

NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month
Issue 315
February
2023



MILA TODD

Political activism and electronic exploration with Oxford's collaboration queen.

Also in this issue:

Introducing **DAZE**

At work with **SMART GUITARS**

KITE and **WILDERNESS** line-up news

plus

All your Oxford music news, previews, reviews and listings for February

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THE BULLINGDON

FEBRUARY 2023

GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Monday 30th January

Kris Barras Band
Dea Matróna

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 2nd February

The Rills

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 2nd February

So Fetch
2000s Party

Doors: 11PM

Friday 3rd February

Pet Needs

Doors: 7PM

Friday 3rd February

DNB Presents

Drum and Bass Vol. 1
(The Return)

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 4th February

Reggaeton Party

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 5th February

Green Bean Machine
Soft Crunchy Landing
Colonel Spankey's Love Ensemble

Doors: 8PM

Wednesday 8th February

Josh Pugh: Sausage, Egg,
Josh Pugh, Chips & Beans

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 8th February

Fishco

Doors: 11PM

Thursday 9th February

Tom Ward: Anthem

Doors: 7PM

Friday 10th February

Broken Empire

Doors: 7PM

Friday 10th February

Two Step Presents

UKG? | Garage Night

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 11th February

Simple
Call Super and Parris

Doors: 11PM

Monday 13th February

Jockstrap

Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 14th February

Funky Valentine
Sisters of Funk
Dots Funk Odyssey

Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 14th February

The Cost of Living Crisis!!
Valentines Special
(Singles Party)

Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 15th February

Brave Rival

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 16th February

Marysgarden
Screamini Irene
Starbelly

Doors: 7.30PM

Thursday 16th February

Call Me Maybe
2010s Party

Doors: 11PM

Friday 17th February

Wrest

Doors: 7PM

Friday 17th February

Haus Party | The Return

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 18th February

Musical Medicine

Jay Carder

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 19th February

Adam Van Bandler

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 22nd February

Bankside Blues Band

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 23rd February

John Kearns:
The Varnishing Days

Doors: 7PM

Friday 24th February

Rising From The Deep

Doors: 7PM

Friday 24th February

The Bully Boiler

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 25th February

Rowdio - Real Jungle 01

Jumpin Jack Frost
Conrad Subs

Doors: 11PM

Radini

Lankzi

Algar

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 26th February

Chloe Petts: Transience

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 2nd March

Johnny Payne
and the Thunder

Doors: 7PM

Friday 3rd March

Michelle de Swarte:
Moved

Doors: 7PM

Friday 3rd March

Soul Sista

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 4th March

Simple

Chloe Robinson B2B DJ ADHD

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 5th March

Personal Trainer
Max Blansjaar
EB

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 9th March

Sophie Duker: Hag

Doors: 7PM



NEWS

Phone: 01865 372255

email: editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk

Online: nightshiftmag.co.uk



DESERT STORM launch their new album with a headline show at **O2 Academy** on the **31st March**. The local sludge, groove and desert rock titans release 'Death Rattle' the same day on APF Records. 'Death Rattle is the Oxford quintet's sixth studio album and the follow-up to 2020's 'Omens'. Support for the show comes from Inhuman Nature and Thuum; tickets are on sale now via the O2 Academy website and Ticketmaster.

CHEMICAL BROTHERS, CHRISTINE & THE QUEENS AND FATBOY SLIM are the headliners for this year's **Wilderness Festival**. The music, food and arts festival takes place over the weekend of the **3rd-6th August** at **Cornbury Park**. Among the other acts announced are Sugababes; Confidence Man; Pip Millet; Los Bitchos; Nuha Ruby Ra; Acid Klaus; Lime Garden, and Ronnie Scotts' tribute to Aretha Franklin. A full list of artists and attractions plus ticket details is online at wildernessfestival.com.

OXFORD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC co-host an open, informal conference on the state of and potential future for Oxford's music scene on **Saturday 25th February**. The free Open Space event, run in conjunction with Devoted & Disgruntled, runs from 11am through to 4pm at **The Old Fire Station**. Anyone wishing to attend will need to register for a ticket at ocmevents.org.

Talking about the event, OCM director Jo Ross said: "Oxford is a city with so much energy for music, so many brilliant people making wonderful things happen against the odds; there's barely a night in the week when you couldn't be out seeing some fantastic live music. And yet, it doesn't feel like an easy time to be making live music happen in Oxford. More venues

closing, audiences with less cash in their pockets, artists struggling to make ends meet, inequality and underrepresentation still a huge problem, changes to transport around the city. With this much will and passion, how incredible could the scene be if things were a bit less difficult?

"We think that if we get together and discuss some of the challenges and opportunities, we might find some common ground and discover possibilities. How can we support each other and work together to strengthen and grow the amazing music community in Oxford? How can we harness our collective power to fight for the resources we need? Come and share your frustrations and ideas, and let's work out what we can do, as a community, to change things for the better."

THE FUTURE OF BBC INTRODUCING IN OXFORD remains in the balance with the BBC still deciding whether to cut the 32 local shows down to just 11 regional ones, losing the local flavour of each show in the process. The BBC Introducing network has become a vital source of early radio airplay for grassroots artists over the past 16 years, helping aspiring acts get a first foot on the radio play ladder who have no access to pluggers or record company backing. One thing local music fans can do while we await the outcome is register your views at freshonthenet.co.uk/backbone, stressing the vital part properly locally-focussed shows play in the UK's music industry and infrastructure. Meanwhile BBC Introdunig in Oxford continues to champion a wide range of Oxfordshire artists every Saturday evening between 8-9pm on 95.2fm and DAB. The show is available to stream and download at BBC Sounds.

CARNIVAL is set to return to Cowley Road this summer. The future of the annual East Oxford celebration – the biggest live music and dance event in Oxfordshire, attracting up to 50,000 to Cowley Road each year – looked in doubt when 2022's event was cancelled



SUEDE AND HOT CHIP are set to headline this year's **Kite Festival**. Both acts have been confirmed for the "Festival of Music and Ideas" which takes place at **Kirtlington Park** over the weekend of the **9th-11th June**. They'll be joined by Candi Staton; Baxter Dury; David Holmes; Sofia Kourtesis; Sarathy Korwar; Lynks; Raw Silk, and Decius, with more acts to be added in the next few weeks. Kite, which enjoyed its inaugural year last with star turns from Grace Jones, Self Esteem and Confidence Man as well as the likes of Jarvis Cocker, Delia Smith and Ai Weiwei, features a full line-up of talks, workshops, discussions, debates, comedy and signings.

More information and ticket details at kitefestival.co.uk

amid fears for its financial sustainability; the cancellation followed two years when Carnival was forced to take place online only due to the Covid pandemic. Cowley Road Works, the charity that runs Carnival pointed to "a more challenging funding environment" in the wake of Covid and the cost of living crisis. This year's comeback event takes place on **Sunday 9th July** with the theme announced as Our Nature, Our Future. Renowned carnival expert Pax Nindi, the new Acting Carnival Chairperson, said: "The Carnival was forced to take a break during the COVID pandemic. It is an irreplaceable highlight in the calendar for so many people here in Oxford city and beyond. We are currently on a fundraising exercise and seeking sponsorship which we need to achieve."

MARK WILDEN returns to Truck Store to host his free open legal surgery for local bands. The intellectual copyright barrister and former musician will be on hand to answer any legal or copyright questions from artists on Tuesday 14th February, from 4-6pm, and again on Saturday 11th March, from 11am-2pm.

MASTER RHYTHM has celebrated the opening of its second rehearsal room. The studio, based in the Templars Square shopping centre in Cowley, run by local musician Darren Davis, underwent a full refurbishment

and revealed its new space at the end of November last year. Talking about the new studio, Darren said: "the studio comprises of two rehearsal rooms; one is called the Master Suite and the new one is the Starlight Suite. The Rhythm Suite comprises of two drum booths. Each room has its own calendar that you can book online or through enquiring. The drum kits are all high quality and the rooms sound great, with everything you need to make a noise. Parking can be on Crowell Road if after shopping hours or Castle car park that is just across the sky bridge. We now also have the Famous Banana Suite by Laima Bite at Famous Banana Pictures, offering videos for local bands and artists." Master Rhythm also offer drum tuition, PA and backline hire. Visit masterrhythm.co.uk for more details.

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

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



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A quiet word with

MILA TODD



“I’M A MASSIVE HIPPY” says Mila Todd proudly; “to quote Scarface, ‘you need people like me so you can point your fucking fingers and say ‘that’s the big bad massive hippy’.”

GIVEN MILA’S declaration, and given that being positive and believing in positivity, peace and love are obviously great ideals to aspire to so why is the term ‘hippy’ still so derided, we wonder. “It’s much easier to look for a scapegoat than reflect internally; easier to think of others as the enemy rather than nurturing connection and understanding between each other, and easier to live in denial and pretence than accept our own part in tragedies

we create. I’ll follow hippies over yuppies every time.” MILA TODD IS, WITHOUT A doubt, a force for positivity on the Oxford music scene. Previously singer with rock band Ciphers, she also fronts a 90s rock covers band, The Flaming Keys, is part of a protest samba band and creates her own solo music, increasingly exploring and learning about electronic music. Alongside all these projects Mila – one of the most versatile vocalists in Oxford, capable of epic soul and strident declarations of protest and much more besides and beyond – is a regular collaborator with fellow local musicians. “I’m a performance junkie, always looking for that next hit,” she declares.

OXFORD RESIDENT FOR most of her life, Mila was born and grew up in her mum’s native Glasgow before relocating temporarily to her dad’s Mauritius. How, we wonder, did those experiences open her eyes to music and shape her own music making? “Hundreds of VHS *Top Of The Pops* compilations subliminally hatched my melody making melon. My wee Glaswegian mammy’s love and incessant need for music fed into my desire to gyrate and sing in front of an audience, a speaker and the mirror, which as a child I did constantly and still do. “My wee Mauritian daddy and Mauritian family introduced me to Bollywood classics and the island’s national dance and song, Sega. Sega was created by enslaved

workers who were brought over from mainland Africa by European colonisers. The songs are sung in Creole – the mother tongue of Mauritians – and the main instrument, the heart, is a Ravanne: a large hollow drum made from goatskin that you heat over a fire. The songs are about island life and about having a good time despite the circumstances! ‘Met Nisa’ as they say in Creole. The huge boom that resonates from the Ravanne contributes to my big love for drums and bass.”

DESPITE THESE formative exposures, Mila didn’t start making music for herself until her 30s (“A mid-life crisis,” as she puts it herself), picking up an acoustic guitar and seeing what she could do: “eventually I got fed up with Youtube telling me what to do and went into the fields at the back of my house with guitar in tow. I would sit and play around until I found notes that I liked and just felt my way into creating a tune with one finger and some plucking; this is why I have perplexed looks at my shows sometimes!”

AFTER BRAVING A FEW open mic nights Mila joined Ciphers, a band that also featured fellow local electronic musician Kid Kin. “I have great memories of Ciphers! I was very lucky to land on my feet with such a bunch of talented and lovely people. I had a lot of freedom to explore my own voice and writing and they were also a bunch of funny bampots; Sam, our drummer, is basically a white Richard Ayoade. One of my best memories with the band is when we played the O2 Academy supporting Souer; Lindsey and I spent the whole evening girl crushing. The pandemic, family and career obligations put us on hold but I wouldn’t say we’re gone for good.”

LIKE MANY MUSICIANS Covid and its associated lockdowns were pivotal in Mila’s musical development and journey. “I threw myself into learning more about how I could express my musical ideas, so I bought a pretty electronic guitar and a looper. I also felt I had a lot to say and decided that music was going to be a tool in my activism.” Mila also discovered GarageBand,

which proved pivotal in her move into solo music making. Around the same time she adopted an orphaned magpie, which inspired her solo debut EP ‘Pepper’. “I rescued, or maybe kidnapped, a baby magpie two summers ago. Maternal instincts kicked in as soon as he screeched ‘mammy’ – less Al Jolson, more *Predator!* We were very close; I’d take him for walks in the park and he would fly off into unknown canopies of terror and get harassed and abused by other magpies but he always knew where to find me and would seek safety and comfort on my shoulder. He left me little disgusting presents under my pillow, stole my cash and shat all over me but I was totally in love. Unfortunately he came to a tragic end and the grief floored me for quite some time. The EP ‘Pepper’ was my way of canonising him. He sat on my shoulder the whole time I was making it. When it came to production, I couldn’t make any creative decisions to hone the tracks because I felt that if I changed anything I would be tampering with those beautiful moments we had.”

‘PEPPER’ WASN’T JUST A significant left turn stylistically for Mila, it immediately showed her up as one of Oxford’s most inventive electronic musicians, drawing comparisons with The Future Sound of London, Tim Hecker and Giorgio Moroder. Her interest in and desire to expand on her electronic palate prompted Mila to spend some time in Berlin once travel restrictions lifted, learning more about making digital music. The city seems like a spiritual home for her. “Berlin is always calling. It’s a city that embraces individuality and doesn’t make you feel like a wanker for saying you’re an artist. “I always feel a sense of belonging and electric with creativity when I visit. I needed a reason to spend more time there than just a boozy weekend away. I stumbled across Catalyst. They were offering a four-week summer course in Electronic Music Production, so I took a leap and a peek into the dark arts of Ableton. The course itself is set and taught in an impressive old GDR broadcasting building called Funkhaus; it is truly funky and housey. The teachers are passionate, inspiring industry professionals with a flair for the unconventional. I found the experience overall rewarding, met a ton of cool people and gained invaluable knowledge in synth twiddling.”

The first fruits of this new exploration will be a single at the beginning of March titled ‘Dead Dress Code’, which balances on

rich yet subtle electronic textures while bringing her vocals to play alongside them. Does Mila feel electronic music is particularly freeing for female artists, allowing them to create without having to work in a band format? “Interesting question! I think, yes! In a band format, my way of dealing with issues like feedback was to drop the mic and run away. I left most gigs feeling underwhelmed and dissatisfied with my own lack of understanding of how sound works. Sound engineers can often be way too far up their own mixing desk and consciously or unconsciously have talked down to me. With a powerful tool like Ableton at my fingertips, I can now zap away any mansplaining and just crash my laptop several times before eventually figuring out how to EQ.

MILA’S MUSIC MAKING IS closely tied up with her political

“When I’m pissed off, it’s cathartic to write a song. The process of writing whilst pissed off or in pain is like therapy.”

activism; how does one inform or shape the other? “When I’m pissed off, it’s cathartic to write a song, give it wings and move on. The process of writing whilst pissed off or in pain is like therapy. These days I try to tame my anger and feelings of impotence into something more gentle. This helps me reflect on my own actions and judgements and what example I want to set.” What causes are you currently actively involved in? “I might be labelled a terrorist if I answer that.” Last year’s single ‘Mouthy’ was Mila’s most directly political song to date, an ode to the heroes – “sheroes” as she sings – who inspired the Suffragette movement and women’s rights in general. “I was asked to perform at a protest in London which was against the new Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill. The government was like ‘hey you dissenters, stop being a nuisance or we’ll lock you up and throw away the key’, and I was like ‘get fucked!’ so I wrote an ode to the bravery of the women and men who fought for fairness with the Suffragettes, because if it wasn’t for their courageous dissent, I’d be ritually raped and forced to wear a lampshade on my head.” You’ve recently been inspired by the protests in Iran; what is it particularly about those that has got under your skin, as you put it? “It’s hard for me not to be affected

by the scenes of young people risking their lives to be heard and being met with brutal and fatal violence by the people who are supposed to look after them. I want to help them be heard.” To what degree can music change the world or bring people together to bring change? Hip hop was once dubbed CNN for Black people; do you see it as a way of getting stories or knowledge out there? “When I drum on the streets as part of a samba protest band, I observe people’s reactions and body language around us. Apart from the occasional ‘get a fucking job!’ being thrown around, people genuinely perk up, smile and stop what they’re doing to watch. It’s because they can feel the energy of the band or it’s like they recognise something that they’d long forgotten and you can see how hesitant and curious they are, like they want to jump in and get involved no matter what the cause. We all have those bands and

albums that have changed our lives. Music builds worlds from the past and future, provokes emotion in the present and is a powerful unifier. The more I learn about sound design the more convinced I am of music’s power to transform and transcend the seemingly banal and cruel aspects of existence.”

AS MENTIONED, alongside her own music Mila is quite the collaborator on the local scene, with team-ups with the likes of Emma Coombs from Death of the Maiden under the moniker Just Emma, Tiger Mendoza, and Octavia Freud. What is most rewarding about collaborating, and anything that Mila finds frustrating compared to making her own music? “Emma, aka Slip Mode, aka wannabe Mexican gangsta, reached out over lockdown; we bonded over our mutual appreciation for big phat basslines and mutual disgust for racists and decided to make a track called ‘Mutate’, which helped us both feel a little less helpless during the Black Lives Matter protests. Emma is more badass than any drug cartel warlord. “Tiger Mendoza invited me to be a part of his epic ‘TMskate: The Mixtape’, also over lockdown. He sent me the instrumental track for ‘Oppressor’ and I wrote some lyrics down. Again, I was pissed off with the inhumanity of people in positions of power and needed to vent. I was well chuffed to sing

on Tiger’s drum&bass version and that’s the one we usually perform. Ian is a legend. “I loved singing on ‘Straight to the Top’ with Octavia Freud. It’s a lot of fun to perform and we have a bit of a laugh on stage. Martin and I live close to each other so it was lots of fun visiting his studio and working on creative ideas, helping out with vocals and exploiting his talent to make my own gigs shine. Martin is a kindred spirit. The only frustrating thing about collaborating is that I’m not in charge.” What things particularly do you like about being involved in the Oxford scene? Is it particularly helpful, friendly or encouraging, do you think? “It’s got that Town and Gown edge; one minute you’re involved in a violent singalong at The Half Moon, the next you’re watching pennies being thrown at a harp in the name of sound art at Modern Art Oxford. The legend that is Mark Osprey; Aiden and Richard at Divine Schism; Warren from Shed Sessions; the enigmatic Phil and Sue from Klub Kakofanny; *OMS* magazine, and of course *Nightshift* are all lovely supportive people that keep the scene alive and well. It’s wholesome and heartwarming to know we have this kind of space to thrive and flourish in and a community of people dedicated to looking after it.” WITH HER NEW SINGLE due out and an admirable catalogue of material, solo, band and collaborative, out there to investigate, now’s a great time to discover Mila Todd if you haven’t already; what can we expect from her going forward? ““Dead Dress Code” is out in March and will be yet another genre-less piece of music to confuse, outrage and educate the patriarchy and empower anyone to stand up to bullies.” Any more places you’d like to experience, styles of music you’d like to investigate or causes you want to try and fight? “I’m very excited to be working on my album this summer with an amazing music producer I met in Berlin called Christopher Jarman – aka Raiden, aka Kamikaze Space Programme. I admire his approach to sound design and want his particular vision and expertise to help conjure up an electronic universe for my songs to come alive in. Touring the Outer Hebrides with a field recorder is also on the list. And I’d like to fight Andrew Tate, ‘cause he’s a total prick.” Even ‘massive hippies’ kick ass sometimes. More power to Mila’s fists, boots and voice!

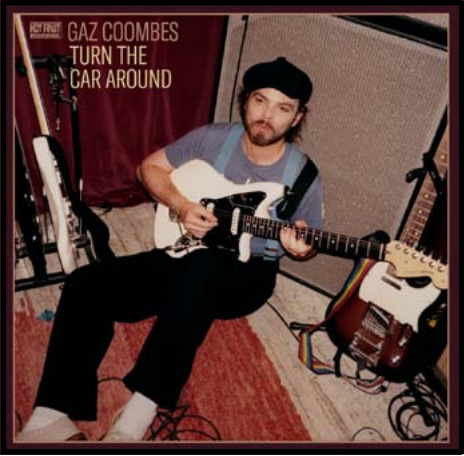
RELEASED

GAZ COOMBES

‘Turn the Car Around’

(*Hot Fruit*)

With Supergrass’s exuberant, if Covid-delayed, reunion still fresh in the memory there might be some hoping Gaz Coombes’ new record would hark back to the youthful blasts of pop energy of that band, but the man – now in his mid-40s – continues to forge a very distinct and distant solo career. Few artists get to grow up with their audience and fewer still get to do it with what appears to be such consummate ease and grace. Like Guy Garvey, to pluck one such name from the ether, Gaz has embraced the cares and trials of middle age in his songwriting. As with 2019’s ‘World’s Strongest Man’, family, particularly fatherhood, is a central theme, alongside an exploration of self and identity. Brash, youthful confidence and energy is 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 on a strangely ominous piece of piano-led music, while by gentle contrast there’s an almost spidery warmth about album high point ‘Don’t Say It’s Over’. It’s not all rumination and melancholy; ‘Feel Loop (Lizard Dream)’ is nicely dirty and funky in its 70s-flavoured groove rock; ‘Long



Live the Strange’ is almost euphoric with its choral vibe and perhaps marks one of the few deliberate Supergrass references here with lines like “When I’m in a room full of misfits”, while the album’s title track is easy and airy compared to some of the late-night self reflection. Perhaps a full-on rock number might have broken the album up a bit but it’s not a record that needs to stamp its feet or make a big deal of things. Instead ‘Turn the Car Around’ finds Gaz Coombes as a mature artist who hasn’t got too comfortable but seems to be content to play a very different musical part to the one he played all those years ago, and all the more respect to him for being so. **Ian Chesterton**

PAGE OF SWORDS

‘It Came For Them In Threes’

(*All Will Be Well*)

When Johnny Cash was nearing the end of his career it was well documented he turned to Rick Rubin to record the American series of albums, revealing a dark, more haunted presence that allowed tracks like the Nine Inch Nails cover ‘Hurt’ to move to a quite disturbing, but yet beautiful place. The first thing on hearing ‘It Came For Them in Threes’ from Page of Swords is immediately how much Ian Mitchell (the sole member of Page of Swords, on vocals and guitar) harks back to that era, but yet makes it his own. Supported by excellent production that really brings out the timber of his voice and the space needed to properly explore it, this three track EP is hugely enjoyable, if too short. At times the lyrics recall Nick Cave due to the melancholy that seeps into each track, and the final track ‘The Ladder’ channelling Hozier (particularly ‘Take Me to Church’), do not expect to leave listening to this EP with a smile on your face. However, it is a collection of songs that really belay sitting with and just listening to quietly, and letting it envelope you. As part two of a three EP project (part three due out in spring of this year) leading to a full

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SUGAR DARLING

‘Scribble’

(*Self released*)

Purveyor of a semi-steady procession of wobbly-headed music that might be described as ‘fusion’ if your idea of fusion is actually ‘untidily glued together’, George O’Connor has switched between his own name and his Sugar Darling moniker with little apparent rhyme or reason over the years but ‘Scribble’, possibly his forth or fifth full album, continues to defy easy categorisation, often making as much sense as Network Rail’s timetables. Much like previous outings there’s an admirable lack of consideration for cohesion or identifiable direction about ‘Scribble’, with George adopting an off-kilter scattergun approach to style and structure that is equal parts bewildering, intriguing and frustrating. Last time we reviewed him we found him trying, not always successfully, to fuse Barry Manilow, Genesis, Van Halen and Vangelis into sort-of-song-like forms. ‘Scribble’ is nominally more coherent but maybe similarly hard to really love for all its oddness. Opener ‘Heyday’ for example, sounds like a lost CBeebies music show theme tune, while that kiddie-friendly feel continues with ‘Lazer Ray’, a hysterical sugar-rush mix of hair-metal and prog. George is at his best when he goes down the Cardiacs route, as on the direction-changing electro scurry of ‘PowerGlory’ and the chaotic, Hammond-led prog-jazz mess of ‘Rumba’. It’s here where we’d love to see what he could do in a live setting where perhaps it all begins to make some kind of sense, but the cantering ‘Home Again’ lacks the necessary mania to carry things further, while the aptly titled madrigal ‘Pastoral Scene’ similarly lacks a sense of craziness and could be nabbed of a 1970s prog opus. It all ends with a gruff, almost bluesy, surf-y speed-metal work-out (well, obviously) which leaves us ever more non-plussed and wishing George would focus on what he does well – that Cardiacs-inspired lunacy – instead of seemingly trying to appear like a bonkers court jester in the court of the Crimson King.

Dale Kattack



TIGER MENDOZA

‘EPTHREE: End Credits’

(*Self released*)

Ian De Quadros is a linchpin in the Oxford scene. His collaborations often enrich and highlight other musicians’ abilities in unexpected ways and as an excellent composer and producer in his own right, frequently takes those he works with to higher places. ‘EPTHREE’ is a labour of love that De Quadros, by his own admission, took longer than expected to release. Still, with two EPs and the excellent Orion/ Sandman single he released in late 2022, Tiger is hardly taking it easy. EP opener ‘Circle of Love’ features the mighty vocals of Mike Ginger, frontman for The Deadbeat Apostles. His voice hits you

over the head like a sledgehammer, with Tiger Mendoza’s delicately intricate beats and signature textures taking you along for the ride. Part Otis Redding, part DJ Shadow, it growls and grows on you with each listen; at first the vocal seems a little excessive in places, but after a few plays it’s exactly that reason why you go back to it. Sometimes more is *more*. Dakorra, aka Ocean Ruin’s Kate Herridge, takes the lead vocals on ‘Sins’; a reworking of a single from last year, this is a delicate, slightly leftfield take on what is already a mighty slice of fine electro-indie. It’s an interesting venture as this is very much the opposite of the opener, showing the subtlety Ian can carry off as well as the Friday night bangers. Emma Hunter’s unmistakable voice, meanwhile, continues the journey on EP midpoint ‘Without’. Produced beautifully and sung it’s like a splendid mix of Kate Bush and The xx. EP highlight ‘Green Machine’ is a collaboration with long-term brother-in-arms Daniel Clear and is an uplifting instrumental affair that really showcases the ex-Death of High-Fi guitarist’s wizardry. Title track, ‘End Credits’, featuring Rowan Groom, is a powerful beast, and a suitable EP closer. Eloquent, nuanced, and rich, this is a lyric that you can listen to on repeat and still find something new. It’s a very human account of the condition that links us all together and as a result transcends itself from being just a song into something almost cinematic – a visual closer to an epic body of work. **Caitlin Helm**

SPANK HAIR

‘See You In The Morning’

(*Heavenly Creature*)

Five tracks of largely straightforward jaunty, bittersweet guitar pop from Spank Hair on their third of a series of recent EPs. They sound in touch with their emotions, enough to splurge them across this set in a way that fires up the double urge to give ‘em a hug and to give ‘em a “snap out of it!” shake. The moody Swans fan in me would prefer it if bands wrapped their heartfelt lyrics about broken relationships with crushing, doomy noise; Spank Hair instead chuck around five fizz-bombs, variations on a jaunty fuzzy modern indie-pop theme. On Bandcamp they call themselves “just another twinkly emo band”. Spank Hair certainly share that approach of using pin-sharp, pushed-forward vocals backed by buzzed-up, safety-cordoned indie schwing. However, they avoid the crushing blandness of so many bands they might be influenced by, and are at least adept enough to raise up a wall-of-sound guitar barrage in ‘Do Your Bit’, and to tone things down with the genuine-sounding ‘Stare At The Wreckage’, at least in its first half.

It’s all nice enough, and although we wish it would lose control both musically and emotionally – to remind us that people aren’t always completely self-aware, and that sometimes we don’t understand why bad things happen – we can’t argue with their ‘positive rush of energy’ approach to songwriting. If you want yer noisy indie-pop without too much cutesy

perkiness, skip to the latter half of this EP: there you’ll find less self-conscious, more sincere-sounding fare. We’d happily see Spank Hair exploring that side of their music more deeply. **Simon Minter**

GIVE ME MONACO

‘Luminance’

(*Emseatee*)

The artist states that this is the second of a pair of EPs “centred around destructive and regenerative elements within nature”, but like all good house and associated genres, it sounds like shiny unnatural machines being corralled by a sensitive human mind – lucky, really, because the water cycle is doubtless very cool, but you can’t really dance to it. You’ll have no trouble flexing a boogie muscle to ‘Basalt’, which pits a classic constantly tweaked acid-trance riff against some bright melodic figures that might have leapfrogged straight from an old Yellow Magic Orchestra album, whilst a breathy vocal fragment threatens to morph into A Guy Called Gerald’s ‘Voodoo Ray’. On the other hand, ‘Caldera’ – yes, all the tracks are connected with volcanic geology – has a sleeker rhythm with a likembe loop and disconnected vocal phonemes that might remind Thames Valley ravers of the much mourned Coloureds. If ‘Lahar’ and ‘Magma’ are possibly a little less memorable, the four-tracker as a whole is packed with warm bounce. As ingenious as it is igneous. **David Murphy**

EPISODE 1

‘Epoch’

(*Inner Peace Records*)

You could write a dissertation about this new concept album from local hip hop collective Inner Peace Records alongside researchers from the University of Oxford’s departments of Modern Language, Artificial Intelligence and Immunology, not to mention a member of Funkadelic and Parliament. Eight tracks from IPR’s Rawz, King Boyden and Easy Chalmers track the titular epoch-making landmarks of each decade from the 1950s to the future, using technology from each decade to create a linear hip hop record that is far more cohesive than its core ideal might suggest.

Opener ‘Better Now’ was recorded in one of the few surviving 1950s recording studios, in Essex, and predates hip hop, but the grainy, analogue instrumentation and recording lends warmth to the track. 60s piece ‘Freedom in Technicolor’, injecting an edge of woozy psychedelia into proceedings, pays tribute to The Doors and Animals who took black r’n’b and made it into rock music.

The group feel most at home in the 1970s with ‘Under the Foot of the Man’, featuring Garrett Shider for a wonderfully funky work-out, although 80s number ‘Music From Computers Pt.1’ shows just how important hip hop and Phil Collins were to each other with the big, computerised beats much in evidence alongside a shadow of The Cure’s melancholic pop.

‘Music From Computers Pt.2’ features an Akai MPC and pays due to tribute to Boom Bap pioneer J Dilla; 00s number ‘Start From One’ is densely layered using an MPC One, a piece of equipment they expand on with ‘Space Flight’, which brings us up to date in the 2020s. University AI researchers have helped predict where the music goes next on album closer ‘In the Hands of Painters’, which uses computer-generated loops and an AI fed thousands of words of words of Rawz’ lyrics. Still no jetpacks but hip hop seems to continue on its steady course of progress.

Such a seemingly high-fallutin’ concept might make the resulting record both disjointed and overly academic but this is both accessible and coherent, at each turn recognisable as an Inner Peace album. It’s an admirably ambitious album.

Dale Kattack



G1G GUIDE

WEDNESDAY 1st

THURSDAY 2nd

THE RILLS: The Bullingdon – Punk-infused indie in the vein of Arctic Monkeys and Libertines from the Lincolnshire trio.
SO FETCH: The Bullingdon – 00’s club party.
LUTHER: The New Theatre – Tribute to Luther Vandross.
CATWEAZLE: The Handle Bar – Oxford’s

February

oldest open night, now relaunched and rejuvenated at the Handle Bar, continues to showcase singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and more each week.
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon – Weekly open night hosted by musician Tom Dalby.

FRIDAY 3rd

PET NEEDS: The Bullingdon – Colchester’s urgent indie-punk quartet tour second album ‘Primetime Entertainment’, returning to town after supporting Frank Turner – who also produced their debut ‘Fractured Party Music’ – last year.
D’N’B: The Bullingdon – Drum&bass club night.
ME REX + WIINCE + SPRING MAJOR: Florence Park Community Centre – Lyrically ambitious, shape-shifting conceptual indie-punk-pop from London’s Big Scary Monsters-signed crew Me Rex at tonight’s Divine Schism show, continuing to explore all things prehistoric on their recent ‘Plesiosaur’ and ‘Pterodactyl’ EPs as well as epic debut album ‘Megabeur’.
JACK GOLDSTEIN + FLUID TOWER + ERIN SNAPE: The Port Mahon – Extravagantly theatrical DIY pop-opera from Jack Goldstein, back in town and making a mesmerising spectacle as he cavorts through influences as diverse as Brian Wilson, Madonna, Meatloaf, Townes van Zandt, Butthole Surfers, Hank Williams, and Stravinsky.
KLUB KAKOFANNEY with FLIGHTS OF HELIOS + STARBELLY + THE BALKAN WANDERERS: Gladiator Club – Klub Kakofanney’s monthly shindig hosts space-rock explorers Flights of Helios alongside glam-goth rockers Starbelly and a return to action after a several-year absence from Balkan folk party crew The Balkan Wanderers, with their new singer.
A BAND CALLED MALICE: Fat Li’s, Witney – Tribute to The Jam.

SATURDAY 4th

CASSELS + SINEWS + AND WHAT: Modern Art Oxford – Marking the first anniversary of the release of their superb ‘A Gut Feeling’, the Chipping Norton duo play the record in full, including epic *Nightshift* Number 3 track of the year, ‘Your Humble Narrator’. They’re joined by post-hardcore outfit Sinews and post-grunge duo And What.
HIPSHAKIN’: The Harcourt Arms – 50s and 60s rhythm’n’blues, rock’n’roll, jump jive, jazz, boogaloo and early soul from the Hipshakin’ DJs.
SHY FX: O2 Academy – Drum&bass and jungle maestro Andre Williams, aka Shy FX, returns to the shire after his show here last year.
REGGAETON OXFORD: The Bullingdon SONS OF THE 70s: Fat Lil’s, Witney

SUNDAY 5th

JW FRANCIS: Truck Store – Laconic, loved-up slacker bedroom pop in the vein of Darwin Deez

and Mac Demarco from JW Francis, out on a tour of the UK’s indie record stores as he launches his album ‘Dream House’
FARA: The North Wall – Return to town for Orkney’s fiddle-led folk quartet, the band’s mix of instrumental dance tunes and traditional Scottish balladry exquisite and moving, the vocal, instrumental and personal chemistry between the band members something to behold.
FAIRPORT CONVENTION: Oxford Playhouse – Intimate show from the English folk-rock legends and pioneers as they gear up for the release of their 30th studio album.
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms – Weekly open night.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon – Weekly Irish session.
OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (3pm) – Weekly open afternoon.
THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Tree, Iffley (3.30pm) – Party-hearty funk, blues, folk, rock and ska from the veteran local crew.
ADAM MATTHEWS: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

MONDAY 6th

STEVE KNIGHTLEY: Nettlebed Folk Club – Intimate solo show from the Show of Hands man.

TUESDAY 7th

RHYS LEWIS: O2 Academy – Hometown headline show for the soulful electric bluesman.

WEDNESDAY 8th

BELINDA CARLISLE: The New Theatre – The punk rock rebel girl-turned-pop megastar celebrates the reissue of a number of her solo albums as well as her old band The Go-Go’s induction into the Rock’n’Roll Hall of Fame, with a hits-strewn set that includes Number 1 pop behemoth ‘Heaven is a Place on Earth’, plus ‘Circle in the Sand’, ‘Leave a Light On, ‘(We Want) the Same Thing’ and many more, plus a couple of those old Go-Go’s classics.

THURSDAY 9th

ARK JAZZ: The Harcourt Arms – Live jazz.
CATWEAZLE: The Handle Bar
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 10th

BROKEN EMPIRE: The Bullingdon – Official hometown album launch show from the local heavyweights following supports to Phil Campbell and the Bastard Sons, Evil Scarecrow and Fallen State, the band’s ‘Before the Fall’ displaying an anthemic mix of heavy rock, metalcore, NWBHM, thrash and death-metal.
TWO STEP PRESENTS UKG: The Bullingdon – UK garage club night.
QUEEN EXTRAVAGANZA: The New Theatre – Tribute to Freddie and the gang.
URBAN FOLK QUARTET: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Lively folk and roots from the acclaimed

quartet, out on another mammoth UK tour, fusing global sounds, from traditional English and Celtic, to Eastern European, Middle Eastern, Afrobeat, Indian, Cuban, bluegrass and funk into their jigs, reels and songs.
BLUE FRIDAY BLUES SESSION: Old Anchor, Abingdon – First of a new monthly Friday blues session, featuring Artisan Blues with guests, playing rough and ready acoustic blues.

SATURDAY 11th

BEAM ME UP: O2 Academy – All-day, two-stage mini-fest, showcasing some of the best up and coming talents from around the UK alongside a local contingent – *see main preview*
SIMPLE: The Bullingdon – House and techno club night with guests Call Super & Parris.
RUDOLF & THE VALENTINOS: The Harcourt Arms – Romantic garage rock, r’n’b, rock’n’roll and 60s beat ahead of Valentine’s Day.
THE SANDY DENNY PROJECT: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Wychwood Folk Club host Sally Barker and PJ Wright as they reinterpret the folk legend’s songbook.

SUNDAY 12th

CAROLINE POLACHEK: O2 Academy – On the cusp of global superstardom with the NYC electro-pop star – *see main preview*
OPEN MIC SESSION: Harcourt Arms
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (3pm)
THE RODNEY QUAKES: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

MONDAY 13th

JOCKSTRAP: The Bullingdon – Restlessly eclectic off-kilter pop from the ‘I Love You Jennifer B’ duo back in town – *see main preview*

TUESDAY 14th

THE GOLDEN DREGS: Truck Store – Free in store set from Cornish alt.country singer-songwriter Benjamin Woods, playing songs from his third album, ‘On Grace & Dignity’, inspired by the likes of Bill Callaghan, The National and Will Oldham.
SISTERS OF FUNK + DOT’S FUNKY ODYSSEY: The Bullingdon – A funky Valentine’s Day party with local bands getting their groove on.
INTRUSION: Kiss Bar – Monthly goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night with Doktor Joy, Bookhouse and guests keeping it dark on the decks.

WEDNESDAY 15th

BRAVE RIVAL: The Bullingdon – Rocking blues and soul, mixing up the influences of Heart, Fleetwood Mac, Rory Gallagher and Led Zep, from the UK outfit out on tour with their debut ‘Life Machine’.
RUN LOGAN RUN + ZAHRA HAJI FATH ALI TEHRANI + ANNIE GARDENER: Tap Social – Inventive, visceral sax and breakbeats-led psychedelic jazz from Bristol’s Run Logan Run at tonight’s OCM-curated show, the duo most recently joined by singer Annie Gardiner – daughter of Ricky Gardiner, who worked with Bowie and Iggy Pop – and for tonight’s show by Dan Messori from Indigo Kid and Nulifer Yanya’s Beth O’Lenahan. Support from Zahra Haji Fath

Ali Tehrani, exploring culture and memory through rhythm and electronic sounds.
BRIGITTE BERAHA: Iffley Church Hall – Jazz from one of the genre’s most versatile singers, who has worked with the likes of Kenny Wheeler, Chris Laurence, Paul Clarvis, Stuart Hall, Martin France, John Parricelli, Bobby Wellins and Henry Lowther.

THURSDAY 16th

MARY’S GARDEN + SCREAMIN’ IRENE + STARBELLY: The Bullingdon – Brooding darkwave rocking in the vein of The Cure and Wolf Alice from Mary’s Garden. Support from grunge crew Screamin’ Irene and glam-gothsters Starbelly.
CALLING PLANET EARTH: The New Theatre – Epic, orchestral tribute to early-80s synth-pop and new romantic classics, from Ultravox and Numan to Duran Duran and Spandau Ballet.
CATWEAZLE: The Handle Bar
FACTORY LIGHTS + NICK HUNT + RAE: Loose Cannon Taproom, Abingdon – Romantic nostalgia from Shapes offshoot The Factory Lights as part of Making Music in Abingdon.
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 17th

WREST: The Bullingdon – Dark, elegant folk-tinged indie rock in the vein of Frightened Rabbit, The National and Idlewild from Edinburgh’s Wrest, winners of the 2019 Scottish Album of the Year award and out on tour to promote new record ‘End All the Days’.
HENGE: O2 Academy – Whacked-out gonzoïd cosmic prog rocking from Manchester’s funky, fancy dress aliens back in town, kind of a magic mushroom-fuelled melange of Gong, Hawkwind, Funkadelic and Magma. Goo, Grok, Zpor and Nom are self-consciously silly but also musically entertaining as they switch from jazzy prog rock to funk-ed-up psych and glam-rock.
BOSSAPHONIK presents: LOKKHI TERRA Cowley Workers Social Club – The monthly world jazz dance club hosts the return of Bangladesh’s Lokkhi Terra – hailed by Bossa host Dan Ofer as the best band the club has witnessed. Helmed by Bangladeshi-British pianist and composer Kishon Khan, the ten-strong ensemble take traditional Bengali baul through the prism of Cuban rumba, Brazilian samba, Afrobeat, funk, Indian classical and Latin-jazz. Horns and keys sit comfortably alongside tablas and congas, guitars and drums and both Bengali and Cuban female vocals to provide a super-fusion sound that’s a continents-spanning smorgasbord of sounds. Lokkhi Terra’s various musicians have serious pedigree, having between them played with Hugh Masakela, Bjork, Bellowhead, Ska Cubano, Ibrahim Ferrer, Tony Allen, Gilles Peterson’s Havana Cultura, The James Taylor Quartet, Dele Sosii and more.

SHOVEL DANCE COLLECTIVE + AIDEN CANADAY: Florence Park Community Centre – Traditional ballads, jigs, working class protest songs, feminist stories and good, old-fashioned singalongs from the expansive, eclectic folk collective, returning to the Shire after their star showing at Supernormal last summer. Divine Schism honcho and Cooling Pearls singer Aiden Canaday supports with his melancholic gothic folk-pop.
HAU5 PARTY: The Bullingdon – Techno, house and disco club night.

Sunday 12th

CAROLINE POLACHEK: O2 Academy

If you judge an artist by the company they keep, the other acts they collaborate with and those who sing their praises then Caroline Polacheck is A-list and then some. Having cut her musical teeth in New York indie-r’n’b outfit Chairlift, she went solo and went viral with her single ‘So Hot You’re’ Hurting My Fingers’. Since her debut album under her own name – 2019’s acclaimed ‘Pang’ – she’s toured with Dua Lipa; collaborated with Charli XCX, Blood Orange and Christine & the Queens among myriad others, and won effusive praise from Taylor Swift and Lady Gaga. All, thus far, without becoming the household name she is doubtless destined to become. New album ‘Desire, I Want To Turn Into You’ should change that. For an artist operating in a generally mainstream style – electronic art-pop; r’n’b, piano balladry and a good mix of 80s AOR– Polacheck mixes it up a fair bit, from her ‘organic autotune’ vocals, through Arabic intonations and a nod or two to Cocteau twin. Her quoted influences include Bjork, Kate Bush and Fiona Apple, but equally Enya, Japanese anime theme tunes and the rhythms of horse riding and while Charli XCX might be a decent first port of call on the comparison front, Haim, Christine & the Queens and even the mighty Weyes Blood aren’t far behind. Tonight’s show is followed on this UK tour by a headline show at Brixton Academy, and unless Oxford builds a bigger venue tonight might be your first and last chance to see Polacheck in town.

MOONAROON: The Harcourt Arms – Traditional Irish songs and dance tunes from the local trio.
WHITNEY – QUEEN OF THE NIGHT: The New Theatre – Big stage tribute to Whitney Houston.
TEKNOCRACY: The Port Mahon – Original techno, breakbeat, rave and jungle with Candy Jet and Aravoya.

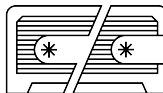
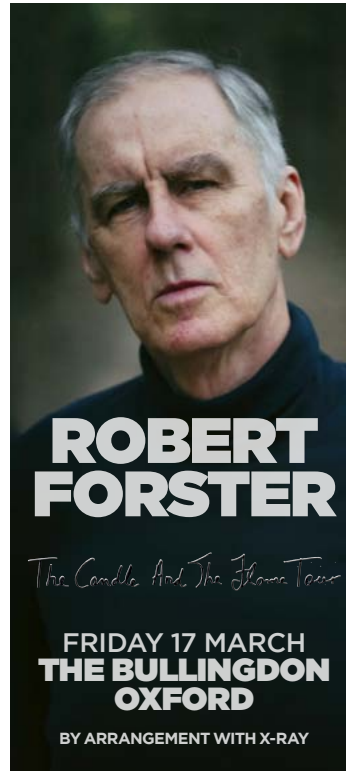
SATURDAY 18th

JON BODEN: The North Wall – Solo show for the singer and fiddle player and mainstay of Bellowhead, who made their Oxford comeback recently. Expect virtuoso playing, stories ancient



PINK MAC: Fat Lil's, Witney

NICOLE ALLAN: Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)





BIG JOANIE / GHUM

The Bullingdon

Outside the Bullingdon the rain thunders down, and inside the music does the same. Black feminist punk band Big Joanie last played here four years ago but time and Oxford have not forgotten them, and they make a triumphant return, promoting new album ‘Back Home’.

Supporting them are Ghum, regular visitors to Oxford. After an atmospheric opening reaches a climax, Ghum expose us to some of their new album, bringing home tense, driving post-punk songs with growling vocals which are fully reminiscent of Jehnny Beth’s Savages.

From the first notes of opening song ‘Cactus Tree’ Big Joanie have the crowd moving. Singer and guitarist Stephanie Phillips croons over jangly guitar before bassist Estella Adeyeri and drummer Chardine Taylor-Stone bring in a driving grungy beat under Phillips’ vocals.

This is followed up by chugging ‘Taut’ and single ‘Happier Still’, the latter a hard-hitting combination of grungy post-punk coupled with 60s-style harmonies. ‘Confident Man’ showcases the different direction the band have taken with ‘Back Home’: 80s synths take precedence whilst Adeyeri opts for an electronic drumkit which gives the song a lo-fi, electro noise. It still suits Phillips’ nonchalant vocal, but it’s a step aside from what Big Joanie are known for.

‘Today’ comes with a special Oxford-related mention, as Adeyeri explains “it’s Andy Bell approved”; you can see why, as it’s not far from Ride’s style, merging an upbeat riff with psyche guitars and effortless harmonies to pull it all together. However, ‘What Are You Waiting For’ gets our whole-hearted approval, as it showcases Big Joanie at their finest: distorted,

chugging guitars complementing Taylor-Stone’s urgency on the drums for a modern punk masterpiece.

This continues throughout the rest of the set, with synthy goodness also found on ‘Your Words’ and ‘Sainted’, the latter their ode to witches. Interweaved between their songs Big Joanie lets their feminist punk ethos shine through: their calls for a general strike resound resolutely in the room. The trio also treat us to their 2020 cover of Solange’s ‘Cranes in the Sky’, a haunting, chanting expression of the seeming hopelessness of it all. Phillips’ bluesy, moody vocals sound reminiscent of Amy Winehouse but then come paired with distorted yet flowing guitar, ebbing piano and an insistent drum beat to give the song a whole new meaning; like the rest of tonight’s set it goes down a storm to match the deluge outside.

Emily Freeman

DREADZONE

The Bullingdon

The dread road warriors rumble into town once again. This is a group we have seen more times than you can shake an empty lighter at, but they still bring the magic. At home at sprawling festivals, raves and cosy venues such as the Bully, few live collectives manage to be both a band and a sound system simultaneously. Leftfield in their heyday spring to mind; no surprise, therefore that singer Earl Sixteen – named after an impressed Jamaican sound engineer asked his age – has featured in the output of both. He has sole frontman duties on this tour, as livewire wingman MC Spee recovers from health issues.

Earl’s unmistakably mellifluous tones dance around the choons, even while the yin/yang symbiotic between the two is missed, as is the onstage banter. Because of this, the purer reggae songs, such as ‘Life, Love and Unity’ and ‘Zion Youth’ are pushed to the fore at the expense of some of their more up-tempo ragga-dancehall numbers. Leo ‘E- Zee Kill’ Williams, brings the hefty bass pressure whilst his ex-B.A.D partner in riddim Greg Roberts is on the sticks, and Roberts Junior (Blake) mans the six strings. Part time junglist Bazil is on the laptop/sequencer duties, and it is here that

the more dancey/ravey flavours rise to the top. Samples of Jesse Jackson (‘Walk Tall’), orchestral scores and random film dialogue drop in and out of the mix, along with pre-recorded synthesisers and sound effects. Dreadzone are tricky to pigeonhole. They are not strictly reggae or dub – although a clue is, of course, in their name. As such, Dreadzone represent a lineage: Jamaican born Earl 16 linking with a UK rhythm section who played with Mick Jones, whose previous band did so much to liven up the ‘punk reggae party’ in the ‘70s, mixed in with the rave of the 90s. They represent a pluralistic ideal – necessarily unattainable perhaps – outlined by their early chart-bothering ‘Little Britain’ (“No matter what your colour, your race or your culture / This is our inheritance, to lead you on a merry dance.”). A new LP is on the way, one which will not, we hope, stray too far from their idiosyncratic path. In these dread times (also the name of their most recent, darker studio album), post-Brexit and Covid, this is just what the Dread doctor ordered. And if you missed them, don’t worry, they’ll be back.

Leo Bowder

THE CHAMELEONS

O2 Academy

The Chameleons are famously Manchester’s “great lost band” having had a similar run of bad luck to Oxford’s own Candyskins (ironically ending at Geffen too) before they originally vanished. That bad luck continues; their current tour has faced a freak cold snap; this, coupled with the cost of living crisis, has meant unheated venues have been their norm for days. No matter, it just makes them all the more fired up and angry.

The Chameleons are supposed to be touring an anniversary show of second album ‘What Does Anything Mean? Basically’, but there is a mutiny afoot (“we got bored of it” announces singer and bassist Mark Burgess) and so although Burgess, guitarist Reg Smithies et al. stick to this for the majority of the show, they freewheel and choose tracks from across their whole exquisite canon tonight.

They start their set with ‘A Person Isn’t Safe Anywhere These Days’ from debut ‘Script of the Bridge’; the sound is absolutely crystal clear, ice cold music for an ice cold venue. As well as a set of fan favourites we are treated to album

deep cuts, as well as a whole succession of mid song ad libs from the good and the great; we get the Clash’s ‘White Riot’, Joy Division’s ‘Transmission’, and a whole swathe of Beatles.

We get a whole heap of politics too: “62 years I’ve been on this planet Earth, and this country is getting worse”... “What’s it gonna take to light the spark? If this was France....” Burgess incites as he introduces ‘Singing Rule Britannia (While The Walls Close In)’. The main set is closed with ‘Second Skin’ and the room is loud with people la la la-ing the keyboard/guitar riff, just ecstatic elation. It’s no surprise then when the band return for three triumphant encores: ‘Caution’, ‘Inside Out’ and of course the sublime ‘Don’t Fall’.

It’s an absolute masterclass to any musicians watching, and rather than some old codger bemoaning about how in his day it was all green hills around here, it sounds like someone with a surfeit of energy summoning on the next generation, and exclaiming “just imagine how much better you could make things”.

Mark Taylor

AUDIOGRAFT

Modern Art Oxford

MAO’s modest basement is littered with wires and curious contraptions: a fan blowing air into a hung up bag; a hotplate, waiting for cool water to sizzle onto its crackling surface; it’s a magician’s box, ready to electrify our senses. This set up for **AKAMA**’s experimental performance as part of the annual Audiograft mini-festival is an intriguing beginning to the evening. Rapid kinetic vivacity rumbles the room as clicking from car blinkers resounds throughout. Akama uses her piece to explore the concept of heat and temperature movement. The crescendo of her piece is a rich flurry of droning red and white light bulbs, clicking and casting fiery lights into the smoke emanating from the crackling hot plate. The scratching of the radio grows louder as does the screeching feedback. Captivation builds as Akama manoeuvres between contraptions: the heat and energy transcend the basement, resembling the ferocity of a searing car on a mechanically fast highway and this performance fully evokes such compelling images.

“The wonderful thing about being an artist is that you can fuse disparate things through collage, and explore their interesting relationships,” **ROB LYE** says about his audio-visual piece. It began with a collage montage against five guitars playing a progression of A-minor chords at once. The light, ambling guitar lends to the intrigue of the piece as images flick from one to the next, introducing themes of change. Distinctively, Lye’s piece is ambisonic, creating sound that fully surrounds us, adding to the immersion. “What emerges from this is how things disintegrate and

change states,” adds Lye. His work unfolds in compelling forms. For example, he references a news story from his hometown in his voice overs, about a couple falling victim to blue ice. The absence of context is key, as wisps of narrative are left for the audience to chase. What seemed like a pressing incident is flattened by the punchline: “Piss and shit.” The movement of context into the punchline exemplifies the idea of disintegration and continuous change. Lye’s piece is the most inventive while still being coherent.

One piece over the course of the weekend features a **TIM PARKINSON** composition, characterised by an accordion. Initially, the visuals provoke interest in the audience, as artists circle the audience with clanging recyclables. The artists create powerful visuals: Picture two artists sitting at the table while the others crawl on the floor beneath them; the artists toss scraps at them as they writhe at their feet; such a commanding visual is fascinating, especially against the tumultuous score. However, as the clanging amplifies and artists crawl under cardboard boxes for an awkwardly stretched stage, the performance became more opaque. The long, shrill and repetitive nature of the piece seems discordant; for its possibly derivative and glib commentary on what is likely hierarchical exploitation and climate change, the piece seems lost.

Audiograft, though, is a memorable catalogue of experimental pieces, dispensing interest with every distinguished performance, and every piece here feels like a new map to explore.

Hannah Masih

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RUBIE / EMILY JEFFRI / CHIIKA Florence Park Community Centre

Chiika had a very good 2022, building a substantial following through streaming platforms and some radio airplay, as well as landing a few festival appearances. The Oxford singer,

now relocated to London, has developed from low-key r'n'b into a more daring, experimental style that also sees her growing in confidence. Bubbling with energy and overflowing with between-song banter, she reveals some new material, one with a spaghetti western feel, and surprises us with a deft cover of 'Heat Waves', interspersed with her trademark added Hindi sections that work very nicely. The next step must surely be putting a band together, though the practical and financial implications of that are ever more daunting for anyone lacking record company backing.

It's always an honour to be present at a first ever live performance and Emily Jeffri does not disappoint. The local 18-year-old has been making music for four years on her iPhone using Garageband, but it's astonishingly assured and confident. Opening with 'WHERE ARE THEY NOW???' which has had some considerable online impact, ie. more than three million Spotify plays, she's clearly a bit nervous, but a small coterie of fans/friends help her dance through the jitters. Fond of deep, buzzing bass sweeps, deep vocals and stomping beats, the songs are catchy even

with a few rough edges. There's a touch of 90s bangers, a hint of goth and even some Goldfrapp, even though they formed six years before she was even born. Choosing songs on the fly on her phone is a bold move but this is a key moment, the virtual world bursting into the real one. Given a studio and some serious soft and hardware, the prospect of what she could achieve is truly frightening, in the best possible sense.

Rubie last trod these boards only three months ago, as part of Jenny Moore's Mystic Business' headlining set for Divine Schism's 10th anniversary. Tonight she earns her headliner billing with a bold, passionate performance, aided by her keyboard, effects pedals and a versatile but understated drummer. Her music is sparse yet complex, the vocal delivery theatrical and almost pained. She's also an amazing piano player, with sweeping flourishes up and down the keyboard. 'Whole', from recent album 'Take Both', is completely transformed, stripped of the acoustic guitar pickings, the minimal digital beats augmented by live drums as it builds up to a wailing climax. Easy listening this isn't, richly rewarding it surely is. *Art Lagun*

KANADIA / JUNIPER NIGHTS / BEDD

The Bullingdon

Bedd are already playing when we walk into the Bullingdon; the vibe, which makes sense when you realise that we're in the Beanie Tapes pocket of sharp indie, is reminiscent of 'Transatlanticism' - era Death Cab for Cutie, if Ben Gibbard had been a lot more agitated and into synths. The material is drawn from last year's EP '1 1/2'; the cassettes are a decoy. These guys can make a big noise. The highlight is 'I Whoo Yeah', a devastating six-minute lilt through grief; Jamie Hyatt lets his lyrics undercut the way they're supposed to, and we are all left wishing it was always Beddtime. Next up are Juniper Nights, everyone's favourite post-grunge four-piece with a penchant for seasonal lyrics (it's always winter or summer, never spring; they deal in extremes). They've been gigging around a lot recently but their sets are unfailingly entertaining, and tonight is no exception. Their affinity with Kanadia is easy to understand; like the headliners they are more reflective rockers than most, meditative lyrics

emerging from a cloud of guitar pedals. Subject matter ranges from takes on Shirley Jackson ('In This House') to an anthemic unreleased track in support of trans rights. More of this, please Album launch gigs can often feel like easy home runs: the set list writes itself; everyone basically wants to like it anyway, and if they've turned up on the day, it's in the bag. As we have all come to expect, however, Kanadia have put in a monumental shift. The pyrotechnics (and an astounding number of extremely well-choreographed switches between guitars and keyboards) are there to support their self-proclaimed 'stadium-sized' songs, but it's more than just that. 'June' is, for all the thousands of strobes, a tremendously tender record; once again, the four-piece are compelling just as much for their vulnerability as for their showmanship. "I dream," sings James Bettis, "what else can we do?"; on the album's title track, and the crowd certainly agree. *Shaw Worth*



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WHAT’S MY LINE?

A monthly look at jobs in local music. This month it’s **DAVE SMART** *and he’s a* **LUTHIER and GUITAR REPAIRER.**

How long have you worked in this job?
“Over 30 years.”

What is one thing you have to do as part of your job that the average person might not know?
“I use baking powder when carrying out guitar repairs.”

What’s been the single biggest highlight of your career so far?
“Every time a customer leaves with their repaired guitar and a smile on their face.”

And the lowlight?
“Spending far too much unplanned time on a piece of work.”

How much and how did Covid affect your job?
“Thankfully I had more than enough work to carry me through the first lockdown and then the floodgates opened as touring musicians couldn’t tour and new customers took up playing guitar. All their instruments required maintenance... at once! Not complaining, though.”

Who’s your favourite Oxford musical artist?
“For me this is an impossible question to



answer due to the wealth of talent Oxford’s produced over the years. As soon as I choose one band, another one springs to mind. At the moment I’m thinking of The Nubiles... now The Human Torches... see what I mean?”

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

“It’s never been a better time as there are plenty of good guitar building courses on offer around the UK. Apart from that, get your hands dirty by pulling an old guitar apart and putting it back together; you’ll learn important lessons from any mistakes you make.”

Who’s the most awkward person you’ve ever had to deal with in your job?
“I’ve come up against some proper challenges over the years which makes a happy ending even more pleasing.”

When was the last time you heard genius? “Green Lung at the Roundhouse, December 2022.”

Have you ever compromised your integrity in the course of your work?
“Absolutely not!”

Would you swap your job for any other and if so, what?
“I’m quite happy with my lot but wouldn’t mind being a digger driver.”

Are you rich?
“Like a heavily reduced caramelised onion gravy.”

Do you consider your job glamorous?
“No, but I can understand others might until they see the state of my hands.”

What’s your favourite thing about Oxford’s music scene?
“The amazing diversity of music produced.”

Dr. SHOTOVER: Embassy Regal Memoir

Greetings, Young Jackfruit, and welcome to the East Indies Club bar. Happy New Beer! Ahem, talking of *which*...? Ah, thank’ee. Good man. [*Glugg, glugg, glugg*]... Now, here’s a piece of news, hot off the proverbial. Yes, my long-awaited, much-leaked memoir is finally out! FLARED, it’s called. It describes in detail how one’s posh inbred family treated one badly as a nipper – the bullying from one’s older sister Wilhemina, the pressure to dress up as Stalin for fancy dress parties, the unwelcome attention from the Daily Vile and other scabloids, then the opprobrium directed at one’s beautiful Hollywood starlet wife. Some military ‘experts’ have called into question one’s account of one’s days in the King’s Own Mahavishnu Rifles... could one really have smoked twenty-five chillums before the regimental dinner? Frankly, one has no clear recollection now, but

maybe we should try a controlled (substance) experiment...? [*Starts humming*] Pass the duchy on the left hand side... oh hang on, one has given UP one’s duchy, hasn’t one? **Next month: Coming Up or Heir**



‘Lost your moccasins in your flares again, Shotover?’ ‘Hush. One is at one with nature’.

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

Who are they?
Daze are a three piece indie pop band from Oxfordshire – Daisy George Eaton (*vocals*), Scott Atkins (*guitar*) and Tom Aries (*drums*). Daisy started playing music in 2015 while studying in college as a singer songwriter, mainly on acoustic guitar; Scott then joined in 2017 as the guitarist. Daisy and Scott were writing and recording for four years, mainly at home in bedroom studios, releasing two EPs over lockdown. In late 2021 Tom joined on the drums for some recording sessions and later joined properly, completing the trio. Over the course of the past year they’ve “stepped up massively both in our writing and performance. We had the privilege of playing some massive festivals this year including Cornbury and Truck Fest which was a dream for us.” The band’s new EP, ‘good days, bad days’, is released on the 3rd March.

What do they sound like?
The sweet sound of summer yet to come: the band’s simple, lightly funky jazz-tinged indie pop is all warm sunny afternoons and carefree melodies tinged with melancholy as Daisy chirrups about betrayal and heartache with sweet breeziness. Or, in their own words, “We’re an indie pop band influenced by genres from rock, hip hop and lofi pop with melancholy vocals over summery tunes.

What inspires them?
“A joint love for music would be our number one inspiration. Having all met while studying music tech at Abingdon and Witney College; it’s something we’ve always wanted to do. Without music our lives would be very boring and we live for the late night gigs and obsessing over the tiniest details in our music. We look up to our favourite bands and artists as inspiration for making something of your life.”

Their career highlight so far is:
“Definitely playing Truck Festival this summer; it’s always been a dream for us to play there so to achieve that it was unbelievable!”
And the lowlight:

“We have many, but playing to just the bar staff at one gig was a low one. Every band has to go through that, though. Also, the first gig after Truck when we came back down to earth.”

Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

“If anyone says anything other than Radiohead then they’re lying.”

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

“As a collective our album of choice would be ‘In Rainbows’; we listened to it so much in the summer Tom’s car battery died just before we were leaving Cornbury.”

When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect?
“We have our new EP launch show at The Library on the 4th March. We’ve been experimenting with some new sounds and creating bigger moments in our live set that we can’t wait to show off.”

Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

“The community in the music scene is full of lovely people that are rooting for you and you feel as if they’re on your side pushing you further. The downside would be the lack of music venues, especially with so many closing recently due to Covid and uni housing.”

You might love them if you love:

Claire; Girl In Red; Arlo Parks; Glass Animals; Self Esteem.

Hear them here:
Dazetheband on Spotify, Bandcamp, Soundcloud etc.



ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

“KILL THE BILL!” shouted the front page headline on February 2003’s *Nightshift*, but we hadn’t gone all nihilistic on the police’s arsars. Instead we were rallying local gig goers to protest against the live music licensing bill, up before the House of Lords and threatening to add a whole heap of red tape and financial barriers to putting on gigs, while threatening pubs or shops with extortionate fines for hosting unlicensed live performances. Our main interview was with the mighty **Winnebago Deal**, proclaimed as “the sound of the unstoppable force colliding with the immovable object” for their savagely stripped-down, fuzzed-up brand of uber grunge metal. The duo had been on a non-stop gigging frenzy, earning them a 9/10 review in *Metal Hammer* and prompting Steve Lamacq to declare that “they makes every other garage rock band sound like Coldplay”. This month they were due to release a mini-album on Fierce Panda Records as well as being handpicked to support **Fugazi** in London. “We figured our music would appeal to maniacs, but we never expected the suits to get it,” declared singer/guitarist Ben Perrier of the major label interest surrounding the band, before proclaiming that “We’re thinking about becoming skinheads.” Also this month **Meanwhile, Back In Communist Russia** released their second album, ‘My Elixir, Your Poison’, *Nightshift*’s review declaring it “a monument to both the band’s resilience in the face of their own chaotic existence and to the creative

energy that exists between them. Brilliant.” **Kings Of Leon** made their first and only Oxford appearance this month. We seem to remember thinking they were shit. Not much has changed since on that score.

10 YEARS AGO

It was all about **Stornoway** in February 2013. The local folk-pop heroes were on the front cover of *Nightshift* again (their third appearance), talking about new album ‘Tales From Terra Firma’, as well as a two-night homecoming at **Oxford Town Hall**, and a special acoustic show at **The New Theatre** as part of the **Childish Things** fundraiser for Helen & Douglas House, also featuring **KT Tunstall**, **Newton Faulkner** and **Bug Prentice**. Singer Brian Briggs mused that the limit of his rock and roll lifestyle since the release of the band’s previous album had amounted to learning balloon modelling and getting a new phone. Ollie Steadman declared his love of going on tour, not for its drunken escapades and riotous behaviour but because “the long drives allow you to catch up on all the films and books you’ve missed out on, holed up in a studio.” As the quartet’s commercial star continued to rise, the famously academic group were glad they didn’t have to contemplate a return to normal jobs any time soon. “I recently took a look at all my old chemistry papers stored on Google Drive and I almost fainted at the prospect of ever recalling what I meant by ‘mechanical cleavage in the intradiol and extradiol catechol dioxygenases’.

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

Please tell me there’s session work out there!” Another big local name were also on the move with **Foals** releasing ‘Holy Fire’ this month on Transgressive, while **This Town Needs Guns** released their ‘13.0.0.0.0’ album, and **Candy Says**, **Junkie Brush** and rapper **Chima Anya** had EP releases out.

5 YEARS AGO

Foals were in the news again in February 2018 with the announcement that **Walter Gervers** had departed the band. “To all our fans, sadly we have to announce that our mate Walter has decided to leave the band to pursue a new life,” said the band’s official Twitter account, concluding “He’ll always be our brother, we love him and we wish him well in his future endeavours.” In other local news **Truck Store** celebrated its seventh birthday with a day of live music and DJs, while **Gaz Coombes** announced the release of his third solo album ‘World’s Strongest Man’. In local release news **Flights of Helios** put out their debut album ‘Endings’, while this month’s *Nightshift* cover stars **The Sad Song Co.** – the work of Frank Turner drummer Nigel Powell – released his new album ‘Worth’. Among gig highlights of the month were shows at the **O2 Academy** for **Natalie Imbruglia**; **Jorja Smith**; **Newton Faulkner**; **John Cooper Clarke**, and **The Blackheads**, while over at the **Bullington** we had **Jesca Hoop**, and **The Cellar** hosted **The Lovely Eggs**; **Shopping**; **John**, and **The Blinders**.

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TRACKS

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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

TOM DALBY

Did you miss us? We didn't come round last month; instead we sat on the sofa eating tubs of Celebrations and watching rolling news present a procession of musical greats dying. We also caught flu and cellulitis and the roof of *Nightshift* Towers leaked, so all in all it was a jolly festive and New Year period and we're in need of some cheering up. The pile of new Tracks always does that, whether they intend to or not, right? Well, Tom Dalby at least has some idea about lifting spirits and getting a bit of a party going. His song here is called 'The Power of a Loving Woman' and is little over two minutes of carefree rocking blues, a cheerily boozed-up twelve bar boogie and perhaps something that fell sideways out of the mid-70s pub-rock / r'n'b scene, like a good-time Chris Rea jamming it up with ZZ Top or maybe a less abrasive but equally exuberant Dr Feelgood (RIP Wilko among myriad others), with Tom hailing the love of his life in a way that's timeless rather than dated. Our heroes might die but love endures, as does rock and roll music. Happy New Year, one and all.

MARK BOSLEY BAND

Often dubbed Oxford's Master of Misery (by *Nightshift* it must be said), Mark Bosley probably isn't the most likely candidate to put a smile on our faces, but he's always had an understated sense of humour about even his most gothic laments and this track, 'Let's Impeach the President', sounds like it could get a bit of a snug bar singalong going after a few glasses of the finest ale. The backlog of stuff for review means this was originally sent to us at the back end of October and Donald Trump might seem less of a threat to democracy now but blights like him have a way of growing out of sight to reappear when you least expect them, and anyway, with the current less-bonkers incumbent apparently storing national secrets in the tool shed, perhaps this song can get in early for the next impeachment. The song itself has got a bit of a 60s folk-rock feel to it,

a bit of a 'Levitate the Pentagon' vibe and manages to rhyme "impeach the president" with "orange sack of excrement" which might not exactly be WB Yeats but does conjure an accurate image of the corpulent guinea pig in question. There's also a track here called 'Trussanomics', which splices lines from the blink-and-you'd-miss-her PM's car crash speech with some semi free-form sludge rocking, which probably isn't snug bar singalong fodder however much ale you've downed. In conclusion, Mark Bosley remains a force for good and a quintessentially English kind of protest singer; hell, at this rate we might have to rechristen the Master of Misery the Merrie Meister of Mirth soon.

LINA SIMON

After some pleasingly mischievous electronic and synth-pop strangeness over the last couple of years this sounds a bit fractured and muted from Lina, a little unfocussed on first listen, but then coherent pop has never really been her aim, and as the spingle and spangle of synths unfurls in starlit fashion and the throbbing industrial beats subtly invade the available low-end space, we're reminded of The Knife, which will always be a good thing. Lina's distorted, middle-distance vocals might be barely decipherable and even mark her out as someone in not inconsiderable pain, but whack this up loud enough and give it a few listens and there's something nicely gnarly and hypnotic about it all. You see, even dark, dirgy, downbeat stuff can make us happy. Actually, that's mostly what makes us happy. That, chocolate-coated Brazil nuts and kittens.

NINETEENTH HOUR

A month off, even one plagued by ailments and mishaps, should really have given us some extra vigour and enthusiasm, a keen desire to explore strange new musical worlds. Ah, if only more musicians shared that desire for the new and unexplored, rather than the well-trodden. Superficially there's nowt wrong with Nineteenth Hour and maybe we're being particularly big meanies to pick on them but there's something lacking in the soul department about their song 'Tired of Running' here, the title of which could be a metaphor for all of music's ills. It's accomplished, rich sounding even, with its stadium-sized, arena-aiming indie-rock pomp and grandeur, but equally it's all a bit bombastic, slightly overwrought. It builds well enough, from weary anthem-in-waiting to sky-touching everything-and-the-kitchen-sink festival singalong and might well appeal to less demanding Muse fans or the rockier end of the Snow Patrol fanbase, but to be honest it sounds a bit like

a Build Your Own Indie Anthem Lego kit: nice to look at but ultimately not the real thing.

PORT IN A STORM

Wind, rain, darkness, more rain, even more rain; yeah, a band called Port in a Storm should fit in perfectly right now, especially one armed with a song called State of the World' which is, lest you hide behind the sofa every time the news comes on and frankly who'd blame you, UTTERLY FUCKED TO BUGGERY. So, really this could be a twenty-page newspaper supplement rather than a three-minute synth-led folk-rock song. Like Nineteenth Hour it feels a tad bombastic at times, but seems to possess a bit of vim and vigour about it at the same time, the busy, borderline messy tune in hand propulsive and full-bodied, although the slightly adenoidal vocals maybe don't carry the kind of necessary authority to convey the absolute state of everything we're talking about here. Still, it powers along merrily and slightly militantly and you can actually imagine this playing over a montage of apocalyptic images at the end of the very last ever BBC news broadcast as a semi hysterical Lukwesa Burak necks a bottle of warm Pinot Grigio and everything you've ever known and loved slides into the abyss. Are we over-egging things a tad here?

IAN KIEFFER

You think we're being a bunch of old misery guts? You should watch the Ian Kieffer video for his song 'Willem', which finds our morose hero sat in the dark, singing his gracefully mournful f-bomb-laden piano ballad with all due gravitas and solemnity while someone makes his face up as a clown, which is – ta da! – IRONY! Because there ain't nothing jolly or slapstick about Ian or his music. This makes Midlake sound like The Chuckle Brothers. In fact there is a fair chunk of Midlake about this. It's quite nice really, even if it lacks that airy euphoria Midlake can conjure, or the rustic warmth of Neil Young, or the otherworldly folky psychedelia of Flaming Lips, two other acts whose fans might enjoy this, if not quite as fervently as he'd wish. Let's just say it's quite nice and leave it at that. A Rich Tea biscuit of a song – a passable accompaniment to a cuppa if you can't get a proper biscuit.

SLEEPERS

Then again, for all his sombre self-contemplation, Sleepers make Ian Kieffer sound like Anaal Nathrakh by comparison on their song 'Ultrasound' (and how we'd love to hear a band with the kind of explorative spirit of Ultrasound right now), which is a sort of raggedy jangle, all spingly spangly and as fey as a Pound Shop

birthday card of a bunny rabbit holding a buttercup beneath the legend 'I Wuff You To The Moon & Back, Fluffy Bunnykins'. We don't like to make assumptions here but we wonder if this song was originally written as a lullaby to a favourite teddy bear as it swims wide-eyed through dreamy, limpid pools of sensitivity and marshmallows, only to incongruously make way for an epic guitar solo that's neither epic nor much of a solo really but does at least up the musical spikiness levels to thistledown level. Sleepers name is quite obviously missing something and we get to wondering what might have been had they necked said E before writing and recording 'Ultrasound'. We could have had a psychedelic masterpiece or a banging trance track on our hands rather than a soundtrack to footage of grass blowing softly in a gentle breeze on a nondescript cloudy day.

TOILET TRACK

KING PANIC

Yay! King Panic! KING *PANIC*! This lot will redress the karmic balance of all that suffocating softiness, surely. They even describe themselves as "sometimes a bit raucous" and "sometimes a bit jazz swampy". Except, oh dear, not here and not now, or anytime in the near future from what we can discern on the strength of this offering. Their EP is titled 'Anhedonia', which it shares with Undersmile's doom masterpiece from a few years back and their opening track is called 'God Made You Dirty', so why is this all so soft-centred, clean-cut and, well, insipid? We want 'God Made You Dirty' to be an ode to bourbon-soaked jeans and mascara-streaks, not poo-filled nappies and runny noses. 'The Answer' does feature the lines "You get a kick out of fucking around / But this is the sound of you meeting your match," which just cries out to be a venom-infused revenge rock anthem but sounds like someone tutting after adding too much sugar to their rather milky cup of tea (and deliciously dangerous Rich Tea biscuits for all!). "Sing me to sleep, I won't need to count sheep" drools the singer on 'Salvador', by which time any residual energy in the music has drained away like used dishwater and only a seething desire to go on a hammer rampage is stopping *Nightshift* slipping into a slumber. This is music bereft of life and spirit. And they promised us so much more. King Panic? King Clutch Our Pearls While Reading a *Guardian* 'Thinkpiece' About How Fun & Laughter Are Triggering For Hopeless Milksops With Allergies more like, or maybe simply 'king Bollocks. We're confiscating your name and giving it to the next rock band who can actually rock. At this stage another bout of flu feels like a preferable option to listening to this again.

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.

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