

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every

month

Issue 325

Dec 2023 /

Jan 2024

TRACKS OF OUR YEAR

The Best Oxford Songs of 2023

Also in this issue:

Introducing MID AIR

At work with JOSH RIGAL

plus

All your Oxford music news, previews and reviews
for December & January

OXFORD DUPLICATION CENTRE



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

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

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

THE BULLINGDON

DECEMBER 2023

GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Friday 1st December

Toology & Ghosts
in the Photographs
Echochamber

Doors: 7PM

Friday 1st December

Trippin Ballis
Santa's Psychedelic Sleigh

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 2nd December

Simple
Peach B2B Midland
All night Long

Doors: 11PM

Thursday 7th December

It's All About The Music
Your Song Special

Doors: 7PM

Friday 8th December

Tide Lines

Doors: 7PM

Friday 8th December

I The Haus Party
X-Mas Special

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 9th December

Reggaeton Party

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 10th December

Opus Kink

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 14th December

Premium Leisure
Album Launch
Blue Bayou
Shock Horror

Doors: 7PM

Friday 15th December

Dreadzone

Doors: 7PM

Friday 15th December

The Bully Bailer
Winter Warmer
(Last event of 2023)

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 16th December

Old Skool Oxford
Micky Finn
(94-'96 Set)

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 17th December

In a Different Place
Mandrake Handshake
The August List

Deadbeat Apostles

Killer Kowalski

Emma Hunter

Mid Air Dogmilk

Cholly

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 20th December

The Jake Kirkpatrick
Memorial Gig

Doors: 7PM

Friday 22nd December

The Shapes Xmas Shindig
The Balkan Wanderers
Jody & The Jerns

Doors: 7PM

Sunday 24th December

Reggae Xmas
Friendly Fire Band

Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 26th December

Terraforms Boxing Day Party
Nicky Blackmarket
Greencode & Bolo

DJ Smokey

Jo Keeble

Overkill

Doors: 10PM

Friday 29th December

Party Time Again
White Magic
5 Star General

The Major

DJ Unruly

Platinum

Kirky Vibes

Untouchable

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 30th December

Rawdio

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 31st December

Hooked on NYE

Danny Byrd

Darrison

[IVY]

Count skylarkin

Inky

Mainline Audio

Love Shank

Hooked DJs

Doors: 9PM

Friday 2nd February

As Everything Unfolds

Doors: 7PM

Sunday 4th February

Gary Meikle: Facts

Doors: 7PM

Friday 9th February

The Total Stone Roses

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 10th February

Beam me up 2024

Dead Letter

The Rills, Dolores Forever, Snayx

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 15th February

Basketmouth:
Cancel Culture

Doors: 7PM

Friday 16th February

Nabil Abdulrashid:
The Purple Pill

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 17th February

Musical Medicine

Mr Scruff

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 25th February

Luke Combs UK

Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 27th February

The Bug Club

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 28th February

Melanie Bracewell:
Forget Me Not

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 29th February

Tom Houghton:
It's Not Ideal

Doors: 7PM

NEWS

email: editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk

Online: nightshiftmag.co.uk



BROOKES UNIVERSITY

has announced plans to close its renowned music course after over 40 years in what is being seen as yet another attack on music and the wider arts under the current Tory government, with the university cutting costs in the face of reduced funding.

A statement from Brookes music staff in November described their reaction as “shock and devastation” at the move, which will eventually see all the course staff made redundant. No new students will be taken on from this academic year and the course closed completely in 2026, once current student cohorts complete their course. Previous students on the course include Radiohead’s Jonny Greenwood and Ride’s Loz Colbert, while scores of local musicians have come through the course. Brookes have blamed falling student numbers as a reason for closing the course.

A petition to try and persuade Brookes to reverse their decision is active now at [Change.org](https://www.change.org). The petition had gathered over 3,000 signatures at time of *Nightshift* going to print.

CROWDED HOUSE are set to headline the closing night of next year’s **Nocturne Live** festival. The Australian pop heroes will play at **Blenheim Palace on Sunday the 16th June**, joined by **Sheryl Crow** and **Turin Brakes**.

Nocturne 2023 runs from the 12th June at the UNESCO World Heritage site, featuring five nights of live music to 10,000 fans each night. More info at [nocturnelive.com](https://www.nocturnelive.com)

OPERATION BOOMBOX is a new music and arts project which aims to liven up Cowley Road while providing exposure for local artists and musicians. Organised by not-for-profit graffiti crew MES Crew and funded by the Arts Council, Operation Boombox will see nine utility boxes along

the Cowley Road given an artistic makeover with each piece of art a response to a track by a local band or musician. A QR code on each box will enable people to listen to the track. Two boxes have been done so far in response to tracks by The Manacles of Acid and rapper Evolucion, with future pieces based on music by Rawz, Zen Lewis, Kanadia and Sam ‘DeSide’ Mansell among others. Visit www.operationboombox.co.uk for more details.

BBC INTRODUCING IN OXFORDSHIRE & BERKSHIRE

continues to showcase grassroots music from across both counties every Thursday, from 8-10pm on 95.2fm and DAB. The show, presented by Dave Gilyeat, is repeated on Saturday evenings and is available to listen to online on BBC Sounds.

MELTING POT continues to showcase new and classic Oxford music every fortnight on Get Radio. Local acts can submit their music to the show, presented by Rich and Deadly, by emailing meltingpot@getradio.co.uk.

LIVE MUSIC TUESDAY broadcasts two hours of local music including studio sessions, plus gig reviews and previews, interviews and gig replays on Windrushradio.co.uk every Tuesday between 8-10pm with presenters Fergus McVey and Emma De La Querra. Send your music to studio@windrushradio.co.uk



EMMA HUNTER has been talking to *Nightshift* about her single ‘Morire’, which has been voted *Nightshift*’s Song of the Year for 2023. ‘Morire’ was the runaway winner in a vote of the magazine’s contributors. It is Emma’s second Number 1 following on from ‘Window’ in 2021.

“It feels amazing to be honest,” she said; ‘we hoped the song would go down well and we are delighted that it has been so well received. It’s the boost we needed to keep us motivated; it reminds us that melody and storytelling is always worth striving for. We would like to say a huge thank you to *Nightshift*, Jimmy Hetherington for his fantastic production on the track, and to Steve Preston for his fantastic trumpet playing. “The song is part of the story of Yolanda and Danny that I don’t seem to be able to leave alone. They are characters that live in 1950s Mexico; he is an alcoholic murderer and she can’t seem to leave him, but then she finds love again and he probably ends up in a ditch somewhere. ‘Morire’ – which is the Italian word to fade and die – is about Danny’s relationship with alcohol. He is essentially choosing to drink himself into oblivion and fade away, rather than choosing a relationship with Yolanda. This is before she finds out about all the murdering by the way. The video, shot by Matt Trevor-Roper, helps to tell the story and shows that this song is all about the realisation that he won’t change, he won’t stop. The song reflects elements of an earlier song called ‘Snake’, which is a more hopeful tale, that maybe he will change. In ‘Morire’, it’s all too late.”

After a busy year of gigging, Emma finishes 2023 with a show at the In A Different Place all-day at The Bullingdon on Sunday 17th December. Looking further forward, there are plans for a debut album next year. “With all that chat about Yolanda and Danny, it makes perfect sense to create an album that tells their story. Hopefully we’ll be able to do this with an amazing special edition vinyl that contains all of Yolanda and Danny’s songs in chronological order. We are also releasing our third EP in spring next year so it would be great if we could release the tales of Yolanda and Danny alongside it. To celebrate the EP release we will be putting on a special show at the Holywell Music Rooms, which promises to be a brilliant night. After that we will start working on an album with some of the other material that we have.”

Read the full Nightshift end of year Top 30 overleaf.

THE BULLINGDON

Cocktail Bar

2-4-1 COCKTAILS 4-8PM EVERY DAY!

MIX ‘N’ MATCH YOUR FAVOURITES

FREE VENUE HIRE!
PERFECT FOR ANY EVENT

EMAILMARKETING@THEBULLINGDON.CO.UK FOR MORE DETAILS



THE BEST IN LIVE STAND-UP COMEDY

EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT

7pm | Tickets: Glee.co.uk or 0871 472 0400

FOLLOW US ON SOCIALS
FOR MORE INFORMATION



@THEBULLINGDON
@BULLINGDONBAR

THE BULLINGDON
162 COWLEY ROAD
OXFORD, OX4 1UE

www.thebullingdon.co.uk
info@thebullingdon.co.uk
[Facebook.com/bullingdonoxford](https://www.facebook.com/bullingdonoxford)

IN A DIFFERENT PLACE

MANDRAKE HANDSHAKE / THE AUGUST LIST / DEADBEAT APOSTLES
KILLER KOWALSKI / EMMA HUNTER / MID AIR / DOGMILK / CHOLLY / 31HOURS
OLD MAN MAY / ENJOYABLE LISTENS / TAMARA
LAIMA / BARRICANE / SIMON VEANEY

17 DEC 2023 THE BULLINGDON

TRACKS OF OUR YEAR

The end of another year is upon us and even as the world seems to be falling further into despair with each new news bulletin, we still have music to shelter us and take us on adventures, and as ever Oxford music continues to be a beacon of quality. As is traditional Nightshift’s contributors have been voting for their favourite local tracks of 2023. This year saw a very clear winner as EMMA HUNTER won her second end of year Number 1 with the epic, exotic ‘Morire’, a continuation of her series of song stories of her characters Yolanda and Danny. Here then is our rundown of the best Oxford music of the year. Keep supporting local grassroots artists, and here’s to more greatness in 2024!



1. EMMA HUNTER ‘Morire’

If anyone had any doubts that Emma Hunter is a supreme talent, ‘Morire’ will have blown such doubts from their moorings and out to sea. This is a simply epic piece of music – six and half minutes of elegantly turbulent flamenco-flavoured surf-rock wherein Emma – backed as ever by the supreme percussive talents of Tom Bruce – dives deep into love, murder and alcoholism with a vocal performance to die for and a song that is gothic romantic tragedy on a cinematic scale. Absolutely wonderful.

2. STORNOWAY ‘Trouble With The Green’

Before David Cameron made dramatic comebacks something to abhor, Stornoway made returns something to adore and with ‘Dig the Mountain’, they never sounded like they’d been away. The first single from the album was also its choice cut, showing the band’s magical way with an intricately woven melody that exudes sweet simplicity is undiminished. Welcome back boys, you – unlike Lord Cameron – are most welcome round here.

3. GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS ‘The Day After Gomorrah’

Horror and beauty in one epic, elegant beast of a track that closes Ghosts in the Photographs’ brilliant debut album. From the pitch-black opening dialogue, taken from *Apocalypse Now*, through a spangled shoegazey guitar seascape and onwards into the heart of darkness that is Josh Day’s volcanic

guest vocal performance over a tumultuous cascade of post-rock, post-metal noise, this is how to make music on the grandest scale. Magnificent stuff.

4. THE PEOPLE VERSUS ‘Pretty Words’

Pretty by title, pretty by nature. The People Versus were a gust of fresh pure pop blossom on the scene this year, led by the wonderfully pure, emotionally-charged vocal talents of Alice Edwards. The words come infused with hurt but this sounds like a spell being cast on the listener. A perfect mix of shadow and sunlight in pop form.

5. THE SUBTHEORY ‘Crown Of Thorns’

No sunshine reaches the dark, mist-shrouded streets that The Subtheory walk in this somnambulating *film noir* soundtrack, Andy Hill’s will o’ the wisp trip hop beats and guitar shimmer skittering around Cate Debu’s wonderfully limpid and dreamy vocals. Evil lurks in dark corners but it does so with the sleek elegance of a cat.

6. MILA TODD ‘Mutate’

Consistently one of the most versatile stars on the local scene, Mila’s journeys into Berlin’s electronic music scene have served her well as she’s released a series of inventive tracks across 2023 of which this mutated version of her Just Emma single was a stand-out, merging exotic psychedelia, haunted torch song, crunching beats and industrial electronic exploration into a plaintive yet defiant piece of perfect pop.

7. THE BOBO ‘Tez to Znasz’

Maria Rozalska’s dark, ethereal electronic pop hit another high point with this single, showing again her ability to create a delicate lacework of musical euphoria that sounds like it could crumble to dust if you even breathed on it but could take you up into the stars and beyond as it tumbles and floats gently but wraith-like through Julee Cruise-like dream-pop land. The finest brush strokes make the grandest of art.

8. PECQ ‘Left Behind’

Hannah Jacobs spent much of 2023 on tour as Arlo Parks’ keyboard player but thankfully also found time, alongside musical partner Nicò O’Brien, to release a succession of intricate, elaborate electronic pop pieces like this: a song that stretches out from its intimate, inward-looking beginning to an expansive chorus as Hannah ruminates on the loss of a friend. It’s heartbreaking but it’s also quite, quite beautiful.

9. PREMIUM LEISURE ‘Cornerhouse’

Ironically Premium Leisure’s most downbeat sounding song to date was also their least cynical: a romantic celebration of the warmth and comfort of time away with the one you love and a call to switch off from the pressures of the world. Chris Barker has been quietly earning a reputation as one of the best musical craftsmen in Oxford and ‘Cornerhouse’’s mix of reflection and optimism serves to confirm his outstanding talent.

10. DESERT STORM ‘Druid’s Heath’

Can it really be that Desert Storm have got even heavier? The evidence was plain and impossible to resist on latest effort ‘Death Rattle’ which, like predecessor ‘Omens’ ramped up the riffage and expanded those huge, storm-ravaged musical horizons. This, possibly the heaviest cut from the record, is an absolute beast of a song but, as ever with Desert Storm, it’s cut from granite with expert hands and a subtlety that throws its monstrosity into even starker relief.

11. GAZ COOMBES ‘Don’t Say It’s Over’

Few pop stars get to grow up with their audience and fewer still have the chops to carry it off effectively but Gaz Coombes proved he can do it with style on ‘Turn the Car Around’, from which the melancholic ‘Don’t Say It’s Over’ was the chief pick, with its spidery warmth despite the reflection and doubt that pervades the song. A songwriter of easy grace, Gaz’ exuberant pop days might be over but his class remains perfectly intact.

12. DOLLY MAVIES ‘Silhouette’

“We could sail the world but I’m scared of the sea” sings Dolly Mavies breathily on the highlight of her beautifully realised debut album, ‘The Calm & The Storm’, her voice cast adrift on plangent piano and barely-there beats, Dolly alone with her doubts and fears, and if it’s more calm than storm musically (if not always lyrically), a hazy sea mist suits her intimate style more than a Force 9 gale.

13. DUBWISER ‘Smile Plenty’

Only a bit like buses, you wait years for a Dubwiser EP to come along and then two turn up at once. “Wake up, wake up, wake up! Smile!” is the opening exhortation to positivity that is ‘Smile Plenty’ and we’re off on a joyously carefree lope through easy reggae grooves and uplifting brass that sounds like the musical equivalent of ice cream or cold beer on a hot summer’s day. Never mind the dark winter nights, get some Dubwiser in your bloodstream.

14. THE FOAM HEADS ‘Everything Is F*ckd’

If Dubwiser exude positivity, The Foam Heads bring us down to earth

with this tense exploration of the world and its woes, but they do it so deftly you’re suckered from the start, the song reminiscent at times of Red Guitars’ classic ‘Steeltown’ but with a post-Sonic Youth noise-rock sensibility, copious use of the F-bomb and the feeling that if the balloon really does go up, at least we’ve got a cracking apocalyptic tune to dance into oblivion to.

15. TIGER MENDOZA ‘Without’

By our reckoning, by 2027 Tiger Mendoza will have collaborated with every other musician on the local scene. And you know what, we’re looking forward to hearing every single one of them. On ‘Without’ Ian De Quadros teams up with Emma Hunter for a darker, more downbeat journey into hip hop-driven electronic soundscaping, Ian giving Emma’s imperious vocal performance a neatly tense undertone.

16. TOM WEBBER ‘Face In The Crowd’

An ode to escape from small town life, but also a reflection on the mixed emotions it brings, where known home comforts make way for something bigger and possibly scarier from the young Didcot singer-songwriter. Webber sounds like an old head on a young shoulders, pondering questions usually associated with more mature songwriters at a certain point in their career. That he ponders them with an assured country soul voice and musical style make him an even more remarkable talent.

17. BARRELHAUS ‘Self Help For The Helpless’

Anyone bemoaning a lack of good old rock music in town – particularly since the closure of the Wheatshaf – should jump into BarrelHaus’ pickup truck and head off to whichever bar they’re gonna tear up tonight with a mix of big fat greasy riffs, but with a bouncy melody worthy of the perkier J-pop. They can stomp like QOTSA but they can groove too like prime electric T-Rex. And yes, they rock.

18. MOSA ‘Helicopter’

A shadowy, pensive lament that sounds like it should be the coda from an album of emotionally-draining melancholy from David Ashbourne; there’s a chiming resistance playing across ‘Helicopter’’s shadowy face, keeping you from seeing its eyes; a double-glazed mist of exquisitely produced brass and electronica spooling over the piano chords with a beguiling insistence; a trace of

haunted fairground in its corner-of-your-eye ghostliness. Enveloping and warm yet set to chill you to the bone.

19. IN-FLIGHT MOVIE ‘Aliens’

Nightshift will always get a thrill out of unreconstructed synth-pop and the shining, shimmering synths that herald In-Flight Movies’ lead track from their most recent EP are a joy. The band’s other great trick is marrying effervescent synths with live drums, which fair power ‘Aliens’ along and they end up scurrying along the line between Pale Blue Eyes and 65daysofstatic, which is a rather lovely line to tread.

20. WILLIE J HEALEY ‘Tiger Woods’

Willie J Healey exudes good vibes, as if just listening to his music can help you cast off the weight of the world and luxuriate in its calmer waters; third album ‘Bunny’ married disparate influences of Prince, Sly Stone, Stevie Wonder and Neil Young, bouncing or simply meanders through woozy slacker soul, through sweet, understated gospel, to airy surf-pop; ‘Tiger Woods’ provided one of many high points on the album with its trademark hazy stoner vibe and a general impression it could heal all the world’s ills.

21. MID AIR ‘There’s A Son’

‘There’s A Son’ might tell of someone “tongue-tied and compromised” who fails to ever fully connect, but the song hits the emotive bullseye, with a lilting and cultured melancholy like the R.E.M. of ‘Sweetness Follows’; imagine the weepy emoji carved meticulously onto age-varnished mahogany and you might catch the elegantly misty-eyed impression. Barney Morse-Brown from Duotone adds cello, which is as near as one can get to a Kitemark for sophisticated music in Oxford.

22. AGS CONNOLLY ‘I’ll Be Good For You’

Ags Connolly headed down south for his fourth album ‘Siempre’, a love letter to Texas written on the tequila-stained bar napkins of the honkytonks and cantinas of the borderlands. Nobody, but nobody, does lost and oceans apart love like Ags. His unique, maple soaked, seared-steak voice knows that the heart has more than six strings and here again the killer lines pluck every last one of them.

23. KILLER

KOWALSKI

‘Heroes In Disgrace’

Disgust rather than rage fuels Killer Kowalski’s ode-cum-tirade to heroes who let us down – from beloved actors embroiled in domestic abuse cases to punk icons selling out to advertising companies. Their ire is fired out in the style of a wiry Mark E Smith-like urchin sneering over obstinately unfunky punk-funk crunk. Reputations are toppled with acid-tongued poetry and the tautes of post-punk virulence.

24. ASHER DUST ‘Rotten Lucky’

Few local artists are as simultaneously instantly recognisable and difficult to second guess as Asher Dust. This latest single from the veteran local musician swims coolly in rich, overlapping layers of electronics and skittering beats, over which Asher meditates on the simultaneous sweetness and pain of impermanence, balancing a reflective vocal performance with the turbulent uncertainties and cruelties of life, from domestic violence to racism.

25. DEADBEAT APOSTLES

‘All That Glitters’

Most of The Deadbeat Apostles’ eponymous album was already familiar to fans, including last year’s superb ‘In Spite of It All’, but of their new songs, ‘All That Glitters’ shone out, sounding like a classic Motown love anthem, not far off The Four Tops, with Mike Ginger showing just how powerful he can sound even when reigning it in a notch or two.

26. SILENT WEAPON ‘The Fear Of The Possibility Of Chaos’

After the scouring maelstrom of last year’s ‘Purge’ album, Umair Chaudhry returned with an EP of sweet-natured acoustic love ballads. Of course he bloody didn’t. He continued to scourge and scour, his music lurking in those dark corners where so many fear to look. Along the way he covered metal heroes Voivod but this vicious slice of industrial electronic horror was exactly what Silent Weapon do best: bring the noise.

27. JODY AND THE JERMS ‘Counting Dreams’

In love with timeless indie pop of the kind that blossomed in the mid-1980s and never wilted over

the intervening decades, Jody & The Jerm are highly prolific in their shimmer and jangle, but this stand-out from their third album ‘Wonder’ captures the swoon and bounce of the band best, Jody’s Kirsty MacColl-inspired vocal played out over a guitar spangle that knows that short, sweet and simple is the key to a great tune.

28. DREAM PHONE ‘Hell’

Few Oxford acts can get a packed room grinning from ear to ear but local duo Dream Phone’s exuberant electro-pop does the job, usually in two minute bursts of punked-up hyperpop fun. Hannah and Jenny’s debut EP didn’t waste a note as it careered through auto-tuned, pitch-shifted giddy-core, ‘Hell’ finding them at their funkiest: glistering, glissing synths see-sawing, reflecting the song’s protagonist’s unease, warped, wobbly and, yes, a whole heap and a half of fun.

29. BRUNO MUERTE ‘Phil D’Ophear’

After the departure of Roberto Bini back to Italy, Stefano Maio recruited former Vienna Ditto man Nigel Firth into Bruno Muerte and together they undertook a journey into 80s and 90s electronic music strangeness; amid the mutant soundtracks and occasional silliness of their ‘Errors’ album, ‘Phil D’Ophear’ was a head-nodding squiggle of synths and beats that isn’t a million miles away from some of Aphex Twin’s electro experiments. Now it just needs a sci-fi movie to soundtrack.

30. MEANS OF PRODUCTION ‘High Traffic Neighbourhood’

The post-punk synth-pop duo’s adherence to a minimalist linear electronic sound that forever evokes images of pylons and underpasses continued apace on this single: “the song of the by-pass as Tim Day intones over acid squiggles, hums, squelches and bleeps. You can almost feel the city closing in around you as The Normal go nightclubbing with Bam Bam.

The next 10...

CHIKA: ‘Villain’; **EPISODE 1:** ‘Under the Foot of Man’; **ANT KELLY:** ‘Sea Spray’; **ALEXANDRA HAMER:** ‘She Lives’; **EMILY JEFFRI:** ‘Do You Remember Me’; **JONNY PAYNE & THE THUNDER:** ‘Santa Cruz’; **PET TWIN:** ‘I Want To Win’; **BARRICANE:** ‘Saltwater’; **PAGE OF SWORDS:** ‘The Ladder’; **MYSTERY BISCUIT:** ‘I Was Born Tonight’

RELEASED

SILENT WEAPON

‘The Fear of the Possibility of Chaos’

(Blindsight)
In last month’s *Nightshift* cover feature, Umair Chaudhry, who is electronic music project Silent Weapon, told us: “People pleasing is the enemy of true art”. Such a rogue yet painfully truthful philosophy is seemingly at the very core of his new skull-crushing EP, as he goes against the grain in favour of chasing his inner calling. ‘The Fear Of The Possibility Of Chaos’ is evocative of a hellish post-apocalyptic world akin to that of Cyberpunk 2077 or Katsuhiro Otomo’s classic anime *Akira*. One can only imagine how perfectly Umair’s sonic hellscapes would set a backdrop for the frenetic neon light trails left scattered through New Tokyo or Night City. It appears to be a match made in heaven, that ironically was constructed in hell.
Across four tracks Umair utilises every weapon in his potent arsenal, bolstered by his onslaught of vocals, to explore themes of indoctrination and a looming societal collapse. Opening track ‘Menticide’ sets the tone with its thumping drum kicks and piercing electronics, only to be taken a step further by ‘Big Fish Eat Little Ones’. Here Umair’s vocals take on an imposing demonic tone as his humanity is progressively stripped away into the digital wasteland. It’s frighteningly good.

LONE VOICE

‘Broken’

(Self released)
Rich Burge – aka Lone Voice – wears his heart on his sleeve with this nine-track album of melancholy and what *Nightshift* presumes is earnest introspection.
Predominantly piano driven, Rich clearly has some things to get off his chest, and it starts with ‘Quiet Hart’. You can’t help but hear a Jarvis Cocker and Frankie Goes To Hollywood influence in the vocals and be impressed by the multi-layered and rich arrangements. Continuing with ‘The Ship’, crisp guitar mirrors the piano this time, punctuated with 80s-style percussion, but there is more than a nautical tip of the cap to the lyrics here. At first we fear this would be a bit too heavy-handed on the sea-faring metaphors, but the vague bossa nova feel makes it work somehow.
‘The Canary No Longer Sings’ features a lush, macabre piano refrain with driving drums. Rich has clearly taken influence from Nick Cave here, as his lyrics have a weight and gravitas to them that strikes you as very bold indeed. This might not be for everyone, but we get the impression that Lone Voice doesn’t really care.



The title track continues in the same vein with its 2000s-style drum&bass influences. Underscored by a booming bassline, Umair builds upon this foundation with a plethora of soaring synths and spectral vocals, before proceeding to shatter our skulls at the halfway mark. Pushing his synth to breaking point for almost two minutes, the track surges towards an ever-climbing peak before an eventual catharsis. Closing the EP with ‘Angel Rat’, a Voivod cover Umair has always wanted to do, it leaves us hungry for his next instalment. A testament to rejecting the niceties of people pleasing, and remaining true to your own destiny, ‘The Fear of the Possibility of Chaos’ has got us excited for Umair’s forthcoming album. Stay tuned, stay yourself.
Sam Mumford

Things on the record continue in a similar vein with ‘Fool’, featuring an epic arrangement of strings and synths. Rich clearly has a strong voice, but over the course of an album, you wonder if some additional vocals might have been welcome. ‘Let Me Fall’ echoes this sentiment as it kind of treads the ground that its predecessors have already covered.
‘Great Dictator’ is clearly the stand out track. It sounds like it should have been the intro to a new HBO mini-series, oozing drama, sassiness, and an air of arrogance that seems to just work.
Just as you realise that there is more to Lone Voice than you would initially think, ‘Enough Is Enough’ is confirmation of that – with guitars and an almost euphoric chorus that allows you to forgive the final track, ‘Now What’, which seems to tread back to the start of the album where you yearned for a change of gear. It’s a solid effort and is full of potential; *Nightshift* look forward to seeing how this material will work in a live setting.
Caitlin Helm

Sponsored by

TRUCK

OXFORD • WITNEY • ONLINE

SINEWS

‘Sinews’

(Divine Schism)
“Hi, we’re Sinews! You might remember us from such local bands as Egrets, Spank Hair, Dallas Don’t, The Dumplings...” I don’t know if this is the band’s actual stage introduction, but you get the idea: Sinews are a supergroup / noise-spewing hydra born from the ever fertile ground of local bands we miss from not so long ago.
Sinews make a unique brand of brooding noise rock with sawtooth hardcore edges, woven full-on together with punk tempos, which make for a surprisingly cerebral result. It’s not just pure seething or pure rage, the shades make the picture more complex, with the vocals shifting from *sprechgesang* outpourings to throat-shredding catharsis.
The EP’s title track drives forward with growling stoicism while tidal patterns of anxiety come from the vocals. This stoicism is then blown away by the 100mph distorted mayhem of ‘The Yawning Door’, clocking in at only ninety seconds. ‘Pony Cure’ then does an excellent job of combining these two energies; huge bass and constant cymbal crash hold together the riffs and rage from the guitars and vocals. If this doesn’t get a pit going, nothing can, but the welcome respite of the more down-tempo, contemplative passages are what makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts, as is the theme with Sinews. The production feels like the band sound live, which is always a good thing. It’s not crystal clear with Richard Bell’s vocals drowning out the rest with the aim of commercial success, but raucous and immersive – turn this up loud enough and ask your neighbours to pop round to complain and you could be convinced you were upstairs at The Port Mahon, Sinews in full performance flow.

Is it insulting to call Sinews a thinking-person’s punk band? The tropes of several heavy archetypes are here but pieced together with very deft hands... which then punch out massive power chords and throw a pint at you. Perhaps, this analogy isn’t clear, but either way, it’s a cracking EP.
Matt Chapman Jones



THE PEOPLE VERSUS

‘Squares’

(Self released)
The Halloween period may be over, but The People Versus have rustled up something spooky for us with haunting new track ‘Squares’.
Adopting a dystopian, post-apocalyptic theme, ‘Squares’ considers what it’s like to send your last words to a loved one via text message, and how these “final squares” will be condemned to hover around in the ether after the world’s end. An incredible concept for a song, and nicely translated into a synth-heavy melody with distorted, vaguely robotic backing vocals of sorts intermittently breaking into the track.
Yet, these machine-like features are nicely counterbalanced by the violin that teeters on the edge of the verses and Alice Edwards’ impressive and seamless vocal range. Towards the end of the song there’s much more emphasis put on the incredible vocals as the second chorus comes to fruition in a much fuller way as a result of the layering and harmonies. And as the song comes to a close, the entire melody is stripped back to a bare-bones piano section, the chords quite slowly and loosely strung together, giving us large a capella sections in which the melancholic vocals echo in the absence of the former melody. The empty space we are left with allows the emotion to come to a real climax here, yet The People Versus do a brilliant job in never quite letting it resolve itself as the track ends on an ambivalent, lingering note.

Madison Collier

MEANS OF PRODUCTION

‘Adventures in

Capitalism’

(All Will Be Well)
Means of Production takes listeners on a vibrant journey with their latest EP. Opening track ‘The Nail’ sets the tone with infectious beats and a seamless blend of electronic elements. The huge, expansive thumping bass that opens the album recalls ‘Phat Planet’ by Leftfield, but there are definite elements in homage to Orbital and Bicep as well, although much darker in tone. Lyrically, the whole album sticks to a dystopian view of capitalism in line with Massive Attack and Aphex Twin.
As the EP progresses, ‘10 Dysfunctions’ introduces a dynamic rhythm, keeping the energy high. This is eminently danceable, though best in a dark, dingy basement club of which sadly few exist now. Penultimate track ‘Yawner’ is more drone like, with repeated lyrics that might appeal to fans of Sleaford Mods but ends up moving more towards Kraftwerk. Final number ‘Magna One’ could be from The Orb or The Chemical Brothers in their halcyon days, with a slow building pulsating beat; whilst it is still a critique of the means of production, as the EP title suggests, they have managed to combine this with an energy and solid production that would go down a storm at a festival, or equally a small sweaty rave. One of this reviewer’s favourite releases this year.
Damon Boughen

PET TWIN

‘On My Beach’

(Self released)
Midway through this beautifully realised EP a cut titled ‘Cabrini-Green’ raises itself up on the kind of playful guitar riff The Cure would pay handsomely for. It’s a clever emotional deception, because the Cabrini-Green in question was one of several well appointed, utopian, high-rise estates in Chicago after WW2, that through mismanagement and corruption became horrifyingly deprived and a totem for haunting mythological menaces by being used as a living backdrop for the 1992 horror film *Candyman*.
It’s this kind of hallowed and foreboding mood that permeates the flickering torch descent into the EP’s heart of darkness: firstly through the epic sea-sigh of the eponymous ‘On My Beach’, where James Gallagher acquiesces to depression as his comfort zone, onward through dreams with the Pepper’s ghost of Ted Hughes in ‘Crows’, and then off with a rolling stride into the billowing breeze of ‘Dark Forest’.
And yet, while it rests its case heavily on the sum of its Cimmerian parts, the whole suite of songs – produced and mastered in turn by Mike Bannard and Tim Turan, through Safehouse Studios – is delivered in such a way as to make it entertaining and playable across the house while preparing an evening meal or doing the chores. Progressive, and gleefully planting his flags in the turf alongside the likes of The Smile, as they both reach for a state of grace amid the chaos, Pet Twin makes neutering our fears the new rock and roll.
Paul Carrera

TRUCK

OXFORD • WITNEY • ONLINE

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

#1 SUFJAN STEVENS
JAVELIN

The acclaimed singer-songwriter, arranger and all-round visionary has gifted us a quite extraordinary 10th album. Born from tragedy but suffused with hope, a soaring, vibrant triumph of ever-expanding majestic sound which has buried its way deep into the hearts of us Truckers!



#2 WILLIE J HEALEY
BUNNY

#3 BARRY CAN'T SWIM
WHEN WILL WE LAND?

#4 THE NATIONAL
FIRST TWO PAGES OF
FRANKENSTEIN

#5 SAY SHE SHE
SILVER

#6 YOUNG FATHERS
HEAVY HEAVY

#7 NABIHAH IQBAL
DREAMER

#8 ROMY
IN THE AIR

#9 JAMES BLAKE
PLATINO ROADS
INTO HEAVEN

#10 EL MICHELS AFFAIR & BLACK THOUGHT
GLORIOUS GAME

#11 JALEN NGONDA
COME AROUND
AND LOVE ME

#12 BC CAMPBUGHT
THE LAST ROTATION
OF EARTH

#13 TREEBOY & ARC
NATURAL HABITAT

#14 NATION OF LANGUAGE
STRANGE DISCIPLE

#15 LANKUM
FALSE LANKUM

#16 SLEEP TOKEN
TAKE ME BACK TO EDEN

#17 GEESE
3D COUNTRY

#18 LANA DEL REY
DUELING DIAMONDS
A TUNNEL UNDER OCEAN BOYS?

#19 ROLLING STONES
HACKNEY DIAMONDS

#20 BEACH FOSILS
BUNNY

SCAN THE CODE TO VIEW
OUR FULL TOP 50 LIST!

TRUCKMUSIC.STORE

G1G GUIDE

FRIDAY 1st

MEANS OF PRODUCTION: Truck Store (6pm) – The post-punk/synth-pop duo launch their new EP with an instore set.
TOOLOGY + GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS: The Bullingdon – Tool tribute from Toology, plus epic post-rock from G1TP.
TRIPPIN BALLS: The Bullingdon – Psychedelic club night.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with STORYTELLER + BEAVER FUEL + BABY TEETH +

Sunday 3rd

WITHERED HAND / DARREN HAYMAN: Common Ground

Quite the double bill at tonight’s Divine Schism show with a first Oxford gig in twelve years for Withered Hand alongside underground indie hero Darren Hayman. Withered Hand is the musical moniker of Edinburgh’s Dan Willson, whose wistful, rustic and romantic mix of country, folk and even gospel has earned him a cult following – not least 6Music legend Marc Riley – and has seen him working and playing with the likes of Jeffery Lewis, James Yorkston, Frightened Rabbit and Kramer along the way. Raised as a Jehovah’s Witness, Willson didn’t even pick up a guitar until he was 30, but he sounds born to it with echoes of Teenage Fanclub, Sufjan Stevens and Neil Young in his often lovelorn songs. Since 2009 he’s released just three full albums; the most recent is this year’s ‘How To Love’, typically intimate and euphoric and featuring guest appearances from Kathryn William and King Creosote. As if that’s not enough, former Hefner frontman Darren Hayman returns to town, the man once hailed by Stewart Lee as “the thinking person’s indie pop legend” continuing to document the sometimes mundane, often emotional details of his life in often beautifully crafted hangdog style, a quintessential English songwriter in the tradition of Ray Davies.



December

SUGARBULLY: The Gladiator Club – Klub Kakofanney host their monthly shindig with fusion crew Storyteller, indie punkers Beaver Fuel and eloquently theatrical rap from Sugarbully.
FLIGHTS OF HELIOS + MYSTERY BISCUIT + PET TWIN: The Port Mahon – Elegant post-rock, psychedelia and folk from Flights of Helios, alongside psychedelic post-rockers Mystery Biscuit and atmospheric downbeat from one-man band Pet Twin.
MUNGO BLUES: Tap Social, Botley – High-energy funky blues covers and originals.
HELEN PEARSON: Market Tap – Emotive acoustic folk-pop from the local singer-songwriter, launching her new EP, ‘Falling Backwards’.
RUSTY SHACKLE: Harwell Village Hall – Lively roots’n’roll from south Wales folk-rockers Rusty Shackle touring their ‘Under a Blood Red Moon’ album at tonight’s sold-out show.
THE BRITPOP BAND: Fat Lil’s, Witney
HI-ON MAIDEN: The Northcourt, Abingdon – Iron Maiden tribute.
GORDON MACKAY: The Lamb & Flag, Hailey – Laidback country, pop and rock covers.

SATURDAY 2nd

SIMPLE ft. PEACH B2B MIDLAND: The Bullingdon – House and techno club night.
BEN MCKELVEY: The Jericho Tavern – Rootsy blues and Americana from the singer-songwriter touring his new ‘Fully Restored With Original Parts’ album.
HIPSHAKIN’: The Harcourt Arms – 50s and 60s rhythm’n’blues, rock’n’roll, jump jive, jazz, boogaloo and early soul from the Hipshakin’ DJs.
SUB FOCUS + I.D. + GRAFIX: O2 Academy – Switch present London’s Sub Focus, Nick Douwma having made his name as a jungle and drum&bass producer on RAM Records, remixing The Prodigy and touring with Pendulum before heading into a more eclectic terrain, mixing house and dubstep into his D&B records and live sets.
SCOTT GORDON BAND: The Market Tap – Rootsy, soulful Americana.
DISCO INSTITUTION: Tap Social, Botley – Disco, funk and r’n’b with DJ Dom.
RESTLESS OCEANS: The Cross Keys, Thame – EP launch show from the local folk-rock outfit.
O MOON + FIREGAZER: Abingdon British Legion – Indie and folk at tonight’s Skittle Alley show.

SUNDAY 3rd

WITHERED HAND + DARREN HAYMAN + TWO WHITE CRANES: Common Ground – Edinburgh’s underground music legend returns to town – *see main preview*
OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms – Weekly open night.
THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Tree, Iffley (3.45pm) – Rock and blues classics from the

veteran local singer and guitarist and chums.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon – Weekly Irish folk session.
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm) – Weekly open session.
AMANDA ANDJELKOVIC: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

MONDAY 4th

MAY TUMI: St. Aldates Tavern – The local singer-songwriter launches her debut album, her airy acoustic folk-pop inspired by Joni Mitchell and Miriam Makeba.

TUESDAY 5th

SUNDARA KARMA: O2 Academy – Euphoric indie rocking from the Reading stars, touring third album ‘Better Luck Next Time’.
SUNDARA KARMA: Truck Store – Intimate instore set from the band ahead of their O2 show.

WEDNESDAY 6th

BEANS ON TOAST: The Jericho Tavern – Hoarse, ramshackle protest folk and meditations on love, life and drugs from Essex’s Jay McAllister back in town once more, the cult favourite having collaborated with Frank Turner, Mumford and Sons, Billy Bragg, Laura Marling and Emmy the Great along the way to releasing a new album on the 1st December every year (his birthday), as well as playing Glastonbury Festival every year since 2007.
ALAN BARNES & ART THEMEN: Iffley Church Hall – a double dose of two of UK jazz’s most renowned saxophonists together in one show with Alan Barnes having played with the BBC Big Band and Radio Orchestra as well as Freddie Hubbard, Stan Tracey, Mike Westbrook and John Dankworth, while Art Themen has been a stalwart on the scene for 60 years now alongside his career as an orthopaedic surgeon.

THURSDAY 7th

IT’S ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC YOUR SONG SPECIAL: The Bullingdon – Fun covers night ahead of the Christmas season.
PUNCHING SWANS + SINEWS + GROSS MISCONDUCT + AND WHAT: The Library – Divine Schism host a night of post-hardcore and grunge with Kent trio Punching Swans back in town for the first time since 2016, mixing up the influences of Fugazi and McLusky alongside local post-hardcore crew Sinews, launching their debut EP ‘Pony Cure’, plus London punks Gross Misconduct and local ‘slow-grunge’ duo And What.
YOUNG WOMEN’S MUSIC PROJECT TAKEOVER: Truck Store – Launch event for the YWMP calendar with DJ sets.
FIRST THURSDAY MUSIC CLUB: Thame Snooker Club – A night of Americana with sets from Steady Habits, Savannah Gardener, and The Holy Fools, plus The 2 Strokes and Chris & Natalie.
FLY YETI FLY: The Unicorn, Abingdon –

Delicate folk tunes from the Wiltshire duo.
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon – Weekly open mic night hosted by Tom Dalby.
OPEN MIC: Delaney’s, Wantage

FRIDAY 8th

TIDE LINES: The Bullingdon – Romantic folk-rock from the Scottish band, formed by former Skipinnish members, imagining a Caledonian Springsteen with added synths and bagpipes and touring new album ‘An Ocean Full of Islands’.
HAU5 PARTY: The Bullingdon – Techno, house and disco club night.
RATS EAT RATS: The Jericho Tavern – Grunge and punk from the local rockers.
OF MICE & MEN: O2 Academy – California’s metalcore and post-hardcore crew tour their eighth album, ‘Tether’.
CRAIG CHARLES’ FUNK & SOUL HOUSE PARTY: O2 Academy – BBC Radio’s most infectiously enthusiastic DJ and space traveller brings his party-starting collection of soul, funk and rare grooves back to town.
SECRET RIVALS + CRITTER CABAL + LEON P FIELDS: The Library – Quickfix Records host a free show with recently reformed local indie crew Secret Rivals, nodding to The Cure with their dark, melodic gothic pop.
REV FERRIDAY: The Market Tap – Lowdown, dirty blues and rock’n’roll from the one-man band.
INDIE DISCO: Tap Social, Botley – 80s and 90s indie classics on vinyl with DJ Dom.
THE BOWIE EXPERIENCE: Fat Lil’s, Witney
THE TAKE THAT EXPERIENCE: Delaney’s, Wantage

SATURDAY 9th

DAY OF THE DEADBEATS 19: Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock – The Deadbeat Apostles’ free shindig reaches its nineteenth instalment with the band continuing to make a name as one of the most entertaining bands in town with their punk-infused blend of soul, r’n’b and rock’n’roll, drawing on The Rolling Stones and Wilson Pickett amongst many others for inspiration. They’re joined tonight by fuzzy indie pop janglers Jody & The Jermis and QOTSA-inspired rockers BarrelHaus.
REGGAETON OXFORD: The Bullingdon – Reggaeton club night.
SPIRALITES: The Harcourt Arms – Barbershop quartet with northern soul and rocksteady vibes.
MOMOJO: The Jericho Tavern – Covers and originals in aid of charity.
OSMOSIS: The Black Swan – It’s All About the Music show.
LOS AMIGOS: Tap Social, Botley – Garage, house, breaks and classic funk with the DJ collective.
CHRISTMAS SOUL with THE OXFORD GOSPEL CHOIR: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Christmas-themed gospel and soul show with the local choir.

SUNDAY 10th

GAZ COOMBES: The New Theatre – Homecoming show for the local hero – *see main preview*
OPUS KINK: The Bullingdon – Jazz skronk punk action from the Brighton sleazesters – *see main preview*
DOWN FOR THE COUNT ORCHESTRA: St.

Edward’s School Olivier Hall – Big band swing from the London orchestra.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms LIGHTHOUSE JAZZ BAND: The White House (5pm) – Jazz standards.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Tree, Iffley (3.45pm) – Funk, blues, ska, folk, pop and more from the local party-hearty stalwarts.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)
MOJO WORKING: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

MONDAY 11th

TUESDAY 12th

THE LAST WHOLE EARTH CATALOG + HÖÖF + SAFETY JACKET: The Library – Downbeat lo-fi indie from London’s The Last Whole Earth Catalog at tonight’s Divine Schism show, with support from local DIY fuzz-popsters – and this month’s *Nightshift* Top Track winners – HööF and London indie rockers Safety Jacket.

WEDNESDAY 13th

THURSDAY 14th

PREMIUM LEISURE: The Bullingdon – Album launch gig for Chris Barker’s nostalgic, feelgood pop romantics, channelling Bowie and Bolan into a funky psychedelic pop haze.
STEPH PIRRIE’S CHRISTMAS JAZZ: The Harcourt Arms – Festive jazz with the singer and trumpeter.
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 15th

DREADZONE: The Bullingdon – Return to town for the perennial reggae, dub and folk party starters,
THE BULLY BOILER: The Bullingdon – House, techno and garage club night.
BOSSAPHONIK presents ONIPA + DJ COUSCOUS: Cowley Workers Social Club – The monthly world jazz dance night hosts Afro-futurists Onipa, an explosive fusion of Afrobeat and soukous with hip hop and electronica, plus London based DJ Couscous from travelling festival venue Lunched Out Lizards.
THE BIG MOON: O2 Academy – Juliette Jackson and gang bring the spiky pop joy – *see main preview*
BAR STOOL PREACHERS: O2 Academy – Rousing, politicised punk, folk and ska from the London/Brighton sextet, inspired by The Clash and touring their new album ‘Above the Static’.
MOONAROON: The Harcourt Arms – Return of the Irish folk crew, playing songs and dance tunes.

SOUL PLAZA: Tap Social, Botley – Eclectic dance vibes from the Oxford-London collective.
JUMPIN’ JAKE FLASH: The Ampleforth, Risinghurst – Celebration of the music of The Rolling Stones and The Blues Brothers in one.
JINGLE BELL JAZZ: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Festive jazz faves with duo Fleur Stevenson and Hugh Turner.

SATURDAY 16th

OH, COMMUNITY!.: Common



Sunday 10th

GAZ COOMBES: The New Theatre

From The Jennifers, through Supergrass to a solo career, through a Supergrass reunion to a resumption of his solo career, Gaz Coombes is a bona fide Oxford music legend as well as an international star – heck, he even turned up on CBeebies for a Father’s Day special, showing his universal appeal. No wonder then that his first hometown solo show in five years, at Oxford’s biggest venue, is almost sold out. Gaz’s most recent album, ‘Turn The Car Around’, saw him continue to mature both as a musician and a songwriter, embracing the cares and trials of middle age identity, relationships and parenthood, the brash, youthful confidence and energy of Supergrass increasingly replaced by an almost stately solemnity on songs like ‘Overnight Trains’, exuberant simplicity replaced by more densely textured melodies and arrangements, uncertainty battling often wearily with contentment, although he’s not averse to moments of upbeat funk or euphoric pop. It’s rare that a musician gets to grow up with their audience, less so do so with such consummate ease, but Gaz has made a whole new musical world for himself and continues to sound like he’s living his best life.

Ground (2pm) – Divine Schism host a full day and evening of live music in aid of YWMP and in solidarity with Palestine. Today’s headliners are ferocious Welsh noise merchants Jarcrew, who are joined by an excellent cast of indie and DIY acts, including Mumbles; Langkamer; Jeff; Non Threatening Boys; Chloe August & The Van Stadens; The Cooling Pearls; Suspire; Riley Meyer, and The Van Stadens.
OLD SKOOL OXFORD ft. MICKY FINN: The Bullingdon – Old skool club bangers with veteran DJ and mixer Micky Finn.
SIR BALD DIDDLEY & THE RIPCURLS: The Harcourt Arms – Surf rock, rock’n’roll and

25mm & 57mm Pin Badges available
Premium quality badges made in Oxford

25mm	57mm
10 badges £10	10 badges £18
50 badges £18	50 badges £38
100 badges £25	100 badges £65

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

  [@garagerockmerch](https://www.instagram.com/garagerockmerch)



Sunday 10th

**OPUS KINK:
The Bullingdon**

Turbulent times call for turbulent music and few bands around at the moment capture the essence of rock and roll chaos as well as Opus Kink. The Brighton sextet have rightly been earning themselves a reputation as one of the most exciting live acts around over the last couple of years alongside releasing a steady stream of singles and EPs that eschew too much production polish in favour of trying to capture that live energy on record. The band’s primordial musical chaos is raw and sleazy with heavy gothic overtones, which make them sound a bit like natural heirs to The Birthday Party at times. They – and frontman Angus Rogers in particular – hark back to The Clash, not only in their polemical poetry but in their embrace of funk, while hefty sax skronks add a freeform jazz spirit to proceedings. The fusion of punk and jazz is a hard one to pull off but Opus Kink do it with a kind of murderous ease: as with the likes of Protomartyr and The Birthday Party back at the very beginning, their gigs hint that all hell might break out at any moment and you, dear listener, will be powerless to resist. As if you’d even want to.

r’n’b from the veteran local guitarist and band. **MARTIN GREEN’S LIGHTING THE DARK:** Wesley Memorial Church – Oxford Contemporary Music host the Ivor Novello-winning composer as he journeys musically through the challenges and joys of winter and Christmas, from ancient pagan sounds to the modern day. **BREWER’S NIGHT OFF:** Tap Social, Botley – House, techno, breaks and more. **WARRIN & McCARTHY:** Market Tap – Festive country, folk and pop covers. **ALL ON A WINTER’S NIGHT:** Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Jonny Coppin and his band play festive folk songs and carols at tonight’s Wychwood Folk & Acoustic Club show. **ZEN LEWIS + AIKZ + HALF DECENT:** King’s Head & Bell, Abingdon – Skittle Alley host a night of local hip hop. **FUSED:** Fat Lil’s, Witney – 90s and 00s indie and rock anthems. **THE PETE FRYER BAND:** The Croft Bar, Abingdon **KING AWESOME:** Delaney’s, Wantage – Tribute to 80s arena rock.

SUNDAY 17th
IN A DIFFERENT PLACE: The Bullingdon (2pm) – Two rooms of top quality Oxford music

all day with a headline set from Mandrake Handshake alongside The August List, The Deadbeat Apostles and much, much more – *see main preview*
FLYTE: O2 Academy – Soft-centred indie rocking with its heart in 1970s California from London’s Flyte, previous tour support to Bombay Bicycle Club, and out on tour and channelling the influences of Grizzly Bear, Bon Iver and Elliot Smith at times.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms
MONKEYFISTS + PUPPET MECHANIC + TONY BATEY & SAL MOORE: The Tree, Iffley (4pm) – Klub Kakofanney host a free afternoon of live music.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)
MA BESSIE XMAS SPECIAL: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm) – Jazz and blues from the local singer.

MONDAY 18th
MAISY’S RAINBOW DREAM + NO HORSES: The Port Mahon – Effusive, punk-tinged indie rock from Maisy’s Rainbow Dream.

TUESDAY 19th
WEDNESDAY 20th
THE JAKE KIRKPATRICK MEMORIAL GIG: The Bullingdon – Krissy Matthews and Friends play in aid of Sobell House at tonight’s Haven Club gig.

THURSDAY 21st
LACUNA COMMON: The Jericho Tavern – Spiky, propulsive, post-punk inspired indie rocking from the local stars.
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 22nd
THE SHAPES + THE BALKAN WANDERERS + JODY & THE JERMS: The Bullingdon – Local soul, new wave and folk-punk faves The Shapes play their traditional festive show, channelling the spirits of Dexy’s, Van Morrison and Tom Petty, and once they play their trademark cover of ‘Fairytale of New York’ it’s officially Christmas in Oxford. They’re joined by the recently reformed Balkan Wanderers with their lively blend of eastern and southern European folk music, and fuzzy jangle-pop stars Jody & the Jerms.
KNIGHTS OF MENTIS: The Harcourt Arms – Folk, blues and Americana from the expansive local crew.
SLADE + SONS OF THE SEVENTIES: O2 Academy – No Noddy Holder but if it’s Christmas it must be time to crack out some Slade, right? Dave Hill and Don Powell helm the current incarnation of the blockbusting 70s glam rockers, once more running through their litany of hits – from ‘Mama, We’er All Crazee Now’ and ‘Gudbye T’Jane’ to ‘Skweeze Me Please Me’, ‘Cum On Feel The Noize’ and, oh yes, ‘Merry Xmas Everybody’. Novelty antlers optional, boozy good cheer essential.
DIEZELBUD: The Jericho Tavern – Pensive indie noise from the Bletchington outfit, mixing up influences of atmospheric rock, post-rock and hip hop.
BOTLEY CRUE: The Hollybush, Osney – Indie, new wave and Britpop covers.

HORNS OF PLENTY: Tap Social, Botley – Festive vibes with the local ensemble.
THE INFLATABLES: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Ska and Two Tone classics.

SATURDAY 23rd
SYSTEM EIGHTIES: Fat Lil’s, Witney – 80s hits.

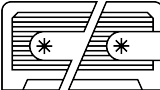
SUNDAY 24th
REGGAE CHRISTMAS: The Bullingdon – 28 years and still going strong, Count Skylarkin’s Yuletide reggae party continues to ring in Christmas. This year’s special guests are The Freedom Fire Band, stars of this summer’s Boomtown, bringing roots, dancehall and riddims with vocalists Myki Tuff, Lukas Daley and Tomlin Mystic. The band have previously collaborated with Susan Cadogan and Dawn Penn. They’re joined tonight by Destanation DJs, spinning rebel sounds, and chief selector himself, Skylarkin.
MARK CROFTS: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm) – Funky originals and covers from the local singer-songwriter.

Friday 15th
**THE BIG MOON:
O2 Academy**
Often musicians become more careworn as they mature and experience life’s landmark moments but something like the opposite seems to be true of The Big Moon. The band’s Mercury-nominated 2017 debut, ‘Love in the 4th Dimension’, was a spiky indie statement of intent with a post-grunge feel. Fast forward to last year’s third album, the Top 10 ‘Here Is Everything’ and frontwoman Juliette Jackson is singing about positive pregnancy tests and breastfeeding and sounds more joyous than ever. Musically too the band seem to have become ever more carefree – the Pixies-inspired barbs of that debut have been smoothed out enough to make The Big Moon genuine pop contenders without losing the melodic hooks that make them such a great pop proposition. There’s even more than a hint of disco about songs like ‘Daydreaming’ and you can imagine the quartet becoming an even bigger commercial hit than they already are, while retaining the critical acclaim that has helped build their reputation. Tonight’s gig is part of a tour to promote a new deluxe release of ‘Here Is Everything’; the album features remixes from old chum Marika Hackman and Art School Girlfriend, brand new tracks ‘Summer Still Comes’ and ‘Round Forever’ – which sees bassist Celia Archer on lead vocals duty for the first time – as well as some exclusive live versions of album tracks.



TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM
SEETICKETS.COM * GIGANTIC.COM
@CROSSTOWN_LIVE /CROSSTOWNCONCERTS @CROSSTOWNCONCERTS

**CROSSTOWN
CONCERTS**





Sunday 17th

IN A DIFFERENT PLACE: The Bullingdon

It's the time of year for celebration and what better to celebrate than the fantastic local music scene we have in Oxford. As such, today's collaboration between *Nightshift*, Gappy Tooth Industries and All Will Be Well Records brings together 15 of the best local acts across two rooms at The Bully. Headliners on the main backroom stage are **MANDRAKE HANDSHAKE** (*pictured*), bringing their psychedelic pop to an Oxford stage for the only time in 2023. They're joined by awesome Americana-drone crew **THE AUGUST LIST**; punk-spirited r'n'b warriors **THE DEADBEAT APOSTLES**; caustic post-punkers **KILLER KOWALSKI**; gothic flamenco-surf siren **EMMA HUNTER**; elegant indie drifters **MID AIR**; eclectic funk-punk fuzzsters **DOGMILK**; sample-happy electro-pop star **CHOLLY**, and Afro-pop-flavoured fidget-pop crew **31HOURS**. In the front bar there'll be solo and duo sets from **OLD MAN MAY**; **ENJOYABLE LISTENS**; **TAMARA**; **LAIMA**; **BARRICANE** and **SIMON VEANEY**, so the action never stops all day. For all the venues closures and pressure on grassroots live music, Oxford continues to punch above its weight and provide the goods and today's mini-festival is the perfect time and place to celebrate that, and all at a pocket money price.

MONDAY 25th

Merry Christmas everyone, please send kittens.

TUESDAY 26th

TERRAFORMS: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass club night with Nicky Blackmarket.
THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Seacourt Bridge Inn – The local rock and blues legend plays his traditional Botley Boxing Day show.
DEEP OVER: Tap Social, Botley – Have a very merry bass-heavy Boxing Day.

WEDNESDAY 27th

NO FRET: Fat Lil's, Witney

THURSDAY 28th

DALBY'S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 29th

PARTY TIME AGAIN: The Bullingdon – Club night with White Magic, 5-Star General, The Major, DJ Unruly and more.

SATURDAY 30th

RAWDIO: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass and jungle club night.

SUNDAY 31st

HOOKED ON NYE ft. **DANNY BYRD**: The Bullingdon – New Year's Eve party.
NYE SINGALONG: The Harcourt Arms
THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Cornerhouse, Hollow Way
HARD ON YOUR EARS: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)
THE STANDARD: Fat Lil's, Witney
JUMPIN' JAKE FLASH: The Shepherd's Hut, Ewelme

JANUARY

THURSDAY 4th

DALBY'S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 5th

STAGE DIVE DAVE: Fat Lil's, Witney

SATURDAY 6th

HIPSHAKIN': The Harcourt Arms
WHAT THE FUNK: Fat Lil's, Witney

SUNDAY 7th

OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)
RAG'N'MOAN MEN: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm) – Blues, folk and Americana with the local trio.

THURSDAY 11th

DALBY'S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

SATURDAY 13th

MONTMORENCY: The Burton Taylor Theatre – Roots contemporary folk, blues and pop from the Cotswold quartet, drawing on English, American, Scottish and Irish traditions.
COUNT SKYLARKIN: Tap Social, Botley – Roots reggae, dancehall and more with the local DJ legend.
REG MEUROSS + MANDOLIRIUM: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood
DOG OF TWO HEAD: Fat Lil's, Witney – Tribute to early Status Quo.

SUNDAY 14th

OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)

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.

THURSDAY 18th

RECIPROCATE: The Library – Taut, angular experimental rock noise from the London trio at tonight's Divine Schism show.
DALBY'S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 19th

BOSSAPHONIK presents **SAM REDMORE & THE TROPICAL SOUNDCLASH ALLSTARS + DJ BOOMSHANK**: Cowley Workers Social Club – The monthly world jazz dance club night hosts Sam Redmore and The Tropical Soundclash Allstars, playing disco and soul with cumbia, samba and Afrobeat. On the decks is Dutty Moonshine Big Band saxophonist DJ Boomshank.
NIRVANA TRIBUTE: The Bullingdon
SINEWS + BLOOD VISIONS + EVERYFACE BECOMES A SKULL: The Library – EP launch for the local post-hardcore crew, channelling Fugazi, Shellac and more.
ENJOY THE SILENCE: Fat Lil's, Witney – Depeche Mode tribute.

SATURDAY 20th

BANKSIDE BLUES: The Harcourt Arms
ABSOLUTION: O2 Academy – Tribute to Muse.
ROXETTE UK: Fat Lil's, Witney

SUNDAY 21st

OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)

THURSDAY 25th

DALBY'S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 26th

CANCER BATS AS BAT SABBATH: The Bullingdon – Black Sabbath covers from the Canadian metal and hardcore titans.
LORD BUG: The Jericho Tavern
THE GREATEST HITS OF MOTOWN: The New Theatre – Big stage tribute to classic Motown.
FAJITA FUNK: Tap Social, Botley – House, funk, breaks, disco and more.

SATURDAY 27th

DEPOLARIZE: The Jericho Tavern – Inventive metalcore and hardcore from the rising local stars.
ELVANA: O2 Academy – Return of the Elvis impersonator-fronted Nirvana tribute act.
SLICED TOMATOES: Tap Social, Botley – Beats, bass, northern soul and funk with the DJ collective.
RATS IN THE KITCHEN: Fat Lil's, Witney – UB40 tribute.

SUNDAY 28th

OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)

MONDAY 29th

MILES KANE: O2 Academy – Return to town for the former-Rascals singer and Last Shadow Puppets co-frontman, touring most recent solo album 'One Man Band'.

NIGHTSHIFT
Oxford's Music Magazine



IN A DIFFERENT PLACE

MANDRAKE HANDSHAKE
THE AUGUST LIST / DEADBEAT APOSTLES
KILLER KOWALSKI / EMMA HUNTER / MID AIR
DOGMILK / CHOLLY / 31HOURS

OLD MAN MAY / ENJOYABLE LISTENS
TAMARA / LAIMA BITE
BARRICANE / SIMON VEANEY

BACKLINE AND FRONT BAR SOUND BY SAFEHOUSE STUDIO

TICKETS
AVAILABLE
ON WGT

17 DEC 2023 THE BULLINGDON



KANADIA / GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS / DOLLY MAVIES / EMMA HUNTER

The Jericho Tavern

Tonight was always going to be a night that I would never forget, celebrating twelve years of Oxford music super fandom from my home in Louisiana by attending the iconic Jericho Tavern to witness some of my favourite local stars, who’ve come together to help me celebrate my first ever visit to the city. Four headlining acts coming together for a one-off concert; it’s a dream come true. Emma Hunter (the Oxfordian Beth

Gibbons) and Tom Bruce waste no time in setting the stage with her gorgeous vocals and his dynamic drumming. Hunter’s vibrant outfit perfectly complements the vivacious performance. Their set of flamenco-infused trip-hop rock pays tribute to what I had requested, including ‘Here I Go’, ‘Snake’, the sexy, dirty blues ditty ‘Where the Roses Grow’; the sublime ‘Horizon Hunting’, uber catchy dance track ‘Love Is Not

A Choice’ and ace looper-pedal laden closer, ‘Treacle Well’. She’s not the next PJ Harvey, she’s the first Emma Hunter, and that’s even better. Dolly Mavies is an old soul residing in a young woman’s body. Her voice is as lovely as her music is catchy, wistful and powerful. She brilliantly blends genres like she’s making a sonic smoothie. Her set, which includes many personal favourite songs

from her outstanding debut album ‘The Calm & The Storm’, plus new song ‘Get Out’, seamlessly pivots from soft and delicate ballads (‘Distance’; ‘Drawing Circles’; ‘Reflection’) to pop rock foot stompers (‘I’m All Sugar’; ‘Spaghetti’; ‘Forgive & Forget’) that also showcase the talent of her band. Pure bliss.

I knew that Ghosts in the Photographs’ performances were loud, epic and intense. From the moment that George, Ian and Brent open with ‘Bad Milk Blood’, I feel like I’m being pummeled by a 50-foot tsunami of post-rock/shoegaze splendour. Their set wis a glorious explosion of thunderous drums awash in effects-laden guitar riffs and pulsating bass lines. Hearing ‘We Did What We Could in Isolation’, ‘Taylor Mountain Memorial’ and ‘Buildings That Don’t Fall Down When You Want Them To’ puts a huge smile on my face.

When Kanadia go full on into opener ‘Feel It Again’, I absolutely feel it, as does everyone else in the sold-out crowd. James, Melissa, Tim and Everton turn the humble Jericho Tavern into a Wembley Stadium on Walton Street. Their sound is gargantuan, and I feel every last bit of it as I stand front and centre before that modest stage. Their 13-song set, which includes personal favourites ‘Desert Song’; ‘Wish Away My Time’; ‘Devoured’; ‘Where’s Your Friends/Wild’, and closer ‘All I See’, is a performance for the ages. Two new songs, ‘How Do You Sleep’ and ‘Too Late Now’, even are debuted in honour of the very special evening. My oh my, indeed.

Scott Lyman

as best highlighted on ‘Black Camero’, which provides an interlude to the set before he deep dives into the rest of his new album. ‘Dreams’ epitomises the record; its disco boogie rhythm coupled to a seductive bass line has the crowd dancing and the heat rising. This leads on throughout the set as Healey gets the whole room moving, plunging into older and newer material alike with the kind of skill that makes him look like he’s been at it since funk first emerged. Ending the set with single ‘Fashun’ off his 2020 album ‘Twin Heavy’, Willie has us hooked, gripped on his every word and shake of his hips. Even if you didn’t know this song beforehand, it’s one to belt out. It finishes and the band leave the stage with the air of a job well done, and we can’t argue with them on that. However, Healey stays on stage and asks to do one more – ‘We Should Hang’, a devastating love song from his first album. It’s a captivating, stripped back performance, just vocals and guitar, which captures the full scale of his voice and talent. As the audience joins in with his final croons of “hang!” and Willie J Healey appears to fight back his emotions, it perfectly exemplifies why he’s garnering such a buzz. It’s the perfect end to a perfect set.

Emily Freeman

BELL LUNGS / MILKWEED Modern Art Oxford

Just before Milkweed start playing, someone in the Modern Art Oxford basement whispers to their friend “listen, okay, I’m happy you’re here because I can’t take anyone else to the experimental folk gig. You’re gonna like it.” They’re dead right; the next hour and a half of music is both one of the most experimental and consistently moving stints of music I have heard on an Oxford stage. We’ve had our fair share of folk projects here, but nothing about this evening feels excessive, or even worse, tired and by the book. Rather, it’s by heart; although the majority of tonight’s material are original compositions, their connection to both tradition and speculation about the future of folk is palpable.

Playing a gallery opening is a tough gig, especially in the Modern Art basement insofar as there is inevitably an audible drinks party above. Milkweed, undeterred, beginning like all good storytellers do, proclaiming the veil between seen and unseen lifted for the evening, and as if under a spell, any sense of what’s upstairs vanishes. We begin with a set of songs from ‘Myths and Legends of Wales’, their 2022 LP working from the compilation of the same name by Tony Roberts. Here is the night’s first appearance of Arthuriانا, though we’re not kept in Britain for long – Milkweed whisk us from the snake deities of the traditional Chinese creation myth to a brief oral history of the horse in America

THE BOO RADLEYS O2 Academy

Many bands experience an albatross around their neck in the form of a hit song – The Boo Radleys are no exception. After twenty one years in the wilderness, they now operate as a three-piece; sadly, chief songwriter and guitarist Martin Carr decided not to hook back up with the band upon the reformation. In a live setting they’re fleshed out by trumpeter Nick Etwell of The Filthy Six and versatile guitarist Louis Smith, who fills Carr’s shoes admirably.

Already three albums in, The Boos came onto the mainstream radar in 1995 along with the wave of Britpop bands upon releasing the ‘Wake Up Boo!’ single and album. Kicking back against its pop sheen they unleashed their experimental career peak ‘C’mon Kids’ – as well as containing melodic flair, distortion and fuzz were also present, in a nod to their early days. It was loved by critics but never had the commercial success of its predecessor. They bowed out in 1999 with the sublime ‘Kingsize’. Back to the present day, they’ve hit the ground running, releasing two well-received albums, as well as a tour in June playing 1993 masterpiece ‘Giant Steps’ in its entirety. Singer Sice announces that the last time

(these texts are from the 1979 edition of the annual journal of the Folklore Society) and right back to the Mordred story. I think any other group might have been overwhelmed by this kind of eclecticism, but sitting as they do in the same tonal space, one voice echoing across a banjo and guitar, the whole thing coheres into a vivid and breathing stream of stories.

They’re well programmed in that regard. Headliner Bell Lungs (stage name of Ceylan Hay, Scottish-Turkish sound artist) also presents 40 minutes of uninterrupted music, which she begins not with a bang but a whisper, sitting quietly on a mat (armed with microphone, army of loop machines/guitar pedals/bow/electric violin/pan pipes/bagpipe chanter/bird caller) and beginning to conjure drones that she pulls in and out of focus as her own (astonishingly chameleonic) voice sits atop. Her music sits in a hypnotic space between breath and idea, gently reforming itself as one motif becomes another; her singing, at times piercingly clear, at others so fine that we’re wondering if it is coming from her at all, guides us through with untouchable grace. Enraptured, the audience all sit down with her, as if bowing. I could name some reference points: Julianna Barwick, Harold Budd, some Brian Eno, and Brighde Chaimbeul all spring to mind. But my notes just read ‘WOW.’ WOW. *Shaw Worth*

they played Oxford was supporting Ride at the Apollo Theatre in 1991 (*history states 1992*). Playing to a considerably smaller audience tonight in the upstairs room, he’s in a jubilant mood, regaling anecdotes and looking like he’s found the secret to happiness. Before the euphoric ‘Find The Answer Within’ he explains, “This is pretty much my hometown gig; I was born in the North West but I’ve lived in Thame longer” – it’s then dedicated to Pete and Trudy who run his local boozer The Cross Keys. Melding beautiful melodies to thought-provoking lyrics is a trick The Boos have mastered: concerning euthanasia, ‘A Full Syringe And Memories Of You’ ebbs and flows, caressing the senses with the faintest touch. ‘I Was Glad To Know’ from latest LP ‘Eight’ fits into the set seamlessly and ‘Finest Kiss’ from back in their shoegaze days evokes a wailing noise, when fuzz and feedback were king. Leaving the grandiose ‘Lazarus’ as the penultimate song, followed by the aforementioned soaring albatross ‘Wake Up Boo!’, is a stroke of genius that brings things to a wondrous end, but not so The Boo Radleys’ resurrection. *Gary Davidson*

HARCOURT ARMS

SAT 2ND DEC
HIPSHAKIN’
SAT 9TH DEC
THE SPIRALITES
THURS 14TH DEC
STEPH PIRRIE XMAS JAZZ
FRI 15TH DEC
MOONAROON
SAT 16TH DEC
**SIR BALD DIDDLEY
& THE RIPCURLS XMAS PARTY**
FRI 22ND
THE KNIGHTS OF MENTIS
SUN 31ST DEC
**NYE SING A LONG
WITH JACK**
SAT 6TH JAN 2024
HIPSHAKIN’ 2024!
SAT JAN 20TH
BANKSIDE BLUES BAND

OPEN MIC EVERY SUNDAY
LIVE MUSIC IN THE HEART OF JERICHO
CRANHAM TERRACE JERICHO OX2 6DG

SUPPORTING OXFORD MUSIC
• SINCE 2002 •

WeGot Tickets

Oxford gig listings

Ticket your event

REPAIR ... RESTORE ... REBORN

Guitar and amp repairs, custom modifications and accessories

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



ANDY BELL’S GLOK / TIGER MENDOZA / APHRA TAYLOR

The Jericho Tavern

Aphra Taylor’s guitar glints beneath the deep, pomegranate shades of lighting; the rest of the room remains unlit. This image captures the glimmer of nostalgia and mourning left over after a dark devastation, a theme that runs throughout Aphra’s performance. This is rooted partially in her sharp, poignant lyricism: “I was five when I learnt what it meant to be alive.” This line, soaked in vulnerability, lingers till the end of her performance of ‘Sixteen’. Another thematic performance comes from the same EP. ‘The Night Dances’. In ‘Red’ Aphra sings “And I want to go back to

those days / Because now my own mind is a mere archway.” It shares a universal sentiment about growing into a jaded view of life. The lone acoustic guitar and gently drowsy vocals in both of these performances convey a stripped-back sense of self. Tiger Mendoza creates a landscape where synthesisers and hard-driven beats dominate the terrain. His performance of ‘Without’, featuring Emma Hunter, is no exception. The visceral, pummelling beat compliments the visuals that are now projecting a monologue behind him. It starts with an omnipresent aspiration,

happiness: “I’m a happy person on the inside / and I can be much happier.” This performance, in a world that is largely focused on individualism, speaks to the depths of members in the audience. The next lines of the speech turn this aspiration into a more clichéd sentiment: “Life is beautiful [...] the child learns and follows in your footsteps.” This could be interpreted as tongue-in-cheek. For a multitude of people, having children wouldn’t be, with the rise of individualism, and can’t be their happiness. This generalization, then, could be interpreted as a criticism of this being the supposed

peak. Equally, individuals may also see the beauty in the continuation of life. Its artfulness lies in its versatility.

With a mix of psychedelic rock and electronica, Andy Bell plays alongside a visual flurry of electrical colours. Bell’s shoegaze mastery is evident in his performance of ‘Memorial Device’. Soft electrical whirring swirls underneath crunches of his guitar like gusts of wind, as his synthesiser buzzes and piano keys alternate low and high notes effortlessly. This layering of mediums creates a distinctive and memorable piece. At the beginning, this buzzing whistles lower and higher tones – creating an electrifying, fascinating and, somehow still, a mellow escape. *Hannah Masih*

and drum to build to a crescendo.

Tonight feels like something of a greatest hits show; even though a new album may be on the horizon the majority of the set runs through his powerful back catalogue. That’s perhaps no bad thing, given said catalogue includes his powerful cover of Massive Attacks ‘Teardrop’, a three-part crowd harmony to ‘Four Leaf Clover’ and a crowd jumping competition (which is the closest you’ll get to a moshpit at a Newton show) on ‘Gone in the Morning’. While the newer material is very much in keeping with his self-professed “diddly diddly bap bap” sound, that’s by no means a bad thing. In fact, the only low point of the night is that he dodges the shouts for ‘Single Ladies’ from the crowd, after quipping that the stage is so drafty he feels like Beyoncé. Suffice to say for Newton Faulkner fans, the forthcoming album is unlikely to disappoint. *Lisa Ward*

THE MARY WALLOPERS

O2 Academy

There’s a worry early on in The Mary Wallopers’ set that they’re in danger of being a parody of themselves as the bandmates trade barbed banter at the expense of the songs, but once they get down to the business in hand it’s quickly evident how the band have risen so high so quickly, at least as far as English audiences are concerned.

Of course the band – centred around brothers Charles and Andrew Hendy and Sean McKenna but tonight playing as a six-piece – have serious history in their native Dundalk; you don’t achieve this level of musical and personal chemistry without years of practice in pubs and clubs.

Truth be told this would have worked better in a more intimate setting – what folk music doesn’t – but the fanaticism of the fans packed down the front is undeniable and reminiscent of The Pogues at their peak. The comparison has been made regularly but really The Mary Wallopers are less mired in the grime and dirt of Shane MacGowan’s lyrical world and for the most part feel like a good-time drinking band. They come with a serious political edge of course: ‘The Rich Man & The Poor Man’ is a jaunty sing’n’drink-along but makes a serious point, as does ‘Building Up & Tearing England Down’, while Barry Dransfield’s ‘Lots Of Little Soldiers’ is biting satire as its best. Elsewhere, by contrast, ‘The Blarney Stone’ sounds like pure carefree celebration.

At full pelt, we are reminded of The Pogues in full flight, but more so The Dubliners, who seem like more natural musical ancestors, but they’re at their most affecting when they strip things down as on the traveller ballad ‘Wexford Town’ or the tragic, nostalgic ‘John

O’Halloran’, which provides the emotional high point of the night and feels as poignant and relevant today as when it was first written. They leave us on a high though with the roustabout revelry of Hamish Imlach’s ‘Cod Liver Oil & The Orange Juice’ and the traditional ‘All For Me Grog’. A parting “Free Palestine!” as they leave the stage might feel throwaway on one level but it does serve to remind everyone here that for all the good times, traditional folk such as this, is the heart and soul of protest music. As for The Mary Wallopers, those good times look like they’re only going to get better in the near future.

Ian Chesterton

GOLD BABY / SKI LIFT / ROM COMS / ELECTRIC SHEPHERD

The Library

Electric Shepherd are one of those feelgood, slightly ramshackle student bands that used to populate these parts in large numbers, but these days seem rarer. Or maybe they just escape into the wild less often. All the required boxes are ticked; wacky name (though other bands share it), gang of friends singing along at the front, and some old chestnut covers (The Police, Britney). Everyone seems to know ‘Domestic Bliss’ and it’s a decent enough song, even if the singing is a bit, er, primal. But it’s all good fun, and God knows we need more of that.

Rom Coms, the first of three London bands tonight, circle in a similar orbit to local band And What, and more than just due to being a two-piece outfit featuring a singer/guitarist and drummer. The guitar is pleasingly scuzzy,

the drumming relaxed and the songs deftly put together. With elements of riot grrrl and bubblegum pop with a 60s twist, they’re probably best enjoyed in an intimate live environment like this, where personality and feeling count higher than technical flourish. Croydon band Ski Lift’s song ‘Moaning Again’ found fame with repeated use on *Made In Chelsea*, though tonight they present a subtler, pub rock-style take than the bombastic, hugely compressed version heard on TV. Welsh guitarist Benji Tranter has an engagingly early 70s style reminiscent of Rory Gallaher or Thin Lizzy, though most songs are aligned more to current indie tastes. The singles, recently collected on a handy compilation, showcase the use of complex, unexpected twists where you never know quite where the song is going. New release ‘Living The Dream’ continues the 70s feel though this time it’s The Jam that come to mind. Either way they stand above much of the current indie fare doing the rounds.

To finish we head across the river to north London and Gold Baby. Formed five years ago by Siân Alex as an outlet for her poetry, they’ve moved through personnel changes before settling into the current three-piece line-up. Everything hinges around Siân’s unusual voice, one minute haunting and fragile, the next punchy, soaring and compelling. The lyrics show definite poetic leanings, little stories of everyday life with fantastical elements thrown in, but the music doesn’t quite live up to the promise this presents. The jangly guitars and low-key drumming are pleasant enough but leave us waiting in vain for a song with a killer hook to bring all the elements together. By way of confirmation this summer’s ‘Colonial Pop’ single starts well but fails to follow through on the promise it holds. But, in line with all of tonight’s acts, the Library’s basement is about as perfect a setting as you could desire.

Art Lagun

OXFORD MAQAM ENSEMBLE / OXFORD MAQAM

St Barnabas Church

St Barnabas is sold out for what’s not just a gig of two halves one of two eras. First it’s Egyptian music from the 19th Century to the dawn of the recording age, which Oxford Maqam rediscovered and has led to them playing packed venues in Cairo, Kuwait and Turkey. They follow this with songs from Egyptian movies of the 1930s to mid 1950s: “a new golden age of Egyptian music”.

The group’s interpretation and improvisation makes the music come alive while they continue to be as authentic as possible. Singers Tariq (from Brickwork Lizards) and Yara have Egyptian roots, and have voices that soar to St Barnabas’ furthest spaces; when singing together their contrasting voices are a great fit.

The line-up for the 19th Century is oud; the zither-like qanun; hand percussion, and double bass, and the group sound like they’re the genuine article. They open with a meditative medley of art songs, starting with an evocative dialogue between Tariq’s oud and Martin’s qanun and ending with Tariq and Lara singing in unison. A moving song dedicated to Gaza follows, then the vibe begins to change with a more upbeat song and lively hand percussion. Then it’s a humorous folk song with the familiar theme of a poor peasant in love with the chieftain’s daughter and they close the first half with a song along the same lines as “How are you going to keep them down on the farm (now that they’ve seen Páree)”. The songs from the movies are in one of the most unlikely styles ever: Arabic Tango, which originated in 1930s Cairo. For these Oxford Maqam

become a small orchestra with the addition of some of the Oxford folk scene’s finest string players and a pianist. Only Tariq, Lara and Martin – now on accordion – remain from the first half. Tariq points out it’s remarkable how the songs’ composers “made Arabic lyrics dance in tango style”. With their excellent arrangements and their very tight playing Oxford Maqam Ensemble do these composers proud. Pianist William South impresses, making his non-Arabic instrument fit in with the Arabic scales, and the ensemble contribute a richly multi-layered Arabic tango of their own.

Many of the songs are familiar to some in the audience, and they applaud as song titles are announced and shout approval during them. Their involvement adds to what’s been a joyful set that ends with everybody on their feet applauding what’s been a superb performance.

Colin May





GODCASTER / LIFTS / LEE RILEY

The Port Mahon

It’s Hallowe’en, and Lee Riley’s guitar lies on its back on the darkened stage. If it resembles a corpse then, like Bela Lugosi’s Dracula projected onto the ceiling above the stage, it is not one that rests easy. Using bows, bludgeons, and just possibly a vibrator, Riley the necromancer invokes clouds of sound that seem to haunt, rather than fill, the room. There are soft misty tones that evaporate when you try to focus on them; there are dense thickets of sonic furze at the bottom end, and, fittingly, the ear-

scouring screams of the damned courtesy of a bowed scrap of metal. If Hallowe’en is a night for encountering the strange, then Dublin’s Lifts deliver by placing a violin and viola centre stage at the Port. Their opening number pairs these with pounded piano and some repetitive Glassy sax to create a blasted cabaret tune like a zombie Jacques Brel fronting Dirty Three. If none of the rest of the set quite hits that height again, their sawing, soaring crescendos and intricate drum tattoos make them A

Chamber Mt. Zion. Only the vocal, which tends towards a ruptured pirate growl, occasionally mars the effect. If NYC sextet Godcaster were to make a horror film, it would be the colour-saturated camp of *Hammer or Amicus*, and judging by the frontman’s stomps and pirouettes, it would be about a rock vocalist possessed by the revenant spirit of a cursed flamenco dancer. These preening theatrics are lightly amusing, but the band don’t need them, the music is easily

engrossing enough. The set careens between spiky blasts of noise slashed with awkwardly tricky guitar, and the breathy, diaphanous ‘Pluto Shoots His Gaze Into The Sun’, which is half hippy campfire meandering, half Broadway ballad. But they’re at their peak when they stretch out over hypnotic Holger Czukay basslines, and the penultimate number powers along like a Kraut reworking of Floyd’s ‘Astronomy Domine’ powered by Dr Frankenstein’s harnessed lightning. It’s a thrilling experience, and we hope there’ll be an even more garish sequel. *David Murphy*

KOSHEEN

The Bullingdon

I would like to be able to deny that it’s been more than 25 years since Kosheen broke onto the dance scene, but sadly the average age of tonight’s crowd more than confirms it to be true. Nevertheless, for just over an hour, Sian Evans and band transport me and the rest of the venue back to earlier times with a set list that’s filled with their most loved numbers. It takes a while for the audience to get engaged, though the likes of ‘Save Your Tears’ with its pounding drum rhythm, ghostly vocals and urgent piano, and reverb heavy ‘Damage’ feature early in the night. It’s not until almost the end of the show, when they launch into lesser-known tracks like ‘Dependency’ that the crowd really seems to come to life. Sian’s voice is every bit as powerful if it once was, barely aged by the

passing of time. Meanwhile the sound bounces of every wall of the venue serving as a reminder that music is both an auditory and sensation-based experience. Though there’s an odd interlude with Sian suggesting that the way to deal with potential perpetrators of rape is to sing show tunes at them, which falls somewhere between ill-formed advice, and a bad rape joke, overall the set is one of precision and well-crafted performance. The hit single ‘Louder’ (with DJ Fresh), which sent dubstep to the number one spot, and the more pop sounding ‘All In My Head’, serve as a reminder that Kosheen have managed to continuously reinvent their sound. Meanwhile, the marching beat of ‘Hide U’, and the lyrically confusing ‘Empty Skies’ also highlight just why Kosheen managed such mainstream success. Tonight is a welcome blast from the past, although it has to be said some 25 years on, I’m secretly relieved that it’s all over by 10pm. *Lisa Ward*



WHAT’S MY LINE?

A monthly look at jobs in local music. This month it’s **JOSH RIGAL** *from and he’s* **A SESSION MUSICIAN & MUSIC TEACHER.**

How long have you worked in this job?

“I’ve been playing gigs since I was 16, but I guess it didn’t turn into a job until my early twenties.”

What is one thing you have to do as part of your job that the average person might not know?

“Make lots of cups of tea and offer lots of encouragement to musicians. You’d be surprised how many seemingly confident performers have crippling self doubt.”

What’s been the single biggest highlight of your career so far?

“This summer I played on Joe Bonamassa’s ‘Keeping The Blues Alive’ cruise with Alice Armstrong. We cruised around the Mediterranean hanging out with some big names. Although I never saw myself performing on a ship as I always associated it with cheesy covers band, this was a once in a life time opportunity. Also, there was unlimited free food and drink!”

And the lowlight?

“Getting screwed over by record labels. If I could go back in time I would do everything without record labels and managers getting involved. They tend to dilute the creative process and you’d be surprised how disorganised most of them are.”

How did Covid affect your job?

“Massively, thankfully I was able to teach



music online to keep myself going. I did take a lot of online music production courses though which allowed me to open Forge Studios. It was also tough mentally to go from super busy to having little to do.”

Who’s your favourite ever Oxford musical artist?

“Balloon Ascents I absolutely loved. My band Little Brother Eli played a few shows with them and I was always impressed by the songs they had. I wonder what they’re doing now...”

What’s the single most important piece advice you’d give to someone wanting to do your job?

“It took me about 10 years to find a financial balance in my work, so keep at it and be flexible. Also, be prepared to have a side hustle until you get your feet on the ground. A lot of young people go study music and think the gigs will come to them, but in reality you have to

build it from the ground up yourself.”

Who’s the most awkward person you’ve ever had to deal with in your job?

“Not sure I could say their name as I’d get in a lot of trouble! I’d say that some people’s version of time keeping is different to mine.”

When was the last time you heard genius?

“I think that word gets used a lot, but I guess it’s subjective. Nothing has blown me away as much as the first time I heard Jimi Hendrix; his records still blow me away. It sparked my love for improvisation and shapes how I play now. Hearing any overly rehearsed music without any spontaneity just bores me.”

Have you ever compromised your integrity in the course of your work?

“Yes, all the time in order to pay the bills and I’m not ashamed of it. I’d rather keep a roof over my head and have to do the occasional gig I don’t like or agree with.”

Would you swap your job for any other and if so, what?

“I wouldn’t change a thing, but if I had to I’d be a gardener. I spent a summer gardening in London with a friend and it was the best summer of my life being out in the sun with the dogs.”

Are you rich?

“I’d say I do okay. I certainly don’t take my life for granted.”

Do you consider your job glamorous?

“Not at all, but it has its moments where I feel like a rock star. And then you’re back playing a gig in The Dog And Duck pub somewhere wondering what has happened.”

What’s your favourite thing about Oxford’s music scene?

“All the lovely people: I’ve made a lot of long lasting friends over the years. I’ve lived in other places and not experienced that kind of camaraderie.”

INTRODUCING....

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

Mid Air

Who are they?

Oxford indie band Mid Air are: Peter Moore (*vocals/guitars*); Corinne Clark (*vocals/keyboards*); Dan Mitchell (*drums*); Colin Fox (*bass/vocals*), and Lee Davies (*guitars/vocals*). Peter and Corinne met in the bar on their first night at university and have been friends ever since. Bonding over a shared love of Prince, they played in a few bands together before forming Mid Air with Dan in 2018. This trio spent a year doing acoustic gigs around Oxford before heading into RAK Studio to record an album in 2019. Then came the pandemic. Two years later and Mid Air completed their debut album, ‘Talking Through Glass’, with session performances from Colin, Lee, and Barney Morse-Brown on cello. Colin and Lee joined the band full-time and the current version of Mid Air started gigging in earnest late 2022. 2023 saw the band play Truck Festival, and be interviewed on BBC Introducing and Melting Pot, as well as playing shows at The O2 Academy Oxford and The Bullingdon. The album is released in December.

What do they sound like?

Elegant, misty-eyed indie pop with twined lead vocals hanging suspended in an amniotic pool of soft synth and stately guitar and a breezy folk darkness. Or, in their own words: “strong pop and melodic sensibilities, underpinned with sympathetic rhythms, swathed in layers of vocal harmonies. Distinctive male/female vocals and an increasing nod to the 80s synth sounds of The Blue Nile and others.”

What inspires them?

“Getting messages from people you’ve never met who have somehow heard a song you wrote in your bedroom and who want to tell you how much it means to them. Also, the indefatigability of the Oxford open mic’ers – lugging themselves and their instruments across town after a long day at work, come rain or shine, week after week, year after year, just for the joy of singing a couple of songs, when it’s always easier to stay at home. Let them always be there.”



Their career highlight so far is:

“Truck was pretty awesome, both the actual gig and the strangers coming up to us later in the day to say how much they loved it!”

And the lowlight:

“There haven’t been any, really, which may sound dull or disingenuous. Okay, how about going into RAK for what absolutely had to be the last day of vocal recording with the lyrics for two songs incomplete. Not just incomplete but barely skeletal. Thankfully, inspiration struck.”

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

“The People Versus – everything about them oozes quality.”

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

“This is an impossible question. One answer is ‘Sign O’ The Times’.”

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

“The all-dayer In a Different Place on 17th December at the Bullingdon. Newcomers can expect a set of original songs, played with passion by a band who really want to be on that stage.

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

“Favourite is the seemingly limitless supply of talented, passionate artists finding a way to get their stuff together and get out there. Least favourite is the fact that East Oxford is essentially one big car park from 3pm daily, making it hard to get to gigs and (ironically) park when you do get there.”

You might love them if you love:

Fleetwood Mac; The Blue Nile; Leonard Cohen; REM; Suede; All About Eve.

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

20 YEARS AGO

Coming down from the celebrations for our 100th issue, which featured a series of gigs at venues around Oxford, including **The Bigger The God’s** farewell show, *Nightshift* listed, as has become traditional, our end of year Top 20 of Oxford songs. Topping the pile in December 2003 was **The Rock Of Travolta’s** ‘Everything’s Opened Up’, the band’s only ever vocal track, featuring **Seafood’s** David Line: “paying sullen homage to Sonic Youth, the song growling and purring before ripping its cage apart in one climactic barrage of sonic mayhem.” The top 5 songs also included **Radiohead’s** ‘Sail To The Moon’; **Sexy Breakfast’s** ‘Walking in the Air’-sampling ‘Fade To White; **Suitable Case For Treatment’s** ‘Brand New Loafers’ and **Bridge’s** ‘Harvester’, while the local favourites of **Winnebago Deal**, **Meanwhile Back In Communist Russia** and **Dive Dive** also made their presence felt. Metalcore heroes **Coma Kai** were the featured interview band, whose singer was called stAN Boa, the odd letter casings being apparently an important thing. They’d just released their EP ‘Between One & Six Zeroes’, which was picking up Radio 1 airplay, while the band were busy trekking round the UK’s toilet venues. Unusually for a metal band they quoted The Smiths and Stone Roses as influences, alongside Deftones and System of a Down: “We’re just trying to make it as difficult as possible to pigeonhole us,” they claimed.



HAMERON: ‘Gosh, one hadn’t realised just how LONG one’s hair had grown in that shed’

Dr SHOTOVER - Lord of the Things

Ah, there you are, Young Frodo. Welcome to the East Indies Club bar, aka the Prancing Pony. Buy us all a barrel of Hobbit Ale and pull up a suitably titchy pew. As you know, there have been many updates to the Lord of the Rings saga. But now, a lost manuscript has been discovered tucked behind a cistern in the toilets of the abandoned Eagle and Child tavern. It seems that JRR Tolkien intended a sequel in which Haldir the Elf, aka David Hameron, is recalled from exile in his garden shed to revive the fortunes of the Sauron Party. Princess Sewerella Saruman is OUT. Haldir Hamface is IN. Who knows how long it will be before they dig out Dominic Smeagol for reinstatement, in exchange for an amnesty on his Dwarfgate testimony? Or will Farage Wormtongue re-form the Nazgul Party and sweep away their electoral base in the Shire? Here>s to another long-running instalment of the franchise! Cheers! Down the Mines of Moria!


Next month: ‘I’m always touched by your presence, Haldir’

Bossaphonik

Superb live bands each month! Resident DJ Dan Oler and Guests

OXFORD’S UNIQUE JAZZ WORLD DANCE EVENT

ONIPA




Afro-futurist stars mixing explosive Afrobeat-soukous-hip hop-electronical!

Touring to promote second LP “Off The Grid” (Real World Records) this dynamic band is a collaboration of musicians from Nubian Twist with K.O.G. (Kweku of Ghana) and Wonky Logic (Steam Down/Nightmares On Wax)

“An effervescent, life-affirming Pan-African tour” Mojo
“Riotous beats and irresistible delirium” The Guardian

Friday 15th December 8pm - 1.30am
£13 adv / £15 student ID / £18 door Band starts at 9.30pm


wegetickets.com



COWLEY WORKERS SOCIAL CLUB

Between Towns Road, OX4 3LZ

www.bossaphonik.com



DJ COUSCOUS
(Lunched out Library)

Appletree Studios
Oxfordshire & Bucks Longest Running Recording Studios
Nearly 40 Years Producing Quality Recordings

- * Recording Bands, Soloists and Business Also:
- * Mixing & Mastering from Home Recorded Files
- * Experienced Multi-Instrumentalist Producer/Engineer
- * Free Session Playing, Production/Arrangement Advice
- * Song Writing for Artists Without Original Songs.
- * Free Parking, Tea & Coffee
- * Amazing Country Views & Light Relaxed Atmosphere
- * Duplication & Artwork Services

tel **01844 237916**
SEE MANY APPLETREE CLIENT REVIEWS & OTHER SERVICES AT:
www.appletreestudios.com

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

Tel: 07876487923
Email: info@warehousestudios.com
www.warehousestudios.com

EVOLUTION
RECORDING STUDIOS

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

Experienced Engineers, Session musicians and Producers in-house.

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

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

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

Glasshouse Studios
Rehearsal and Recording studios

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

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

TRACKS
Yin & Yang Audio

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

TOP TRACK

HÖÖF

The world right now is so bloody grim we can't even make cynical jokes about it anymore; a world where kids are being bombed into oblivion and people in actual power boldly claim homelessness is a lifestyle choice is perhaps a world in dire need of some humour but we can't summon the energy right now. What we can do though is try and enjoy a bit of simple escapism and with this debut set of songs from Hööf, we can, for a few fleeting moments, feel slightly carefree. The local quartet go full on rock with a double umlaut, which means their name is probably pronounced Huff, which reminds us of the classic scene in *Goodfellas* where our brutal protagonists borrow a knife from Horrible Tommy's dear old mum supposedly to chop up a deer they've hit but really to butcher poor old Billy Batts who's unconscious in the boot of their car. Anyway, Hööf's lead song here, 'Ants', is giddy with exuberant naiveté, a lovely, warm wall of fuzzy pop, with sweet hooks and a blurred sense of melody; it's both richly textured and lo-fi, like a Sarah Records band from the 1980s transported to Seattle in the early 90s and told to fit in, which they do with energy to spare. Hööf have played a couple of shows with long-time *Nightshift* faves Jody & the Jerms who recommended them to us in the first place and you can see how the two acts fits snugly together: it's great pop music with a double gingerbread fuzzcore buttery base. It might not actually make the world a less unbearable place but for three sweet minutes it makes everything feel a damn sight fluffier.

JAMIE FELTON

Fluffy isn't something you could say about Jamie Felton's song, accurately titled 'This Isn't Your Average Song'. Instead it's cynical and jaded and caustic. Or is it? Ooh, now there's something to pique your interest. For starters the song in question is a full ten minutes long and comes with a semi aggressive introduction from Jamie – a young lad from Bicester who's previously earned himself a bit of a critical kicking in these pages – before it makes way for what appears to be a Baz Luhrmann 'Sunscreen' -

like litany of ills over a nagging acoustic guitar strum that becomes more and more insistent as it goes on. The spoken word/ rapped vocals list and analyse all the frustrations of the failing artiste, from crap gigs in shit pubs (in Swindon) to the horror of reality TV show instant success whores. It's half heartfelt lament, half angry diatribe and you're torn between feeling sorry for the fella and irked by his bitter judgementalism. But then there's a twist at the end, which we shan't spoil for you; suffice to say the big reveal shows what a clever song this actually is and like a film with a neat twist at the end you're forced to go back and listen again to see everything for what it really is. There's something of the Cassels about 'This Isn't Your Average Song', especially in its wordiness and it's easily the smartest song in this month's pile

ELECTRIC SHEPHERD

Nightshift, it might have been noted (often to the chagrin of seasoned musos with PhDs in clever time signatures), tends to prefer enthusiasm over technique when it comes to music, so we like Electric Shepherd quite a bit on the evidence of this first song of theirs, titled 'Ramona'. With no airs or graces the student band kick out the most basic of chord progressions and the simplest of melodies with what might be described as a rudimentary grasp of musicology, a flurry of punk and pop entwined like untidy bedfellows scrapping to re-enact 'His Latest Flame' as a late-70s new wave hit. It's short, not particularly sharp, but very much to the point for the most part, features something akin to some Burundi-style drumming at one point, has an untidy false ending and a frantic and wholly unnecessary guitar solo to finish on. What it lacks in cleverness it makes up for in spirit and it's considerably more fun than any amount of *Classic Rock*-reading bores will ever be.

FIVER

Then again, Electric Shepherd sound like a supergroup of Rush and Genesis spare parts compared to Fiver. Fiver, who confuse us initially into thinking they're called Fiverfiver because they have a weird email address. Once we work out they're just called Fiver we start to hope their singer is a tenor (DYSWWD? Oh never mind, we'll quid while we're ahead). Anyway, like Electric Shepherd Fiver favour enthusiasm over technique but even more so. Their first song here, 'Cooler', sounds like the most rudimentary Nirvana pastiche you can imagine with its grungy chug and growly vocal and by the time they hit 'Unfold' they sound like a band in an unstoppable rush to get to the toilet before they explode; it's a frantic flurry of punked-up rock and roll that becomes increasingly hysterical

as it heads to its climax after which we hit a brace of tracks both clocking in at exactly one minute 42 seconds that are the most primitive thrash rock devoid of any semblance of subtlety but come with a surfeit of vim and vigour and will probably upset both professional musicians and grunge purists alike, so we'll give them a pass.

MERLIN

Rock of a more solid kind here from one-man-band Merlin, though don't let the word solid put you off: it simply means it'd crush your car if it landed on it. We say one-man-band but Merlin here does employ local cello star Barney Morse-Brown on a couple of tracks, adding some sombre timbre to tracks like 'Shapes In the Fire', but mostly it's crunching hard rock with at least one foot, possible both, in the Queens of the Stone-Age camp. 'Capitalismamma' is melodic but forceful, not so much disjointed as restless, as if it's trying to cover too many bases at once when often this kind of bruising hard rock just needs to get on with the one job in hand. 'I Forgot My Safeword' is more simple-minded and better for it – post-grunge rolling groove rock where the riff is very much king. 'Disconnect' throws some nice psychedelic effects into the mix but at heart is still a hard rocking beast, and like fellow local QOTSA-loving noise makers BarrelHaus, Merlin gives us riffs and grooves heavy and fluid enough to keep us grooving well past bedtime.

NORTHMORE

Northmore are two guys called George and Dennis who used to play together in the band Northmoor eleven years ago but are back together under a very slightly different name. Unlike much of this month's pile they're musically polite, even cultured, with opening track 'Asini', which opens with the sound of waves lapping gently on a shoreline, a slight, emotive and far too tasteful piece of soft-centred rock with boyband-like harmonies and just the merest hint of euphoria about it. It's inoffensive enough to get past us without any crockery or glassware being hurled at the wall but 'Aquatint' actually gets us laughing, even though it almost certainly doesn't intend to. It's a spoken word piece, bar an airy sung chorus, done with almost stentorian solemnity to the point we're stifling giggles too much to appreciate the spacious U2-meets-Pink Floyd guitar spangles and discreet sax parts. "Aquatint blue / Lost in a misty hue" intones the narrator very, very seriously as we consider sticking Hööf on again, or maybe a tape of random farting noises – anything to puncture the pomposity of it all. Eleven years they waited to make a comeback and now we've ruined the big occasion for them. Sorry Northmore. Give it another decade and maybe come back again as Northmaw or something. Or maybe simply No'more.

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.

FOUR MINUTE WARNING

With a band name like that and the information that they're all 17 and 18 years old, we're expecting – no, hoping – Four Minute Warning to be an eruption of rock and roll thunder – an unleashing of teenage angst and anger with gory splatters of war-themed imagery all over their music. What we really didn't expect – nor hope for – was the timid, tremulous acoustic folk-pop stumble of 'Anymore', which sounds more a like a frail old man on the fringes of the Cropredy festival singing "who can tell where the wind blows, where the time goes, when I'm with you" and generally sounding like he's about to expire in bucolic style before the next line arrives. They at least bring a modicum of funk to bear on 'Sunbather' but it's stretching things to snapping point to call it in any way funky as it dissolves into a keening puddle of jangling inconsequentiality long before it finally casts off its mortal coil. We'd demand Four Minute Warning donate their name to a more deserving band immediately, but there are already at least eleven thousand groups with the same name already and some of them actually deserve it. In the meantime, lads, Trading Standards would like a word with you about the Trades Description Act.

TOILET TRACK

HIDDEN SHACKLES

"Hi, we have recently discovered your magazine and love what you are doing. The layout is simple yet effective and the gig guide is a great touch!" say Hidden Shackles by way of introduction. Yeah, cheers, we chuck that lil old gig guide in as a finishing flourish, you know. What do you think a local music magazine is about? Sponge recipes? Actually, thinking about it, we might make more money concentrating on baking tips than dissecting aspiring musicians, and even the most dried-up husk of a Cherry Genoa would be more appetising than this shrill, over-egged power-rock opus. If 'I Feel Alive' here was a cake it'd be a Tesco Value plain sponge with a vast dollop of overly sweet icing on top. Or perhaps a gluten-free, dairy-free, egg-free, flavour-free loaf of sawdust and sorrow that sits wailing in overwrought fashion in the corner imaging itself to be the free-spirited sister of Meatloaf, which isn't actually a cake but we're past caring by this point. And we don't even eat meat anyway (and nor did Meatloaf, ironically). So here's your recipe for this month, dear reader: a dollop of rock cliché; a spoonful of pomp; another dollop of cliché; some more pomp; an egg, why not, and hell, chuck the rest of the bag of clichés in for good measure. Mix stridently and heat to melting point. Cheers Hidden Shackles, you've made us want to turn the news on again to make the world seem a brighter place.

RECORDING & REHEARSAL STUDIO
INC QUALITY BACKLINE - from £12 p/hr

Safehouse STUDIO

ARK-T CENTRE, OX4 3LN - EASY LOAD IN & PARKING

BOOKINGS: MIKE on 07731 804796
mike@safehousetudio.co.uk

[safehousetudio](https://www.facebook.com/safehousetudio) [safehousetudio](https://www.instagram.com/safehousetudio)

Master Rhythm STUDIOS

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

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

Mastered in the studio last month;
SUSPIRE, JOELY JUNE, DIRE STRAITS, THOMAS JUSTIN-BOVE, BOB DYLAN, VALERYAN, ROFI JAMES, HELEN PEARSON, THE DEADBEAT APOSTLES, RUSH, LVRA, STEELY DAN, MODERN GUILT, KILLING JOKE, DEADWAX, THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS, POLLY MORRIS, DAVID BOWIE, TELEMATICS, L.A. GROOVE, LUKE DAVIES, HIGHER MUSIC STATE, SWERVEDRIVER, METALLICA.

01865 716466 tim@turanaudio.co.uk

A modern, friendly recording service

Situated just by the Oxford ring-road, our acoustically isolated and conditioned studio space is perfect for voice overs, narration, session work, tracking instruments for bands, mixing, production and more.

Contact us for a chat about your project.
www.startrecording.co.uk

Start Recording

TAD STUDIOS

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

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

Built by Musicians, for Musicians

://ANEWVIEWMUSIC.COM

@ANEWVIEWMUSIC

/ANEWVIEWMUSICUK



TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
GIGANTIC.COM

gigantic

OXFORD GIG LISTINGS

NOV SAT 25
O₂ ACADEMY2
THE ELECTRIC SWING CIRCUS

AN ELECTRO-SWING SPECTACLE

JAN FRI 26
THE BULLINGDON
CANCER BATS AS BAT SABBATH

BLACK SABBATH COVERS FROM THE CANADIAN TITANS

MAR WED 13
O₂ ACADEMY
THE LONGEST JOHNS

MASTERFUL SHANTIES AND SINGALONG.

NOV SUN 26
O₂ ACADEMY2
PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS

HEAVY ROCK FROM MOTÖRHEAD'S LONGTIME GUITARIST

FEB FRI 02
THE BULLINGDON
AS EVERYTHING UNFOLDS

HOOK LADEN METALCORE

MAR MON 18
THE BULLINGDON
TOM MEIGHAN ACOUSTIC

FORMER-KASABIAN FRONT MAN'S ACOUSTIC TOUR

NOV THU 30
O₂ ACADEMY2
L1NKN P4RK

LINKIN PARK TRIBUTE ACT
+ ARIMEA

FEB SAT 10
MULTIPLE VENUES
BEAM ME UP FESTIVAL

NEW MUSIC FROM ANOTHER WORLD
+ DEADLETTER, THE RILLS, DOLORES FOREVER
SNAYX AND MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED

MAR FRI 29
O₂ ACADEMY2
SI CRANSTOUN

OF THE DUALERS

DEC WED 06 **SOLD OUT**
THE JERICHO TAVERN
BEANS ON TOAST

ACCLAIMED SINGER SONGWRITER
+ BASSIE GRACIE, TENSHEDES

FEB TUE 13
THE BULLINGDON
N'FALY KOUYATÉ

FROM AFRO CELT SOUND SYSTEM

MAY FRI 03
O₂ ACADEMY2
KING AWESOME

80S ROCK TRIBUTE ACT

DEC FRI 08 **LOW TICKETS**
O₂ ACADEMY2
OF MICE & MEN

POWERFUL HARD ROCK AGGRESSION.
+ CASKETS, DEFECTS

FEB FRI 23
THE BULLINGDON
BAD TOUCH

HOME GROWN AND FULL BLOWN ROCK AND SOUL

MAY FRI 03
THE JERICHO TAVERN
VC PINES

A SINGER-SONGWRITER BURST OF COLOUR

DEC SUN 10
THE BULLINGDON
OPUS KINK

HORN-FUELLED FILTH-FUNK
+ SELF HELP, HAINTS

MAR TUE 01
THE JERICHO TAVERN
BUZZARD BUZZARD BUZZARD

AN INVIGORATING BLAST OF 70S POWER-POP

MAY FRI 24
THE JERICHO TAVERN
DIZRAELI

TAKING HIP-HOP TO NEW TERRAINS