael Diamond is an Oxford-based DJ and producer; ‘Third Culture’ is a seven-track project, described as a concept album, under the clunky genre title electronica jazz.

THE BOBO feat. KID

KIN

‘2AM’

(*Self released*)

The ongoing collaboration between The Bobo and Kid Kin has been one of the more fertile musical ventures that Oxfordshire has seen in recent years. January 2020’s ‘The Sprinter (At Last)’ kicked off the relationship in portentous style – indeed, one might almost have anticipated a global pandemic was on the cards.

That mood continued on the ‘Fun. Songs Funeral Songs in Disguise’ EP, the original release accompanied by five more tracks of spectral vocals, with a nod to Natasha Khan, and Gemma Williams of synthpop duo Becky Becky. A slew of singles followed throughout the dark months of 2020 and 2021 – from the sombre ‘Enough’ to the 1980s-tinged ‘Harrison’, to the shoegaze/indietronica of ‘Razem’, a trip down a path explored previously by Mazzy Star and Grouper.

Whether the newly upbeat timbres of ‘2AM’ are down to hope that we are coming out of a collective fug or more a wish to escape into hedonism is a debate to be enjoyed, but some swirling production and euphoric drops

LEONIDAS

‘Cap & Gown’

(*Self released*)

Like the legendary king of Spartan mythology, local rapper Leonidas is building himself up a ferocious army, though of songs rather than soldiers. Hot on the heels of recent bangers like ‘Hennessey & Jealousy’ and ‘Normalise’, here’s ‘Cap & Gown’, another get-things-off-my-chest rant, this time about privilege and the perception of anyone from Oxford somehow being posh. The cap here is from the byword for lying, capping, while gown is used in reference

The album attempts to explore fractured identity through electronic and is Michael’s attempt to navigate his personal struggles to cement an identity as an Indian born, Third Culture kid. Opening track ‘Genesis’, featuring Alex Wilson’s ethereal atmospheric and sax runs, puts us in mind of some of the music from the movie *Angel Heart*, languid yet menacing. ‘Enigma’ and ‘Lamentations’, meanwhile, are twitchy, inventive breaks that convey intimacy and uneasy listening. The album’s highlight, ‘Exodus’, drops a fractured, fidgety, track with a sound pitched somewhere between drum&bass and techno; the interestingly pitched, wonky keyboard riff elevates the track and keeps things interesting.

Pitched for both the dancefloor and late night headphone listening, ‘Third Culture’ is inquisitive, at times inventive, with an attuned textural nuance and attention to detail. Although at times the glacier synth sounds become a little repetitive, the experience of dissolution is ably captured by the bustling, melancholic soundscapes.

Lester Sideye



courtesy of Kid Kin’s Peter Lloyd do provide a welcome elegy to a period of introspection. Indeed, just earlier this year, The Bobo appeared as a guest on a Kid Kin track, ‘Control’, and ‘2AM’ very much continues the mood of that release, albeit with a quickened, less stately beat and a serious nod to clubland in its well signposted early hours feel. One could imagine this suiting the Café del Mar set back in the day and one thing is for sure, this is a link up that continues to be rich in possibilities.

Rob Langham

to those who presume. As with previous offerings, the song comes with a shroud of darkness about it, while vocally and lyrically there’s little let-up or compromise; it’s where grime venting meets drill’s edge of menace, and while the song feels well-rounded production-wise it has a dirty DIY underbelly. While much Oxford-made rap comes with a philosophical vibe about it, Leonidas consistently goes for the jugular: it’s rap as blunt force weapon rather than make-‘em-think stealth instrument. While Leonidas’ target field remains wide, short, sharp thrills like this will continue to roll.

Bekti Manish

DAZE

‘21.15’

(*Quickfix*)

Daisy George Eaton, Scott Atkins and Tom Aries, aka Daze, have released a second helping of jazzy pop in the form of ‘21.15’; this new single sees the singer lamenting a lover who reveals his deceit with another woman, and his attempts to hide his two timing.

Set over a quiet, woozy intro recalling Arlo Parks and the songwriting of Self Esteem, the track builds into Glass Animals-like guitar that backs the clever lyrics and allows the track to take on a summery feel.

It might be a little cooler outside now, but this single can definitely be enjoyed in whatever season you might find yourself in, and will definitely bear repeated listening till we see the summer again next year.

Damon Boughen

THE DEADBEAT

APOSTLES

‘In Spite Of It All’

(*Self released*)

In which The Deadbeats, armed with two ICBM-strength lead vocals, throw everything and the kitchen sink into a song, stand back for a few moments to admire their work, wander off to listen to ‘Now That’s What I Call A Bluesy Power Ballad’ from start to finish and return to throw everything and the kitchen sink into the song again, including another kitchen sink they borrowed from the neighbours, just for good measure.

If you can imagine Joe Cocker attempting to emulate Lee Hazelwood and Nancy Sinatra in a blues shack style with Vinegar Joe in tow, you can start to picture what ‘In Spite Of It All’ sounds like. It is epic; it is ballsy; it is all lusty and soulful and drunk on passion. It is fabulously over the top to the point it leaves a slick of hair oil on the ceiling.

It’s not until a good half hour after it’s finished that all the other songs in the house feel bold enough to come out from behind the sofa, only to find the floor littered with shards of broken kitchen sinks. As subtle as a brick but just as much fun when there are breakables about.

Dale Kattack



GIG GUIDE

SATURDAY 1st
SKYLARKIN’ feat. **MUNGO’S HI-FI**
SOUNDSYSTEM: The Bullingdon – Count Skylarkin’ hosts another top-drawer night of dub, dancehall, reggae, ska and more. Tonight sees a return to town for global reggae, dub and dancehall stars Mungo’s Hi-Fi, now into their third decade together, having been formed in Glasgow in 2000 by Tom Tattersall and Doug Paine and having expanded by increments ever since. The forward-thinking collective, inspired

Friday 30th – Sunday 2nd
DIVINE SCHISM 10: Various venues
A very happy decade anniversary to our chums at Divine Schism, who have been championing DIY artists for some 200 shows and with many more to come. To celebrate Aiden Canaday and the gang are hosting a full weekend of live music, kicking off on Friday 30th September with New York anti-folk star **JEFFREY LEWIS**, alongside local lo-fi post-grunge pop chap **MAX BLANSJAAR** and noise-pop urchins **THE DUMPLINGS**, at Florence Park Community Centre. We stay over that way for Saturday’s all-day, which comes topped by London’s chant-pop crew **JENNY MOORE’S MYSTIC BUSINESS**, joined by synth-pop star **GEMMA CULLINGFORD**, plus **TRUST FUND**; **BELL LUNGS**; **WITCHING WAVES**; **BEDD** and more. Sunday moves down Cowley Road for a multi-venue all-day extravaganza that mixes out-of-town acts like **JOHNNY FOREIGNER**; **POZI**; **MAMMOTH PENGUINS**; **SNIFFANY & THE NITS**, and **FOXCUNT** with local starlets including **THE AUGUST LIST**; **PECQ**; **SELF HELP**; **THE BOBO**; **DREAM PHONE**; **DOGMILK**; **ZAHRA HAJI FATH ALI TEHRANI**; **APHRA TAYLOR**; **JULIA MEIJER**; **TIGER MENDOZA**; **AFTER THE THOUGHT**; **GIGSY** and **THE PEOPLE VERSUS**. Many are artists returning to help celebrate a promoter that has forever championed the underdog; others will be making their debuts for Divine Schism; all come with the spirit of independence about them. Long live Divine Schism and all who sail with them.



October

by King Tubby and Prince Jammy, have produced a slew of original albums over the last two decades on their own, knowingly named Scotch Bonnet label.
DIVINE SCHISM 10: Florence Park Social Club – Divine Schism are joined by Jenny Moore’s Mystic Business, Gemma Cullingford, Trust Fund; Bell Lungs; Witching Waves; Bedd and more across a full day of live to celebrate their 10th birthday – *see main preview*
SWITCH feat. **HYBRID MINDS: O2 Academy** – Drum&bass duo Hybrid Minds come to the long-running club night.
HIPSHAKIN’: **Harcourt Arms** – 50s and 60s rhythm’n’blues, rock’n’roll, jump jive, jazz, boogaloo and early soul classics from the Hipshakin’ DJs.
MID AIR + WEDNESDAY’S WOLVES + RICH RAINFORD: The Port Mahon
THE REVELATORS: The Black Swan – Classic covers, from The Stones and Iggy Pop to Led Zep and Fleetwood Mac.

SUNDAY 2nd
DIVINE SCHISM 10: Various venues – A second full day of live music, today along Cowley Road, including The Bullingdon, Truck Store, BSM Social and UPP, with sets from Johnny Foreigner; Pozi; Mammoth Penguins; Sniffany & The Nits and loads more – *see main preview*
SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Port Mahon (3pm) – Free afternoon of live music with sets from Mojo Demon, Tony Batey & Sal Moore, and Cat Shaker.
MONSTER TRUCK + THESE DAMN CROWS: O2 Academy – Classic heavy rock revivalism from the Ontario crew out on tour.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms – Weekly open mic session.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon – Weekly Irish folk session.
OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (3pm) – Weekly open afternoon.
RAG’N’MOAN MEN: Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm) – Blues, folk and Americana with the local trio.

MONDAY 3rd
ANDY IRVINE: Nettlebed Folk Club – An intimate show for the Irish music legend, an icon of traditional folk music and a pioneer of world sounds, from his spells in 60s and 70s stalwarts Sweeny’s Men, Planxty and Patrick Street as well as work with Dick Gaughan and Paul Brady, to more recent experiments with Usher’s Island. Widely considered one of the greatest Irish folk singers of all time as well as a renowned social justice campaigner.

TUESDAY 4th
WEDNESDAY 5th
BEN POOLE: The Bullingdon – A return to town for the rising UK blues-rock guitarist at tonight’s Haven Club show, Poole drawing comparisons to Joe Satriani and Joe Bonamassa, winning fans in Bernie Torme and the late Gary Moore along the way.
PROGRESSION: The Bullingdon – Fortnightly breakbeat, electro, funk and disco club night.

THURSDAY 6th
THE SUBTHEORY: The Library – Electro-pop and trip hop in the vein of Sneaker Pimps, Portishead and Depeche Mode from the local duo.
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 7th
UNDERTONES + HUGH CORNWELL: O2 Academy – A double bill of punk-era icons with Belfast’s legendary hitmakers – *sans* singer Fearghal Sharkey but still helmed by songwriters John and Damian O’Neill – kicking out the hits – ‘Wednesday Week’; ‘Jimmy Jimmy’; ‘My Perfect Cousin’ and of course ‘Teenage Kicks’ plus many, many more, alongside former-Stranglers frontman Hugh Cornwell, who’ll be revisiting classics like ‘Duchess’, ‘Always the Sun’ and ‘Strange Little Girl’ alongside his solo material.
CUT CAPERS: The Bullingdon – Vintage swing, brass, soul grooves, funk and hip hop from Bristol’s nine-strong Cut Capers, out on tour to promote their album ‘Metropolis’.
HAU5 PARTY: The Bullingdon – Techno, house and disco club night.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with PANDAPOCALYPSE + ALCON BLUE + DARKGNOSS: Gladiator Club – The anything-goes monthly gig night celebrates its 30th birthday with two nights of live music; tonight sees big beat synth-pop trio Pandapocalypse keeping things glittery, sparkly and robustly upbeat in the company of Alcan Blue and Darkgnoss.
MOOGIEMAN + MOTHDROP + VETNA: The Port Mahon – This month’s cover star launches his new solo album ‘Dial M For Moogiemán’, alongside live techno manipulator Moth Drop and more – *see main interview feature*

REMEMBER SPORTS + EX VÖID + SPANK HAIR: The Jericho Tavern – Carmen Perry’s spiky, ebullient indie-punk crew tour their new album ‘Like a Stone’ at tonight’s Divine Schism show.
DECOVO + LILLIBET: James Street Tavern – Indie rocking in the vein of Foals and

Arctic Monkeys from local crew Decovo with support from Oxford/Milton Keynes singer-songwriter Lillibet with her Adele-style jazz-flavoured pop and balladry.

SATURDAY 8th
LYR: Florence Park Community Centre – Locally-born singer-songwriter Richard Walter’s team-up with Poet laureate Simon Armitage and multi-instrumentalist Patrick Pearson comes to the unlikely setting of Florence Park Community Centre, together the trio blending spoken word, minimalist post-rock, jazz experimentation and neo-classical wanderings into a darkly comforting whole.
POP WILL EAT ITSELF + SPAIRS: O2 Academy – Stourbridge’s grebo electro-punk crew – now led by Graham Crabb and Mary Byker in the absence of Clint Mansell – relive 80s hits like ‘Can U Dig It’ and ‘Def Con One’, as well as superbly prescient 90s single ‘Ich Bin Ein Auslander’.
MAXIMO PARK + PIP BLOM: O2 Academy – Maximo Park come to town as part of a greatest hits tour, including new single ‘Great Art’, as well as songs from last year’s seventh studio album ‘Nature Always Wins’. The Newcastle indie survivors have been through town a fair few times over the years and remain an enduringly entertaining act, not least for frontman Paul Smith’s quirky rock star quality, an action-packed, literate anti-hero in the vein of Morrissey or Jarvis Cocker whose onstage mania perfectly reflects the bug-eyed spikiness of the band’s best songs, songs like long-time favourite ‘Apply Some Pressure’, a bona fide indie disco anthem, all post-punk angles and restless pop energy. If they have an air of cult faves about them it’s easy to forget that 2007’s ‘Our Earthly Pleasures’ sold over two million copies, so that’s quite a big cult, and seven albums in, they’re not just surviving but thriving. Great support from Dutch indie stars Pip Blom.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with MARY’S GARDEN + MILA TODD + EMMA HUNTER: Gladiator Club – Klub Kakfanney continues to celebrate 30 years of monthly shindigs with a superb line-up of local talent. The reformed Mary’s Garden, fronted by singer Laima Bite, keep it dark and gothic alongside hip hop and electro-pop-infused politico-singer-songwriter Mila Todd, and dark, flamenco and surf-rock-inspired duo Emma Hunter.
FOLKATRON SESSIONS: The North Wall – Inventive, ethereal folk, jazz and electronic music fusion from the eight-strong Anglo-Irish-French collective featuring cellist Lauren Spiceley, and singer Hannah Jacobs from Pecq, reworking traditional folk songs alongside their own compositions.
THE OXLEY MEIER GUITAR PROJECT: St. Giles Church – Virtuoso guitar display from Nick Meier, from Jeff Beck’s band, and Pete Oxley, from world jazz group Curious Paradise, together playing music inspired by Turkish and Latin American sounds and Bach, on a variety of guitars, as part of the Jazz at St Giles season.
REGGAETON OXFORD: The Bullingdon – reggaeton party night.
BEATLES FOR SALE: The Cornerstone,

Didcot – Tribute night.
DAN BUDD IS ROBBIE WILLIAMS: Delaney’s, Wantage – Tribute night.

SUNDAY 9th
SORRY: Truck Store – Instore show from the band to promote second album ‘Anywhere But Here’.
QLOWSKI: The Library – Pensive, unpredictable post-punk and electro-pop from the Covid-inspired Italy/London outfit – *see main preview*
SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Bullingdon (3pm) – Free afternoon of live music in the front bar with Delta Hardware, Arthur Osofsky and more.
SIR BALD DIDDLEY & THE RIPCURLS: Harcourt Arms – Classic surf sounds from the veteran local guitarist and his band.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY: The Tree, Iffley (4-7pm) – Rounding off their 30th birthday celebrations, Klub Kakofanney host a free afternoon session at The Tree with sets from Puppet Mechanic, Tony Batey & Sal Moore and The Mark Bosley Band.
STEPH WILLIS: Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5.30pm) – Soulful pop covers and originals.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (3pm)

MONDAY 10th
THE SKINNER BROTHERS: The Bullingdon – Swaggering indie rocking in the vein of Oasis, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club and Arctic Monkeys from London’s Skinner Brothers – previous tour support to Kasabian – and out on a headline tour to promote new album ‘Soul Boy II’.
COURTNEY MARIE ANDREWS: Truck Store – After her sold-out show at St. John the Evangelist in April, the country singer returns to town for an intimate in-store to promote new album ‘Loose Future’.
CHRIS WHILE & JULIE MATTHEWS: Nettlebed Folk Club – Powerful harmony singing from the Albion Band and St Agnes Fountain duo and leading ladies of English folk, the highly prolific pair out on tour to promote their last album together, ‘Revolution Calls’.

TUESDAY 11th
INTRUSION: Kiss Bar – Monthly goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night.

WEDNESDAY 12th
MI MYE + CARPET: The Library – Dark-hearted, romantic folk-inclined rock from Scottish singer and fiddle player Jamie Lockhart and his Leeds-based band at tonight’s Divine Schism show, drawing comparisons to The National, Sparklehorse and King Creosote.
COURTING + DEEP TAN: O2 Academy – Militant, melodic indie rocking in the vein of Squid, Sports Team and LCD Soundsystem from Liverpool’s emerging young stars Courting, out on a headline tour to promote debut album ‘Guitar Music’,



Sunday 9th
QLOWSKI: The Library
There has been and there will be plenty of music written about and inspired by Covid and its fallout, but Qlowski’s album ‘Quale Futuro’ is one of the few that really captures the anxiety and turbulence of the period, as well as pandemic paranoia. The band, formed in Italy by Michele Tellarini and Cecilia Corapi but now based in London, were previously a more simple indie-punk band before the world changed. The new album retains the often sweet melodic edge of their older sound but now it comes armed with industrial machine beats, lush electro-pop, gothic pensiveness and tense post-punk. It’s a wide-ranging sound the band have leaned on, with few obvious influences or contemporaries, although you could maybe mentioned Joe Meek, The Cure, Killing Joke, X-Ray Spex, The Raincoats and OMD at various points before another song comes along to prove you wrong. It’s really just a great record; the title means What Future? in a nod to the unpredictability of the time around its recording (with Sauna Youth producer Lindsay Corstorphine), and it’s a great, shifting mood piece of a record to mark the occasion. But no, don’t ask us how you pronounce the band’s name – know only that they’re bloody great.

taking aim at streaming, rock conformity and horse racing. Support from London’s post-punkers Deep Tan, previously support to Yard Act.
NEON DANCE & SEBASTIAN REYNOLDS: OVADA – Live performance, including interactive robot dancers, from Neon Dance, performing their new ‘Prehension Blooms’, with a live score from Seb Reynolds.

THURSDAY 13th
SEMI-DETACHED: The Bullingdon – Garage, hip hop and house club night.

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Sunday 16th

PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING: The New Theatre

Having seen them performing as a duo on the Jericho Tavern's tiny stage and followed them since those early indie releases, like the brilliantly inventive 'War Room' EP, it still feels a bit strange seeing Public Service Broadcasting selling out Oxford's biggest live music venue – and for a second time, after their stupendous show here back in 2018 when they toured their 'Every Valley' album. But their expansive, cinematic music deserves such huge stages, arenas and audiences. While 'Every Valley' followed stylistically in the vein of 'Race For Space' and 'War Room' in setting Pathe news narratives to their own soundtracks – a mix of motorik electronica, dynamic modern classical, jazz and bold filmscore instrumentals – the band's most recent album, 2021's 'Bright Magic' is an often more abstract celebration of Berlin in three parts – an immersive mood piece. Samples are fewer and further between with guest stars like Blixa Bargeld, Nina Hoss and Eera more to the fore, Bowie's Berlin trilogy, particularly 'Low', a major influence alongside the film *Metropolis*. The quartet's last show here was a spectacle visually as well as sonically and we hope and expect the same from this gig. They're a brilliantly original band and one whose musical ambitions seem to stretch further than most other musicians ever dare to dream.

DALBY'S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 14th

RED: O2 Academy – Post-grunge metal from the Nashville Christian rockers touring their 'Declaration' album.

MOONAROON: Harcourt Arms – Traditional Irish folk songs and tunes from the local trio.

SATURDAY 15th

SAMANTHA FISH: O2 Academy – Blues and roots rocking from Kansas guitarist and singer Samantha Fish, back in Oxford after her appearance in 2019. Now ensconced as one of the leading lights of the live blues scene, winning numerous awards, including a sweep of gongs at last year's Best of the Beat Awards: Best Artist; Best Blues Act; Best Guitarist and Best Female Vocalist.

MAKING TRACKS: The North Wall – Return to town for the touring celebration of world fusion sounds with emerging musicians from diverse geographical and musical backgrounds.

THE MAY + TIGER MENDOZA + THE BOBO: The Port Mahon – Former-Vienna Ditto man Nigel Firth launches his new solo EP under the moniker The May, mixing up experimental electronics with techno and vocal cut-ups; he's joined by electro maestro Tiger Mendoza with his hybrid of hip hop, drum&bass, industrial and ambient electronica, and atmospheric electro-popster The Bobo. **SIMPLE feat. SHERELLE & YUNG SINGH: The Bullingdon** – Footwork, jungle, juke and 160 from Sherelle at tonight's Simple, the DJ having made her reputation with an acclaimed performance at The Boiler Room and has played alongside Kode9, TASO and Dillinja. Punjabi garage from Yung Singh. **SUBLOONICA: Harcourt Arms** – Double bass and electronics-led hip hop from the local duo.

NICK HARPER: The Jericho Tavern – The acoustic guitar virtuoso, highly eclectic songwriter and political folk singer returns to town, touring his new album, '58 Fordwych Road', having first made his name as a member of his dad Roy's band, before collaborating with Glenn Tilbrook and The Levellers, among others.

CRIME + 31HOURS: The Library – Emoting alt.rocking in the vein of Biffy Clyro and Jimmy Eatworld from Crime, launching their debut album.

NOVA KICKS + CLOUD 11 + PAUL ACREMAN: The Jericho Tavern – Gig in aid of Pans Pandas charity.

JIM GHEDI: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Haunting, atmospheric but politically-spirited drone-folk from Yorkshire singer Jim Ghedi, touring last year's superb 'In the Furrow of the Commonplace', drawing comparisons to the likes of Alasdair Roberts and Robert MacFarlane, while bringing his Yorkshire landscapes alive in a similar way to Seth Lakeman's Devon shorelines and moors. **WHOLE LOTTA DC: Fat Lil's, Witney** – AC/DC tribute.

SUNDAY 16th

PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING: The New Theatre – The social history soundtrackers tour their 'Bright Magic' album – *see main preview*

TRIALS OF CATO: The Bullingdon – A rare visit to Oxford for one of the rising stars of the UK folk scene – Anglo-Welsh trio Trials of Cato, formed in Beirut and bringing a bit of Middle Eastern flair to their political folk stories, taking inspiration from Oysterband, Seth Lakeman and The Incredible String Band. **SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Port Mahon** – Free afternoon of live music with Americana, roots, folk and blues acts.

SANCTIFIED: Holy Trinity Church, Headington – Celebration of gospel blues. **ZOE BADMAN: Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)** – Soulful jazz-pop from the local singer. **OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms** **FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon**

OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (3pm)

MONDAY 17th

TUESDAY 18th

THE UNTHANKS: Oxford Town Hall – Full-ensemble concert from the first family of folk – *see main preview*

LIIEK: The Library – Ten years to the day since their very first gig, Divine Schism celebrate in the company of militant, uptight Berlin noisemakers Liiek, mixing up the influences of Gang of 4, Wire, Minutemen and Shopping

WEDNESDAY 19th

PROGRESSION: The Bullingdon **BOYZLIFE: The New Theatre** – In a fusion more horrific than Jeff Goldblum and that insect in *The Fly*, thingie out of Boyzone and whatisname from Westlife become a single organism and turn pop music into a vile vomit-style gloop. Suck it up, kids.

THURSDAY 20th

NAIMA BOCK: The Port Mahon – Rarefied

Tuesday 18th

THE UNTHANKS: Oxford Town Hall

From starlets of the Northumbrian folk scene to something approaching national treasures and arguably the first family of English folk music, The Unthanks have never stopped moving and every move seems to be upwards and outwards – to the point the band, and particularly sisters Rachel and Becky, are celebrated well beyond folk music circles. Tonight's show is part of a tour to promote their first full ensemble studio album in seven years, 'Sorrows Away', though the sisters have released a succession of themed albums in recent times, interpreting the works of Emily Brontë, First World War poets and Maxine Peake, or obscure traditional songs of their home county and beyond, the contrast and complementary nature of the pair's voices – one limpid, earthy and taught, the other ghostly and ethereal – making every death, horror and sorrow of life sound utterly beautiful. The rich chamber folk arrangements of the full band only serve to enhance those voices and the haunting romance of their words. Seriously, anyone who can listen to 'The King of Rome' and remain dry-eyed has no heart or soul. The ornate, high-ceilinged Town Hall should provide the perfect setting for The Unthanks' return to town: a band to treasure.



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<p>ALVVAYS BLUE REV</p>	<p>RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS RETURN OF THE DREAM CANTEEN</p>	<p>GILLA BAND MOST NORMAL</p>
<p>BONNY LIGHT HORSEMAN ROLLING GOLDEN HOLY</p>	<p>TSHA CAPRICORN SUN</p>	<p>LEE FIELDS SENTIMENTAL FOOL</p>

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Thursday 20th

NAIMA BOCK: The Port Mahon

Having left Goat Girl – the band she co-founded – in 2019, Naima Bock (and how we wish she’d kept her Naima Jelly moniker) has carved out a captivating solo career that in many ways eclipses her old band musically. Born of Brazilian and Greek parents, she explores both South American and European musical traditions on her new album ‘Giant Palm’, a genuinely lovely collection of songs driven by her delicate, crystalline voice but surrounded by everything from synths and piano to woodwind, strung-out strings and sax. It’s simultaneously complex and simple, drawing on the influence of European folk music and Brazilian rhythms and sounds but also the explorative jazz of Kevin Ayres and Robert Wyatt; Broadcast’s pop purity; Cate le Bon’s idiosyncratic approach to melody, and even Alison Statton’s stripped-back folktronica. It’s music that’s intimate yet expansive, introspective and melancholy yet bubbling and optimistic, conversational and reflective but oddly catchy. Mostly though it’s a genuinely lovely, inventive record and her solo debut – courtesy of Divine Schism – in such an intimate venue will be a genuine treat.

folktronica, South American sounds and wonk-pop from the former Goat Girl musician – *see main preview*

WISHBONE ASH: O2 Academy – The 70s mellow rock giants keep on keeping on, singer and guitarist Andy Powell now the only original member still with the band.

SO FETCH: The Bullingdon – Noughties hits and club classics.

DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Stevenon

THE SCOTT GORDON BAND + ASIMOV CASCADE + HORIZON: Loose Cannon, Abingdon – Live music as part of Make Music in Abingdon.

FRIDAY 21st

BOSSAPHONIK with SOOTHSAYERS: Cowley Workers Social Club – The monthly celebration of world jazz dance hosts London’s titans of brass-heavy Afrobeat and dub reggae, Soothsayers, while host Dan Ofer spins a mix of Latin, Afro, Balkan and nu-jazz tunes.

SEA POWER: O2 Academy – Another

elegantly dark voyage through the waters of post-punk and epic indie from the lately de-imperialised Sea Power, touring new album ‘Everything Was Forever’.

RAVING TRIPPY: The Bullingdon – Psychedelic house and techno club night.

THE JOLLY GROGSTERS: Harcourt Arms – Shanties and sea songs from the local vocal ensemble.

BRONA MCVITTIE & BAND + LOUISA LYNE PATTERSON & FRIENDS: The Jericho Tavern – Cosmic Celtic folk, drones and electro-folk from the Irish singer and musician touring her new ‘The Woman in the Moon’ album.

LILLIBET + ALCON BLUE: Tap Social – Soulful pop from Lillibet alongside blues rocking from Alcon Blue.

SEAN MCCONNELL: The Listening Room, Cross Keys, Thame – Plaintive, introspective folk roots and Americana from the Nashville singer-songwriter at tonight’s Empty Room show, McConnell touring his new album ‘Secondhand Folk – his 13th – having written hits for an array of country, rock and pop stars, from Meatloaf and Christina Aguilera, to Tim McGraw, Jake Owen and Martina McBride.

ABSOLUTE BRITNEY: Delaney’s, Wantage – Tribute night.

SATURDAY 22nd

HOBBY HORSE + MOOGIEMAN & THE MASOCHISTS + CHEEKS: The Library – Intricate, polyrhythmic indie-pop from multi-instrumentalist Wilfred Cartwright, whose songs deal with religion, relationships and reclusiveness; he’s joined by this month’s *Nightshift* cover star Moogiemann, playing a full band set, plus Magnetic Fields-inspired sounds from local student musician Cheeks.

ELLA HENDERSON + CIAN DUCROT: O2 Academy – The former *X-Factor* contestant and ‘Ghost’ hitmaker tours her new album, ‘Everything I Didn’t Say’.

ANTARCTIC MONKEYS: O2 Academy – Tribute night.

MUSICAL MEDICINE feat. RUBY SAVAGE: The Bullingdon – Disco, house and disco-house party time with a special guest set from Ruby Savage.

THE PROCLAIMERS: The New Theatre – The Brothers Charlie and Craig Reid bring their none-more-Scottish celebration of love, life and Leith, with singalong hits ‘I’m Gonna Be (500 Miles)’, ‘I’m On My Way’ and ‘Letter From America’.

SCRATCH, CRACKLE & POP: Harcourt Arms

SUNDAY 23rd

THE SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Bullingdon (3pm) – Free afternoon of live music with Bankside Blues, The Oxford Blues Corporation, The Holy Fools and more.

THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Tree, Iffley (3.30-5.30pm) – Classic rock and blues from the veteran local singer and guitarist and chums.

AL JENKINS: Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms

FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon

OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (3pm)

MONDAY 24th

TOM ODELL: O2 Academy – Tom returns to town after his show here in February, promoting new album ‘Best Day of My Life’ in conjunction with Truck Store.

THE JOHN MCCUSKER BAND: Nettlebed Folk Club – Renowned fiddle player McCusker returns to Nettlebed’s legendary folk club with his own band, featuring Ian Carr, Sam Kelly, Helen McCabe and Toby Shaer, McCusker himself celebrating 30 years of making music this year.

TUESDAY 25th

STEELEYE SPAN: The New Theatre – The folk-folk mainstays return, still helmed by Maddy Prior over 50 years on from their formation, tonight playing songs from their vintage 1970s Chrysalis albums.

WEDNESDAY 26th

SPACE ELEVATOR: The Bullingdon – Polished 80s-style stadium rocking and glam from the band formed by guitarist David Young from the *We Will Rock You* West End musical,

Friday 28th

THE LIGHTNING SEEDS / BADLY DRAWN BOY: O2 Academy

Well, thanks to The Lionesses, football did come home and all those years of hurt are washed away. A good time then for the Lightning Seeds to head back off on tour. Whether Ian Broudie considers his biggest hit a boon or a millstone probably depends on how much he enjoys the royalty cheques for ‘Three Lions’. Biggest and best known hit it might be but it’s some distance from The Lightning Seeds’ best song, and really it tended to cheapen what remains one of the best pop acts of the 1990s. Listen to the likes of ‘Pure’ or ‘Life of Riley’ and ‘Sugar Coated Iceberg’ now and it’s still impossible to argue with the pure, undiluted pop thrill of them, Broudie one of the brightest writers and producers of the era – his production credits alone would fill a musical encyclopaedia. Having spent most of the past decade or so doing little beyond sing-along festival appearances, he and his band are back with a new album, ‘See You In The Stars’, retaining his sense of euphoric melancholy, though you know it’ll be those old hits that’ll get the crowd most animated. Support from fellow 90s survivor – Manchester’s self-effacing handdog songsmith Badly Drawn Boy.



unsurprisingly inspired by Queen as well as The Darkness, Heart and Fleetwood Mac.

SAMANA: Truck Store – Wintry, ethereal alt-folk in the venom of Mazzy Star and Angel Olsen from the duo instore.

THURSDAY 27th

MANNEQUINN + TUBER MURPHY + BEN JABOBS: The Jericho Tavern – It’s All About the Music local acts showcase.

THE UMBRELLAS + SEABLITE: The Port Mahon – Double dose of San Francisco Bay-area indie pop at tonight’s Divine Schism show, with The Umbrellas channelling the spirits of Belle & Sebastian, The Pastels and Comet Gain.

ASTON MERRYGOLD: O2 Academy – The vacuum at the heart of the cosmos.

10CC: The New Theatre – Graham Gouldman continues to lead the 1970s soft rock stars, reliving chart-toppers ‘I’m Not In Love’, ‘Rubber Bullets’ and ‘Dreadlock Holiday’, among others.

DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Stevenon

FRIDAY 28th

THE LIGHTNING SEEDS + BADLY DRAWN BOY: O2 Academy – It came home, and so shall The Lightning Seeds – *see main preview*

KAL-EL + THE GRAND MAL + GRUDGEWOOD + HE DIDNT: The Jericho Tavern – Buried In Smoke host Norway’s psychedelic stoner rockers Kal-el, with support from stoner and desert rock riffmongers The Grand Mal, tech-rockers Grudgewood and slow-core doomster he didnt.

EMMA DE LA QUERRA: Harcourt Arms

CUT THE TRAP: The Bullingdon – Trap club night.

THE STYLISTICS: The New Theatre – Fifty years and counting for the Philly soul legends, still going strong long after their huge 1970s commercial heyday, original members Airrion Love and Herb Murrell reprising timeless r’n’b hits like ‘Stop, Look, Listen’, ‘You Are Everything’, ‘You Make Me Feel Brand New’ and ‘I’m Stone In Love With You’.

FAUX FIGHTERS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Foos tribute night.

SATURDAY 29th

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with MYSTERY BISCUIT + MORNING’S THIEF + VANISHING JUMP: The Port Mahon – Another goodly mixed bag of sounds at this month’s GTI, with instrumental krautrock, psych and post-rock from newcomers Mystery Biscuit, alongside woozy, wistful indie from Stoke’s Morning’s Thief, and prog and alt. rock from Vanishing Jump.

Nightshift listings are free. Deadline for inclusion is the 20th of each month, no exceptions. Listings are copyright of Nightshift and may not be used without permission.

DAY OF THE DEABEATS: Isis Farmhouse – The seventeenth iteration of The Deadbeat Apostles’ free shindig features our favourite blues-rock warriors kicking it out with soul and punk spirit in the company of Egyptian-flavoured folksters Brickwork Lizards and big beat-bolstered pure pop furry bears Pandapopalypse.

THE SPIRALITES: Harcourt Arms – Barbershop quartet with northern soul and rocksteady vibes.

SQUEEZE: The New Theatre – South London’s savvy new wave hitmakers head out on tour to promote most recent album ‘The Knowledge’. Their fifteenth album, it was the follow-up to 2015’s ‘From Cradle to the Grave’, the first set of new songs written and recorded by Chris Difford and Glen Tilbrook since 1998, written as the soundtrack to the televised serialisation of Danny Baker’s autobiography of the same name. Difford and Tilbrook remain one of pop great songwriting double acts, mixing laddish wit with kitchen sink romance and regret on classic hits like ‘Cool For Cats’, ‘Pulling Mussels From the Shell’, ‘Take Me I’m Yours’ and ‘Up the Junction’, heirs to The Kinks’ throne in so many ways.

OHHMS + MORASS OF MOLASSES + SILENT WEAPON: The Jericho Tavern – Canterbury’s Ohhms roll back into town like a one-band Panzer division, mixing doom, prog, sludge and stoner metal with its roots in 60s and 70s heavy rock, but injected with plenty of contemporary invention, pummelling, grinding and grooving somewhere in the vast canyons between Isis, Mastodon, Pink Floyd and Torche.

BRIGITTE BERAHA: St. Giles Church – Singer Beraha performs as part of the Jazz at St Giles season.

SUNDAY 30th

THE SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Port Mahon (3pm)

OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms

FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon

OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (3pm)

SCAMPY: Brewery Tap, Abingdon

MONDAY 31st

SOUL SISTA: The Bullingdon – Disco, funk and soul club night.

THE PITMEN POETS: Nettlebed Folk Club – An evening of traditional and contemporary folk songs and stories from the North East, with stalwarts of the scene Billy Mitchell, Bob Fox, Benny Graham and Jez Lowe.



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ARUN GHOSH: CANTICLE OF THE SUN

St Barnabas Church

Music by Arun Ghosh, words by St Francis of Assisi, and taking place on the evening of the announcement of the Queen’s death; this isn’t a gig as usually understood. It goes ahead after discussions between the vicar, promoters Oxford Contemporary Music and Sound UK, and the musicians.

‘Canticle of the Sun’ is a prayer/poem by St Francis of Assisi that Ghosh first came across when browsing in a second hand

bookshop. He sets it by dividing St Francis’ words into a suite of eleven songs, starting with praising God and then our celestial universe: brother sun, sister moon and stars; next our elements: air, water, fire and earth; followed by universal themes: love, endurance and peace, death, and ending with praise to God.

The songs are sung beautifully in the original 13th Century Umbrian, mainly by Irini Arabatzzi and Seaming To, whose voices blend

perfectly. Each song is prefaced by short a semi-spoken, semi-chanted English translation of key phrases, but the translation is as much done by Ghosh and his seven other musicians’ impassioned and sensitive performance. Their ensemble playing is superb.

What is a surprise is that Ghosh, who is a world class jazz clarinetist, spends almost the song cycle at the keyboards, leading the ensemble by his expressive body language while silently mouthing the words.

Equally surprising is that for one number, ‘Mother Earth’, he picks up an acoustic guitar. It’s only in the tenth song, ‘Death’, that he turns to his clarinet for a stunning and dramatic solo, climaxing in what we hear as a free jazz scream of pain and grief, after which the voices return to offer what feels like solace. The settings are structured always with space for the excellent singers and for the Umbrian text to shine. There’s some scope for soloing, mainly from Gosh and from Camilla George, whose warm and lyrical alto sax sound floating above the ensemble is a highlight.

Ghosh draws on multiple sources from spiritual jazz and other devotional music such as Qawwali, Gospel and Gregorian chant, to global dance, rock, electronic experimental and more, but it’s his signature on the music. The songs start with a rhythmic motif, some of which are not that dissimilar; variants of the motif are then repeated over which the melodies ascend and fill St Barnabus. This rhythmic pulse gives even the slower tunes momentum, and a forward movement to the whole piece.

Lighting changes underline changes in mood but we find this an unnecessary distraction as the combination of Ghosh’s settings, the musicianship of his excellent ensemble and the venue itself convey awe, ecstasy, joy, consolation, reflection and so on clearly anyway. It’s an evocative and thought provoking performance that succeeds brilliantly on multiple levels.

Colin May

CANCER BATS

O2 Academy

Well, the 8th of September is certainly a date we’ll remember, and probably not because we fondly recall Cancer Bats banging out ‘Hail Destroyer’ early doors. The Queen’s death was announced at 6.30pm this evening. By 8.30pm, support band Witch Fever are leading a celebratory “the Queen is dead!” cheer (possibly a *bit* too soon, guys), and by 9.30pm we’re caught up in a frenetic, celebratory Cancer Bats circle pit. Tonight they’re playing the role of Oxford’s very own metal party band, with a solid commitment to partying so hard they make Andrew WK look like Jacob Rees-Mogg. There’s no room for political statements; they’re here to throw out the only thing that matters, RIFFS (and anecdotes about defecation, for some reason).

This is a show with plenty of the old-school about it, not even counting their obvious love for classic old-school hardcore, which

gives the clutch of opening songs in particular a breakneck, hurtling pace. There are no encores; they use up enough riffs for three bands in the main set alone. More than anything, this feels like a show from The Before Times, with a gigantic circle pit, overexcited audience members being carried out semi-conscious, or too worse for wear to identify the correct doors to head through. And who can blame them.

Songs like ‘Bricks and Mortar’ are trimmed down to their essence: hardcore brutality that should come with a formal health warning, though singer Liam Cormier bounces around the stage more like a newborn puppy or a (heavily tattooed) delicate foal. On such a weird night, it feels less odd to say that just about the most normal thing we can think of is a full immersion in everything Cancer Bats have to offer.

Stuart Fowkes

DANA GAVANSKI

Florence Park Community Centre

The arpeggiating Casio tones that greet Dana Gavanski onstage tonight are typical of the unassuming, good-natured strangeness of her music. Initially she comes across as a gently folk-tinged singer, one of seemingly scores we encounter on a regular basis, but, like Cate le Bon or Gwenno, that surface sheen is deceptive; her melodies and rhythms are off-kilter, her voice a quietly powerful instrument with a will of its own.

From the gorgeous, swooning ‘Catch’ – the closest Dana comes to pure pop, but even here with a sprinkling of shrapnel in the mix – to ‘I Kiss the Night’, she carries an almost lullaby-like sweetness and simplicity about her music, exuding a delicacy and something like reticence about her, so you barely notice the wayward paths her songs can take, like the harpsichord-infused ‘Bend Away & Fall’, which threatens a bit

of rock action but forever teeters on its edge, or the not-quite-waltz-time ‘Indigo Highway’, with its rinky-dink synth-pop nursery rhyme feel. Gavanski half sings, half sighs ‘Letting Go’, a song that seems to swoon slightly, while ‘Yesterday Is Gone’ sounds like the musical equivalent of a shy child prodigy – superficially stilted yet bright and engaging.

If there’s a gripe tonight it’s that in a short, ten-song set we get two cover versions, including an elegant take on King Crimson’s ‘I Talk To the Wind’, when there’s seemingly no room for songs like ‘Trouble’, which might have energised a tenderly-poised show; this is us wanting more though – more of a singer and musician who doesn’t promise revolutions but oh-so-subtly nudges and cajoles her music out of easy shapes. A quiet star.

Dale Kattack

BEIGE PALACE / IRAN IRAN / UHR

/ GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS

/ SINEWS

The Port Mahon

The Venn diagram of Oxford punk bands grows ever more complex as new venture Sinews grace the stage with members of The Dumplings, Spank Hair, Egrets and probably five other bands among the four-piece. They have a casual disregard for decibel level – the apparent theme of the evening – and wear their influences on their sleeve but the cathartic blast of unfettered discontent and distortion is an excellent starter to this evening’s tasting menu of noise.

Ghosts In The Photographs, Oxford’s evergreen post-rock powerhouse are next up, and COVID and Kickstarter seem to have brought a darker brooding veil to their sound. The chordal bass, soaring guitar and pile-driving drums fill every possible frequency, and every corner of the room (and probably much of East Oxford too). Their epic sound washes us away on tides of echoes, borne into a landscape of their creation. The peaks sublime and colossal, the valleys a gentle embrace. More please!

Uhr, a Mancunian trio, spread themselves across the gamut from (post-) punk sub-genres, from Gang Of Four right up to Idles. Using a strict economy of arrangement the songs are stripped down to the bone, not a shred of fat. Every riff has a razor sharp edge and piercing feedback often takes the place of a melody. There is plenty of punch and just a hint of art-rock nuance that raises the bar very high.

While there is some initial disappointment in discovering Iran Iran are not in fact a middle eastern Duran Duran cover band, their actual sound is so enormous we lose sense of time and space and rapidly feel like the Maxell advert guy, just with a quickly warming pint in one hand. Their set is full of expanded structures, riffs as heavy as a neutron star after a binge day, and metric tons of math-y instrumental complexity. The result is something akin to Battles but instead of delay pedals and vocal effects they decided to channel Napalm Death. The continents are all a bit out of alignment by the time Iran Iran are done, but it was worth it.

To close the night out Beige Palace bring the volume down but pile on the slacker energy. They’re all wonky rhythms and jagged tongue in cheek

THE HANDSOME FAMILY

St Barnabas Church

“This is a song about frogs; it attracts frogs,” deadpans Rennie Sparks introducing the song ‘Frogs’. There then proceeds to be a discussion between her and husband Brett about whether he bought her a four-CD boxset of frog mating calls as an anniversary present once. It’s typical of the surreal and frequently hilarious between-song exchanges that mark The Handsome Family out as one of the most consistently engaging, funny and strange bands around, and stand at odds with their often emotionally bleak songs.

Elsewhere tonight we get songs about octopi, bird feeders that birds hate, and haunted supermarkets, not to mention a never-ending hole into which the song’s protagonist eventually lowers himself after dumping his garbage into it for years, left to fall forever.

Tonight The Handsome Family are playing as a full four-piece band but for all the gorgeous slide guitar and inventive percussion, it’s always about Brett and Rennie. They haven’t even played a note before they have us laughing, Rennie telling a story of how her parents told her Santa Claus was responsible for World War II.

Her sonorous bass leads each song, however glacial the pace, only taking a backseat when she picks up a banjo towards the end. She harmonises with Brett whose deep, rich baritone is rough as a grizzly bear’s hide yet as warm and comforting as a feather bed, perfect for singing ominous yet beautiful gothic country songs of ghostly motels rooms and doomed Native American tribes. Only a mid-set excursion into almost jazzy honky tonk breaks the spell and could easily have made way for absent long-time favourite ‘My Sister’s Tiny Hand’.

The shimmering, moonlit ‘Far From Any Road’ is just one of myriad highlights from a set that mostly benefits from the acoustics of the expansive church, although a lack of stage means we get to see little of the performers, all bar Rennie sat down for the duration. “There’s only so much wine you can drink in one life / But it will never be enough to get you through” she and Brett conclude on ‘Only So Much Wine’ and the existential void threatens once again to open up before us. Moment later we’re laughing again. A rare gift from an exceptional band.

Dale Kattack



lyrics; they’re less concerned with artifice and more with their simple expression of their music and that joy is quickly shared with the audience, still here at eleven thirty after a giant lineup once again put on by those wonderful Divine Schism folks.

Matt Chapman Jones

CLT DRP / CONGRATULATIONS

The Jericho Tavern

We joke that Congratulations might be a rock Cliff Richard tribute – and, be honest, a drop-tuned stoner burn through “Devil Woman” would be a joy – but the Brighton quartet are even more unexpected. Firstly, in their bright primary-coloured threads they look like Mystery Inc have fallen on hard times and started a Butlins showband, and secondly they sound like...everything. At once. Seriously, one track reminds us of Rage Against The Machine, The Cramps, and Bucks Fizz in the space of four minutes, and whilst not every song is as wilfully lopsided, there are plenty of tracks chucking spiky post-punk guitar solos at fat, fuzzy glam riffs, and then putting an abstract pop chant over the top, like eclectic oddballs Islet on a cocktail of Sunny Delight and mezcal. They even schmooze out a camp pseudo-Prince jam, where even the irony is in air quotes. Perhaps we imagined this whole beautiful mania.

Confabulations? Their hometown tour buddies CLT DRP are clearly having their own little version of *Only Connect*.

We’ll leave you to work out what the name signifies (spoiler: sadly it’s not OCELOT DRAPE). The trio deal in aggressive electro rock, and whilst this might bring to mind images of Chicks On Speed or Peaches, they are both weightier, throwing out denture-rattling synth patterns and tympanum-skewering ring modulated guitar, and more controlled, with a glorious line in clinically battering drums and vocals that can do a lot more than just screechily hector (although they do also screechily hector pretty damn well). There are moments that recall Atari Teenage Riot, some passages that update the stalking noughties darkstep of Distance, and even one track with the funky flavour of early Beasties, albeit with rather more enlightened gender politics – COOL TO DO RAP? – but the real surprise is how much metal there is underpinning the imposing rhythms. But dissecting the sound is probably less important than revelling in the aural thrashing we’re getting from this digital cat o’ nine tails (or maybe CLEATED ROPE).

David Murphy

WHAT’S MY LINE?

A monthly look at jobs in local music.
This month it’s **RICHIE WILDSMITH**
from **GARAGE ROCK BADGES** and
he’s a **MERCH MAKER**.

How long have you worked in this job?
“Garage Rock Merch started this year, although we’ve been making our own merch for our bands for a few years. We mainly make badges at the moment but we will be able to print one-colour t-shirts, tote bags etc soon.
What is one thing you have to do as part of your job that the average person might not know?
“I’m always looking out for new products. Researching and testing different products and processes is an important part of the job.”
What’s been the single biggest highlight of your career so far?
“As a new business, I’d have to say completing our first order.”

And the lowlight?
“Having supplies go missing in the post, which took months to sort out.”
How much and how did Covid affect your job?
“Covid delayed us starting the business so we spent the lock down period just getting stuff together ready for when we could promote and let people know about us. But of course, being musicians as well, Covid affected us like every other band, in not being able to play live.”
Who’s your favourite ever Oxford musical artist?
“Wow that’s tough; there are a few bands that I’ve always loved, like The Candyskins, The Samurai Seven, Ride and The Mystics, but I



guess the greatest band ever from Oxford has to be the fuzztastic Supergrass: musical perfection.”
What’s the single most important piece of advice you’d give to someone wanting to do your job?
“Do it in another city ha ha! I dunno, I guess respond to enquiries quickly. Being a small business, every order is appreciated and I like to get orders done and posted asap. I like a fast turnaround so if merch is needed last minute then I’ll try my best to do it, and I’ll deliver it to you myself if you live in OX4.”
Who’s the most awkward person you’ve ever had to deal with in your job?
“I find working with my own quality control pretty awkward.”

When was the last time you heard genius?
“Locally it would have to be ‘Viva La Evolution’ by The Deadbeat Apostles and ‘Distorted Mountain’ by The August List.”
Have you ever compromised your integrity in the course of your work?
“No I haven’t but if Ed Sheeran ordered a thousand badges, I’d quite happily do a good job for him.”
Would you swap your job for any other and if so, what?
“No way would I swap; I’ve always wanted to be a musician and adding the merch side of it means I can work from home spending more time with my family. The only other job I wanted was to play for Plymouth Argyle but I chose music instead; I’m a slightly better drummer than I am a footballer.”
Are you rich?
“In name yes, I’m Rich for life. Other than that I’m not financially, so please buy more badges. I do feel very lucky to have my wonderful wife and daughter, our merch business and two bands that we are in together, that’s just perfect for me.”
Do you consider your job glamorous?
“It probably isn’t but to me it is: maybe not the sitting at home making badges but being able to tour with my best friend and wife in our bands, visiting different cities together is the best, even though that’s on hold for a bit after having our daughter; it will just get even more fun when she’s older.”
What’s your favourite thing about Oxford’s music scene?
“I love that we have *Nightshift*; it’s great having such a good gig guide each month. The music venues here are great and it’s been so sad to lose some amazing ones in recent years but I love hanging out down The Bullingdon, The Library or Port Mahon when there’s some good bands on.”

Dr SHOTOVER: Alphaville of the People

Ah, there you are, Second Lieutenant Jackfruit. Welcome to the regimental reunion of the King’s Own Mahavishnu Rifles, taking place tonight in the East Indies Club bar. What’s that? Ah, good man - you may certainly get your round in, but no, don’t pull up a pew. We are all, as a mark of respect, remaining standing, with our backs to the beer, I mean bier. Until we fall over, that is. And, let’s face it, we are squaring up to an unbelievable number of toasts this evening, in honour of the illustrious recently departed. Who will we be toasting? Oh, the usual late figures of note - everyone from Anne Heche to Drummie Zeb via regimental revolutionary mascot Jean-Luc Godard. And of course Her Majesty, the Sovereign of all our Hearts - Dame Olivia Newton John. Cheers! Raise your glasses and jingle your medals, please. All together now [*regimental pedal steel player strikes up and all start swaying*] – ‘I’m hopelessly devoted... to youu’
Next month: Another Queen Tribute Band



‘Shotoverrre, you’re the one that I want, ooh ooh ooh’

INTRODUCING....

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

BROKEN EMPIRE

Who are they?
Oxford hard rock and metal band Broken Empire are: Ieuan Owen (*vocals/rhythm guitar*); Matt Stevens (*lead guitar*); Ricky Hill (*drums*), and Marco Arena (*bass*). The band formed in 2017 after Ricky and his manager put adverts on out online. Matt was the first to join, then Marco, who had recently moved to the UK from Italy. After a succession of auditions for a vocalist the band met Ieuan (“he looked the part with his crazy coloured mohawk and it all just clicked together nicely!”). The band made their live debut at The Wheatsheaf two months later. Over the past five years they have released four EPs and a single, played over 70 gigs and supported Phil Campbell & The Bastard Sons, Evil Scarecrow, The Fallen State, Ryder’s Creed and Hollowstar. Their debut album, ‘Before the Fall’ is due for release this month.
What do they sound like?
A versatile slab of anthemic, melodic death-tinged metal that breaks out of its genre boundaries with excursions into more traditional heavy rock, metalcore and NWOBHM, but always ferocious, hook-heavy and energetic.
What inspires them?
“Events or moments in our lives, whether personal experiences or just events happening around the world. Our upcoming single ‘Before The Fall’ tackles the subject of asking for help when you need it most but maybe you didn’t realise that at first.”
Their career highlight so far is:
“This year we played a set at a sold out Breaking Bands Festival which was amazing, and we also had the honour of supporting Phil Campbell & The Bastard Sons at a near sold-out O2 Academy, which was buzzing! It was great to see so many people out enjoying live music again!”
And the lowlight:
“We haven’t had many, but having entered Oxford’s Metal 2 The Masses after only playing two or three gigs in 2018, we managed to get to the finals where we unfortunately lost out.”



Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:
“There are so many! We’ve been told we are only allowed one, but we’re going to push our luck and try two. Firstly we’re going to say Molly Karloff; they’re a great bunch of guys and we can’t wait to hear their upcoming album. And secondly we have to give a shout out to our drummer’s dads band The Dirty Earth Band!”
If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:
“Alter Bridge’s ‘Fortress’ on a majority vote.”
When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect?
“To mark the release of our debut album we have another instore set at HMV Oxford planned for October – date to be confirmed. And next February we will be playing a special headline gig at The Bullingdon.”
Their favourite and least favourite thing about Oxford music?
“There are always new bands coming out of Oxford, which is great for the scene and keeps it fresh. However there are fewer and fewer venues to play at, which is such a shame. It’s also not helped by the powers that be putting in more and more restrictions around the likes of the Cowley Road, making it nearly impossible to be able to get to said remaining venues!”
You might love them if you love:
Alter Bridge; Bullet For My Valentine; Avenged Sevenfold; Periphery; Tremonti.
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ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO
While **Supergrass** were the featured band in October 2002’s *Nightshift*, talking about the release of ‘Life On Other Planets’, their fourth studio album, (“There are points during the recording of all our albums where I think I’m going to have a heart attack through the stress,” declared Mickey Quinn), the lead news story this month concerned the state of **The Pub Oxford** on The Plain. Previously home to the legendary **Point** venue, a year after the venue’s forced closure, the room was still standing idle, while the manager declared the pub’s takings had fallen dramatically, giving lie to Six Continents’ previous claims that the live music venue was bad for trade. The company was also responsible for ending the **Famous Monday Blues**’ tenure at the **Fuggle & Firkin**, making them pariahs as far as Oxford gig goers were concerned. In other local news *Nightshift* was set to celebrate another great year in local music with a show at the **Zodiac** featuring **South Sea Company Prospectus**, **The Young Knives**, **Ivy’s Itch** and **Psychid**. Elsewhere on the local gig calendar were **Oceansize**, **British Sea Power** and **Puressence**, while **The Samurai Seven**, **Goldrush**, **Nought**, **The Rock Of Travolta** and **Winnabago Deal** were flying the flag for local music on the Zodiac’s stage. Over in the demo pages, **Ivy’s Itch** topped the pile for “wearing pretty floral frocks and smiling like butter wouldn’t melt in their mouths, before turning on a sixpence and shoving a hand grenade down your pants.”

10 YEARS AGO
Alphabet Backwards made their second front cover appearance in October 2012’s *Nightshift* but it was the month’s Introducing act that catches the eye in retrospect, **Glass Animals** following up their Demo of the Month in April 2010 with their first full feature in any magazine. “We love nature,” they said, asked what inspired them. “Having a studio surrounded by squirrels and field mice is great; we walk past their homes every morning. They’re very friendly neighbours. There’s also a very handsome fox who lives in the hedge next door; he’s eyeing up the chickens round the corner.” While Glass Animals were just starting out on the road to fame and fortune, **Supergrass** were awarded with a blue plaque to commemorate their first ever gig, on the front wall of **The Jericho Tavern**. It was a lovely ceremony, and we were loathe to point out the organisers had got the wrong date. Someone else who we managed not to argue with was **Azealia Banks**, who was playing at the O2 Academy, the bellicose rapper having already fallen out with her record label by this stage in her career. As of last week there are now only seven people on the planet she doesn’t have a beef with. **Marina & the Diamonds**, **Julian Cope**, **Newton Faulkner** and **Benjamin Francis Leftwich** were among other big names in town.

5 YEARS AGO
We know how it ended but five years ago saw the start of the battle to save **The Cellar**, as plans

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

went before the council to turn the venue into retail space. The historic basement venue and nightclub would enjoy a temporary reprieve in this episode before the goalposts were moved and then moved again as the music community, locally and beyond, united to fight for its existence. The fact the building remains empty now, despite St Michael’s & All Saints “charity” declaring it had a duty to maximise profits, is both a tragedy and an outrage. Away from such things, **Cassels** made their second appearance on the cover of *Nightshift*, stating “don’t expect us to write any breezy summer bangers anytime soon” as they talked about their new record ‘Epiphets’, released on Big Scary Monsters. “I went home to Chipping Norton for four days and even in that time lost my mind and sense of identity a little bit; I can never escape the eerie feeling that when you’re standing in the middle of a deserted field, no one would be able to hear you scream,” said Jim Beck of his now former home town. Among the gig highlights of the month were **Gary Numan**, **The Dears**, **Lethal Bizzle** and **Roots Manuva**, at the O2 Academy; **Marc Almond**, **Midge Ure** and **Altered Images**, at **The New Theatre**; **Jane Weaver** at **The Bullingdon**, and **Desperate Journalist** and **Slowcoaches** at **The Cellar**, although the big event of the month was **Ritual Union** along Cowley Road, with **Peace**, **Bo Ningen**, **Josefin Ohrn + the Liberation**, **Baba Naga**, **Traams**, **Ulrika Spacek**, **Black Honey**, **Willie J Healey**, **Low Island** and **The August List** among a host of acts spread wonderfully across half a dozen venues. Bring it back!

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TRACKS

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TOP TRACK

DOGMILK

As *Nightshift* sits down to review this month's pile of tracks, a sizeable chunk of the UK population are sat transfixed in front of the telly watching 24-hour rolling coverage of a fucking queue. Worse, Guinea Pig Awareness Week has been cancelled out of respect for the Queen's passing, which is exactly What She Would Have Wanted™. Still, could be worse – the normal news is a fucking nightmare these days and anyway, *Nightshift* is used to dealing with mournful processions of stuff. Talking of which, let's crack on with this month's tracks from our Center Parcs holding cell.

Dogmilk here are something of a chameleon of a band, particularly live, fervently changing their colours with each song, defying the lazy pigeonholing music critics like to indulge in, so by rights we should hate them, but here we are, top of the pile with a song called 'Deep End', which is variously funky, spiky, rinky-dink and fuzzy, full of sharp edges and a hint of glam, like one of Supergrass' more Bowie-leaning numbers overlaid on Foals' rhythm section. It's grungy in an ebullient kind of way and is all done and dusted in just over two minutes, so it wouldn't fit in well in the royal queue. Hopelessly disrespectful and thus set to be lambasted in a six-page *Daily Mail* supplement for crimes worse than holding hands with your spouse. We demand Dogmilk at the very least change their name to Corgimilk immediately. It's What She'd Have Wanted™. In the meantime, welcome to the top of the pile, chaps.

TENDERTWIN

Now this really is the sort of song we can imagine being played respectfully in Westminster Abbey seeing as what it sounds like it was written and recorded in a church if not a full-on cathedral. Tendertwin is the work of Bilge Nur Yilmaz, a Turkish-born musician who grew up in Philadelphia before relocating to London and most recently came to Oxford to study musical performance. It's orchestral in its reach, starting from sparse, tender piano-and-vocals before cresting to full-on string arrangements by

its somewhat epic climax, her voice airy and slightly fragile, reminding us very slightly early on in the song of Mercury Rev's Jonathan Donahue before the song takes on a more gospel/r'n'b hue and builds with something like stately pace to its denouement, softly swarming strings, a marching beat and an almost religious sense of purpose. Not only this month's song most appropriate for a royal funeral service but also the song most likely to be streamed about sixty billion times on Spotify and soundtrack the next John Lewis Christmas advert. Very nice – welcome to Oxford, Bilge.

IN SILO

The solo work of Chris from the band Zurich, In Silo very definitely captures the solemnity and gravity of the situation with a slightly gloomy form of post-punk machine-pop, which proceeds with martial pace and an air of graceful gloom about it, occasionally sounding a bit like Bon Iver and The National teaming up for some lo-fi techno-rock fun, even if 'fun' is definitely off the menu. Here at *Nightshift* we do like a bit of gloom and general gothic seriousness and this is pleasant enough for the most part – a few nice synth flourishes a reasonable sense of melody so it's not completely funereal, but as the procession of songs continues it can become a bit of a dirge, plodding where it might march. 'Summer', ironically, is most guilty of this, letting little light in, though the Editors-like 'Surrender' picks up the beat and strides more purposefully; the Queen's Royal Guards would likely be impressed by its unstinting discipline and sense of ceremony, even if at this pace it might be late for the battle.

JMS

Like In Silo, JMS is a man outside of his usual band set-up; in this case it's James Hitchman from Alphabet Backwards – the JMS is, apparently, the initials he uses on pinball machine high-score boards. Much like his band this is genial pop, as good natured as a gaggle of retirees in the queue for the Queen's lying in state. Piano, electronic beats and gently strummed guitars add up to a feeling that James might have been sat in a sunny local park with a couple of cans of chilled cider when he wrote and recorded this, and at a time of national mourning it's a nice antidote to all that sadness and solemnity and stiff upper lipness. That said, this song, 'Election Day', isn't about the forthcoming national day of celebration when Liz Untrussedworthy helps the Tories to their most humiliating ever defeat, but about trust in your body when you're living with epilepsy, so beneath the geniality there is a contemplative edge, which is never allowed to overbear too much on the general mood

of the song. So let's forget the bad stuff and concentrate on all of life's positives: all the bad stuff has gone – no more war, climate breakdown or cost of living crisis. Must be over; it's not on the news anymore.

NVMERAL

Nvmereal are, according to their own description, a progressive post-hardcore band, so are, without even listening to them, this month's act least likely to be asked to perform at a royal funeral, something that's quickly confirmed by their music. Polite society is unlikely to be troubled by them any time soon. They've sent us their cover version of Kate Bush's recently revived 'Running Up That Hill', rendered here as a slightly cheesy heavy rock stadium anthem, the backing singer's roar sounding like an audience of cheering acolytes rather than an Uruk hai warrior on heat. It's passable enough but truth be told, we can't see the point. The original is a timeless, transcendental piece of music made by a bona fide genius; this is a straight-up rock song. That said it's about twelvety trillion times better than Rita Ora's recent horror show rendition, which would have any recently deceased people, royal or otherwise, spinning in their graves.

SHOCK HORROR

With a name like Shock Horror this lot really should be more gothic-minded heavy-duty noisemongers, which, for better or worse, they're not. We've seen them live a couple of times over the last few months and they're usually somewhat more boisterous than this recorded track, called 'How Did We Get Here', which bobbles along pleasantly enough for the most part, somewhere between Pavement and the quieter side of Nirvana; we keep expecting it to explode into a ferocious wall of firestorm grunge any moment, but it never does, which at least avoids one rock and roll cliché but does mean it goes nowhere with little apparent haste. It picks up a head of steam with some neat, rhythmic militancy towards the end but then just stops before they can make better use of that hint of promise. And we have to say, the vocals are awful – anonymous, adenoidal and completely unsuited to music with any kind of pretensions towards rock and roll. Plenty of change required but at least there are hints of something worth building on.

DAN McKEAN

Dan McKean used to be in the local band Dandelions who we reviewed positively here a while back, but now he's heading out solo. Is his music respectful to our dear Queen? Yes. Is it any good? We dare not speak such treasonous thoughts! Dear old Dan here trades in reflective semi-acoustic balladry. Regular readers will know this

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

is our absolute favourite kind of music – way ahead of dark, abrasive electro-pop or vicious industrial hardcore, so welcome in Dan, have a seat and don't worry your pretty little head about all the duct tape, knives and bolt cutters lying about, they're for... an experiment. One where we take reflective semi-acoustic balladeers and see if we can make them sound like Anaal Nathrakh by blunt force trauma and extremity removal alone. We think we're getting close after a few years of practice. Only kidding – make yourself a nice cup of tea and help yourself to that bumper tub of Roses chocolates over there. Go on, have another. Have some more. Eat the whole fucking bucket, Dan. Feeling a bit sick? Too sweet and soft centred, eh? Yeah, well now you know we feel after four industrial sized dollops of reflective semi-acoustic balladry. We'll call it a draw.

TOILET TRACK

JOHNNY GRAY

After twenty minutes of music that makes Eric Clapton's 'Wonderful Tonight' sound like Ho99o9's 'United States of Horror', we're in need of something new, fresh, exciting, invigorating. We get Johnny Gray. Gray by name and all that. Gray plays the blues. This is the kind of music that people who genuflect before an imagined idyllic past might enjoy as they feast on corned beef, pease pudding and powdered egg (but not too greedily – rationing and all that, remember). It's music that hasn't changed or progressed in over 50 years and never will, because the future, hell, even the present, is too terrifying – what with its modern fangled drill music and synthesisers and, erm, Pussycat Dolls ("are they modern, dear? I'm making a list of stuff I don't like or understand"). If we're being particularly kind (and believe us, we do try), 'All The Haunted Hearts' here sounds like a knock-off version of the worst excesses of Elton John's mid-80s arena rock period, but really it's just constipated power blues rocking with no heart to haunt. 'On The Rocks', meanwhile, is a reflective acoustic ballad. "The taste of sweet tea / It reminds me of you" dribbles Johnny weepily as he turns to the bottle to better forget the woman who left him (she went off to follow The Antichrist Imperium on tour). Seriously, never mind desalination, this song could turn the oceans to syrup all on its own, it's so cloying. Reader, we live in a world where people would rather leave plastic-wrapped marmalade sandwiches to rot in St James' Park than maybe donate to a local food bank. In this same world, people would rather make or listen to music like this than something that might possess a solitary ounce of soul, grit or fire. In this historical moment, let us misquote a wise old man: "do not pity the dead; pity the living and, above all, those who have to listen to this crap for a living.

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