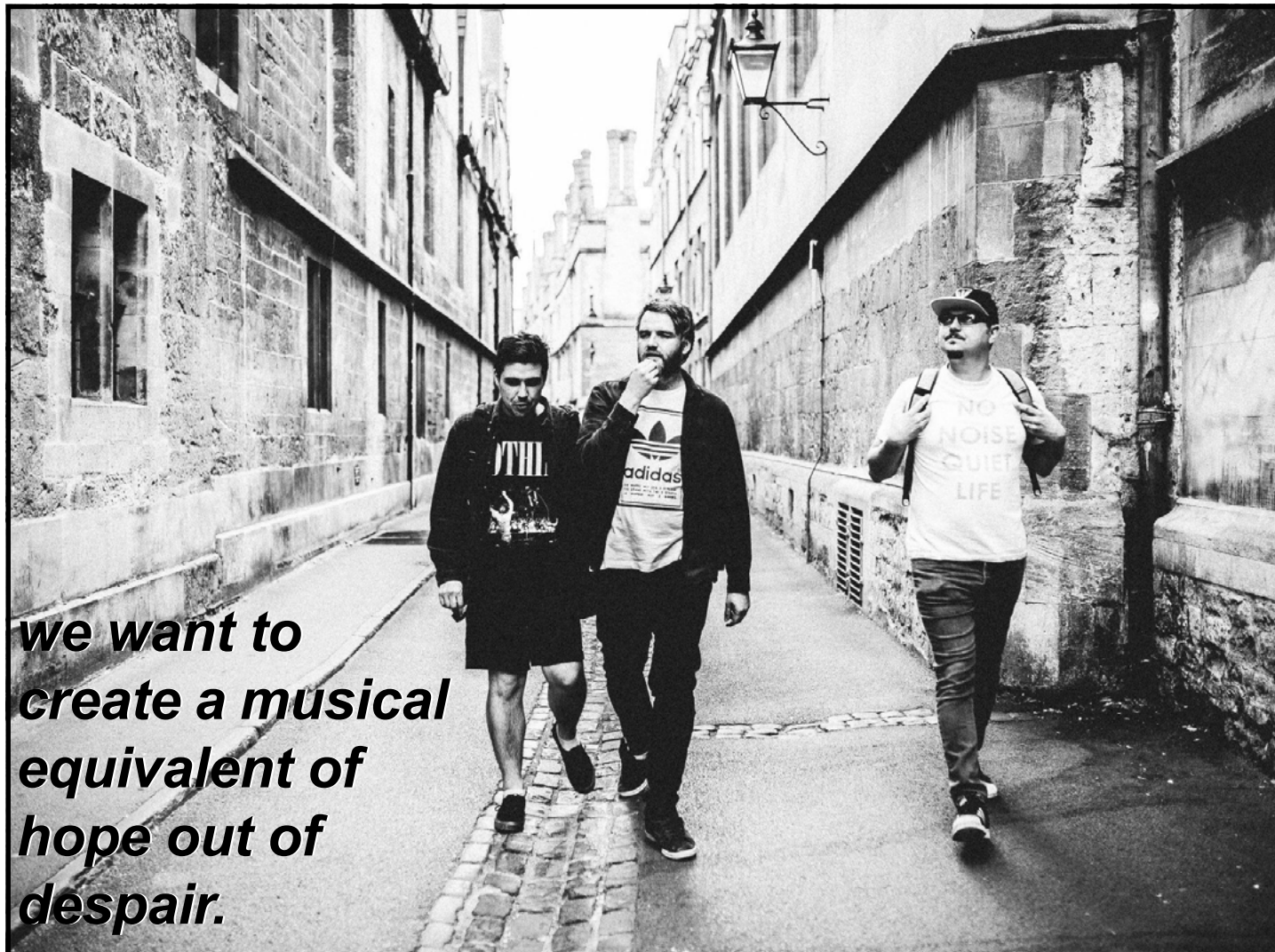


NIGHTSHIFT

Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every
month
Issue 316
March
2023

photo: Helen Messenger



*we want to
create a musical
equivalent of
hope out of
despair.*

Ghosts in the Photographs

An elegant bleakness with
Oxford's post-rock stars

Also in this issue:

TRUCK line-up announced
Introducing **BARRELHAUS**
At work with **MASTER RHYTHM**

plus

All your Oxford music news, previews, reviews
and gigs for the month ahead

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THE BULLINGDON

MARCH 2023

GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Thursday 2nd March

**Johnny Payne
and the Thunder**

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 2nd March

Haute Mess

Doors: 11PM

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

Monday 6th March

**Little Clarendon
Izzy and Martha
Little Clarendon Friends**

Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 7th March

Fluorescent Adolescent

Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 8th March

International Womans Day

Doors: 11PM

Thursday 9th March

Sophie Duker: Hag

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 9th March

The Musicals Party

Doors: 11PM

Friday 10th March

**Babatunde Aléshé:
Babahood**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 10th March

Raving Trippy

Doors: 11PM

Friday 11th March

**Musical Medicine
Raw Silk**

Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 15th March

**Neon Teepee
Cedars of Lebanon**

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 16th March

Wille & The Bandits

Doors: 7PM

Friday 17th March

Robert Forster

Doors: 7PM

Friday 17th March

Bully Barn Dance

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 18th March

Reggaeton Party

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 19th March

Cian Ducrot

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 22nd March

Black Honey

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 23rd March

The Undercover Hippy

Doors: 7PM

Friday 24th March

The Total Stone Roses

Doors: 7PM

Friday 24th March

Bangerz and Lash

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 25th March

Hooked on Jungle

4AM Kru

Napes

Occula

Jo Keeble

Chill Allen

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 26th March

Luke Kidgell:

Cheers to that!

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 30th March

**Jayde Adams:
Men, I can save you**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 31st March

**The HAU5 Party
(GFN The After Party)**

Doors: 11PM

Thursday 1st April

Back to the 80s

Doors: 11PM

Tuesday 4th April

Wunderhorse

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 5th April

Mike & The Moonpies

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 6th April

Danny Mellin

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 8th April

Yard Force Circuit

**Nuh Seh Nuttin
Yard Force Sound, Captain Leafy
Breadback, Erite Irie, Gappy
Set it off Sound, DJ Barry B**

Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 11th April

Modernlove.

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 13th April

**Alasdair Beckett-King:
The Interdimensional ABK**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 14th April

The Lottery Winners

Doors: 7PM

Friday 14th April

Teen Spirit

90s Rock Night

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 15th April

Reggaeton Party

Doors: 7PM

Sunday 16th April

Gary Meikle: 2.5

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 19th April

Kevin James Thornton

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 20th April

Troy Redfern/The Commoners

Doors: 7PM

Friday 21st April

Daft Funk Live

Doors: 7PM

Friday 21st April

The HAU5 Party

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 22nd April

**Musical Medicine
Ben Gomori**

Doors: 11PM

Tuesday 26th April

**Jack Barry:
Don't Happy Be Worry**

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 27th April

**Blue Highways
& Steady Habits**

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 27th April

**Haute Mess
Oxford's Next Top Mess**

Doors: 11PM

Friday 28th April

**Brian of J
The Pearl Jam Tribute**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 28th April

Raving Trippy

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 30th April

Simple

Secret Act

Doors: 11PM

Monday 1st May

May Day After Party

Doors: 11PM

Thursday 4th May

**Halina Rice
Immersive Liveset and AV**

Doors: 7PM

NEWS

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Online: nightshiftmag.co.uk



THE PRETENDERS are the latest headline act to be announced for this year's **KITE FESTIVAL**. Chrissi Hynde's legendary rock band join **Suede** and **Hot Chip** over the weekend of the **9th-11th June** at **Kirtlington Country Park**.

Other musical acts announced for the "festival of music and ideas" include **Django Django** and **Ezra Collective**, who join already announced acts Candi Staton; Baxter Dury; David Holmes and more. Among the new additions to the 'ideas' side of the festival are Hollywood legend **Joan Collins**, as well as doctor and author Adam Kay; Bangles frontwoman Susanna Hoffs and comedian and broadcaster David Badiel. More information and ticket details at kitefestival.co.uk.

BBC INTRODUCING IN OXFORD looks set to be merged with Introducing in Berkshire as part of the BBC's cost-cutting shake up of local radio. No definite plans have yet been announced but the merger seems inevitable after the corporation cut 32 local Introducing shows down to 20. Originally the plan was to cut down to just 10 regional shows, so the move is better than feared but still dilutes both shows from very distinct local music scenes. Currently it's uncertain whether BBC Introducing In Oxford presenter Dave Gilyeat and producer Liz Green will be involved in the new show. Recent cuts to local TV and radio news have seen regular presenters laid off while content for local listeners has been severely cut. Chris Burns, mealy-mouthed

Controller of Local Audio Commissioning, said in a press statement that "The Introducing shows on local BBC stations play an important part in supporting new talent – and will continue to do so – but we know more people are turning to BBC Sounds to listen and we want to do more on there and in our peak daytime schedules to showcase new talent."

Whatever the final outcome it seems inevitable that Oxford's music scene will be less comprehensively served by BBC radio.

Until then keep listening to the show and supporting local broadcasting every Saturday between 8-9pm on 95.2fm and on DAB. The show is available to listen to online on BBC Sounds.

THE FUTURE OF NETTLEBED FOLK CLUB is in doubt after the long-running club left the Village Club, its home of almost 50 years last month. In a statement to fans, the folk club committee said: "Audience numbers have not recovered after the pandemic and with the current cost of living crisis in mind we were already discussing how we move forward. We did mention in our previous newsletters that, with the smaller audience numbers we were experiencing, we would have to take some hard decisions if they remained at these levels. Also a short while ago the Village Club's finance and governance committee had insisted on a new contract before we have any more shows and after careful consideration we have all agreed that we would not be comfortable with some of the contract conditions in the current climate. "We are therefore concerned that the combination of these two factors would make the Folk Club not financially viable in its current form. We fully intend to continue our activities on a less frequent basis and at a different sized venue."

Steve Knightley's show at the start of February was moved to Rupert House School in Henley, a venue the club have stated they intend to use again, while the next planned show is Feast of Fiddles on the 20th March which will now take place at Benson Parish Hall.



ROYAL BLOOD, ALT.J AND TWO-DOOR CINEMA CLUB are set to headline this year's **TRUCK FESTIVAL**. The first line-up announcement was made on the 1st February with some 50 acts confirmed to be heading to **Hill Farm in Steventon** over the weekend of the **21st-23rd July**. Additionally **WOMBATS** will headline the early-doors Thursday night on the 20th. As well as the headliners, Truck will host Self Esteem; Beabadoobee; The Vaccines; Circa Waves; Maisie Peters; DMA's; Pale Waves; Everything Everything; The Lathums; Kate Nash; We Are Scientists; Crawlers; The Beths; Squid; Cian Ducrot; Swim Deep; Red Rum Club; Rachel Chinouriri; Stone; The Bug Club; Connie Constance; Wunderhorse; The Mary Wallopers; Sprints; Courting; Highschool; Prima Queen; Somebody's Child; Panic Shack; The Oxford Symphony Orchestra; Deadletter; The Last Dinner Party; Lizzie Esau; Modernlove; Overpass; Dead Pony; Antony Szmierek; She's In Parties; Heavy Lungs; Lambrini Girls; Gaffa Tape Sandy; Other Half; Snake Eyes; Cherym, and Carsick, as well as Barryoake with Shaun Williamson. More artists, including local acts, are set to be announced over the coming months. Last year's Truck was a sell-out and most tickets for this year's event have sold already, with remaining tickets available at truckfestival.com.

SIGRID, TOM GRENNAN AND BLOSSOMS will headline this summer's **BIG FEASTIVAL**. The music and food festival takes place at **Alex James' Farm** in Kingham over the weekend of the **25th-27th August**. Other acts announced include Vaccines; Rick Astley; Example; Faithless DJs; Melanie C and Hot Chip DJs. A line-up of celebrity chefs alongside family entertainment is also announced with more details at thebigfeastival.com

DOLLY MAVIES releases her debut album in April. The local singer-songwriter – real name Molly Davies – launches 'The Calm & The Storm' with a gig at The Bullingdon on Friday 7th April. Support comes from fellow local singer-songwriter Joely. The album is preceded with a single, 'I'm All Sugar', on the 24th February. Hear it at dollymavies.bandcamp.com.

JODY & THE JERMS release their third studio album in April.

'Wonder' is released on Friday 21st April, available on vinyl, CD and download. The indie-pop stars and recent *Nightshift* cover stars recorded the new record with Ride's Mark Gardener at his OX4 studios; a single, 'Started Something' was released on the 15th February. Jody & The Jerms headline The Bullingdon on Friday 31st March with support from The Shapes and Band of Hope. More news and gig dates at jodyandthejerms.com.

THE HARCOURT ARMS will be closed for refurbishment throughout March. The pub venue in Jericho, returns with its usual full live music line-up in April.

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.



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A quiet word with

Ghosts in the Photographs

photo: Helen Messenger



“THE GHOST OF KING Hamlet coming back from purgatory to convince his son to avenge his death, is pretty badass, even by Shakespeare’s standards!” says *Ghosts In The Photographs* guitarist George Naylor when *Nightshift* asks the band who their favourite ghost is. Bassist Iain Deans is somewhat less morbidly dramatic on the subject: *“Patrick Swayze, he’s got a keen knack for pottery and a deft touch,”* he counters, while drummer Brent Wade comes up with what is quite possibly the correct answer: *“spoiler alert... Dr Malcolm Crowe from The Sixth Sense.”*

LOCAL POST-ROCK soundscapists *Ghosts In The Photographs* are actually named after an old Mogwai lyric, while their music – variously languorously epic, pensive and furiously molten – owes more than a little something to the Scottish pioneers as well as the glacial sonic explorations of *Explosions In The Sky*, the shoegazey shimmer and sparkle of *Ride* and the spiky militancy of *Fugazi*. The trio are a musical spectacle – a journey, a trip, an adventure. The band formed back in 2014 and have released a succession of ambitious singles and EPs, with tracks regularly clocking in at the 10, 12 or 18-minute mark. This month though *Ghosts* release their full debut album, *‘This Is Forever’*, a chance at last for fans to hear on

record what they’ve experienced live: the comprehensive *Ghosts In The Photographs* musical tapestry.

THIS IS THE SECOND TIME *Nightshift* has featured the band on the cover; the last time was back in the summer of 2018, around the time they seemed to be a permanent fixture on Oxfordshire’s live scene and had just released their epic single ‘Dyslexocist’. The end of 2019 saw *Ghosts In The Photographs* starting to build some serious momentum, with supports to the likes of *And So I Watch You From Afar*. Then came Covid, and so much hard work and progress was undone. How hard was it for George, Iain and Brent to stick together, ride things through and reconvene?

George: “We were gearing up for what appeared to be an eventful 2020, so we were naturally disappointed that we had to down tools. However, we appreciate that our position was significantly different to many professional artists that were left high and dry, meaning many bands had to fold with no safety net to protect their livelihoods: something we’ve now come to expect from our charlatan government.

“I was glad to remain active in my role as a nurse though, and felt very fortunate to be safe for the most part. It wasn’t hard keeping the band together in a conventional sense; it was really more an exercise in mental fortitude, until it was possible

to get going again. The way we function as individuals means we’ve never felt at odds with one another, so the pandemic didn’t really change our approach or perspective. We’re very much a family. The overall feeling was that of lost time, but we weren’t alone on that front.”

Iain: “The hardest thing personally was the lack of a creative outlet, which isn’t that bad at all in the grand scheme of things, as I prefer creating as a group and, at that point in time at least, we weren’t a band who used technology to demo and send music to each other; we’ve always done our best work together in a room. We were basically forced into a year-long hiatus. Keeping together wasn’t that hard at all to be fair; we’ve always been more of a family than a band, we stayed in constant contact with each other throughout, were always there for each other during the good times and the bad times. Finally, being back in that practice room together was one of the most cathartic experiences I’ve had. The time off really reinforced the idea that this is exactly the music I want to be making and exactly the people I want to be making it with.”

WHILE MUCH MOMENTUM was lost, *Ghosts* have re-emerged intact from the pandemic and have been back in the studio to continue where they left off. They launched a crowdfunding campaign to finance the recording and release of an

album and surpassed their target. The album is out this month; how does it feel to finally make a full-length record?

George: “It feels great, we’ve had a number of tracks we’ve wanted to share for some time, so having this focus is a real change of tack for us. We’ve only ever really drip-fed our songs over sporadic intervals, so it’s nice to be able to have a comprehensive collection to put out. It’s not quite a concept album but it could be interpreted as such.”

Iain: “If I’m being honest, I’ve always been dead set against a band of our stature releasing an album, putting so much content out at once seemed counter intuitive to me but releasing an album has been one of Brent’s dreams and we’re nothing if not democratic. So, during the initial discussions there was a little bet placed between the three of us, if we didn’t make the crowdfunding target then we’d go back to releasing singles and EPs for the foreseeable, but if we hit the target then we’d make an album. Hitting the target proved to me that there were enough people out there who were not only interested in hearing it but had enough faith in the project to financially back it, so yeah, it feels very good. These tracks are a culmination of nine years together as a band, some songs and ideas we’ve had forever and some so new that we hadn’t even played them together until they were being put together.”

Ghosts have once again worked with Umair Chaudhry for the album; the musician and producer has been a long-time collaborator with the trio; is he a local artist they take inspiration from?

Brent: “Massively. He’s the unofficial fourth member and he just gets the best out of all of us. I can’t see us working with anyone else.”

George: “It’s very easy to be influenced by Umair; we find that he is great at challenging us creatively and we’ll always get him involved musically, to help elevate our compositions. Umair’s musical ability is second to none, the way he continues to furrow a path around the music scene is inspirational. He deserves a lot of recognition and plaudits for what he does, and his latest project, *Silent Weapon*, is another example of his talent for exploring new boundaries.”

LONG-TIME FAVOURITES here at *Nightshift* for their delicate

and intricate, yet visceral take on instrumental post-rock, *Ghosts In The Photographs* are regularly reviewed as a band who need to be seen live or listened to across a full album rather than the shorter form releases they’ve put out thus far; would they agree? Does their kind of music repay loud or extended exposure?

George: “There’s some truth in that but it is of course very subjective! We’ve always felt that we’re a different proposition playing live; I’m thinking volume over talent. But we love to be able to embellish our sound for recording; this helps gives us a slightly different character, a kind of sonic schizophrenia or paradoxical personality if you will. So, you should definitely check out both formats to ensure full immersion in *Ghosts In The Photographs* is achieved.”

Iain: “I’ve always wanted to offer different experiences when it comes to our music. Live it’s just the three of us: guitar, bass and drums. It’s organic; it’s raw; it’s visceral; it’s loud. On a studio recording though, we’re more contemplative, taking our time to really build a song and make it the best it can be in the time given, making use of all the equipment to layer extra guitars, synths and strings that we don’t use live. Offering the same experience both live and on record wouldn’t work for us; we’d either be hamstringing ourselves in the studio or trying to do too much live and not pull it off. Saying that, we have recorded live before; ‘Dyslexorcist’ was just the three of us in a room with mics on and I think that captured our live energy really well.”

Talking of strings, you’ve introduced a string section on some of the tracks on the album – ‘Bad Milk Blood’ and ‘The Day After Gomorrah’ for example; how keen were you to expand your sonic palate beyond the three-piece set-up?

George: “We’ve always been up for incorporating strings into our music, but using a crude mock-up of synth-like strings on a looper was the only way to express this previously. Brent works with a music school and was able to convince the brilliant Jennie Hubble and Janine Mold – cello and violin, respectively – to come and add their talents to proceedings. We get a lot of ideas, often above our station, hence the utility of additional talent to implement them, we were very fortunate to acquire the help of others to raise our musical profile.”

Iain: “I’m always of the mind that we should make full use of all the time and equipment we have on offer in a studio. For the first time we demoed every song prior to going into the studio, so by the time we got started Umair had heard all

the songs, we’d listened to them religiously and we had seven full days to get them down and embellish them to the fullest. When we play live it’s just the three of us together: it’s loud, it’s raw, it’s real. In the studio we really get to show another side of ourselves, we can take our time with each song, layering and enhancing each section, adding in subtle little extras and textures that we’ve always heard ourselves but can’t pull off live as we don’t have three guitarists and a synth player.”

The strings certainly add an extra layer of elegance to *Ghosts’* musical grace. Is elegance in music an underrated virtue?

George: “By mainstream standards, perhaps. It’s something we play around with more and more in our sound, trying to strike a balance of textures whilst not being afraid to allow certain ideas to propagate and become more than the sum of their parts. We may decide to express it in four minutes (‘Bad Milk Blood’) or eighteen (‘Dyslexorcist’), but will never be dictated to by normal tropes of expectation. We like the idea of playing around with minimalism to create intricacy, therefore a simple motif can become an evocative creature. There are so many great artists out there that are able to utilise and express subtlety and dynamics in what they do, it’s just having the perseverance to go and discover them.”

Iain: “I think patience is the most underrated virtue currently; so many songs and artists just give you the hook/reward/pay off straight away. Where’s the foreplay gone? Where’s the build-up and suspense? Though I think that might be an issue with society more than music itself: too many used to instant gratification instead of working towards achieving something, which is always more satisfying.”

THE NEW ALBUM IS A shifting smorgasbord of sonic mood pieces, from light and optimistic, becoming darker towards the record’s end. The track ‘We Did What We Could in Isolation, Awaiting the Darkness’ for example, is very dark and samples an Auschwitz survivor; what inspired that particular piece. Musically though it’s quite serene and beautiful; was that contrast deliberate?

George: “This is a good example

of utilising the music as a form of reflection. The disparity comes from naturally evolving an idea; we don’t always have a sample in place when we start writing a piece of music, but when we find something that resonates it can help us refocus and reinterpret. In this instance, the harshness of the survivor’s memories lays a foundation that’s hard to shake, so we wanted to create a musical equivalent of hope out of despair. The title was inspired by a very thought-provoking story I heard during Holocaust Memorial Day in 2020; There was a prisoner at a concentration camp who was executed in a gas chamber along with a young family member, a

note was found on her body after her death which read ‘We did what we could in isolation, awaiting the darkness’; the candour and acceptance demonstrated in those final moments are heart-breaking; the truth of that time should never be disregarded. In some way I like to think of the song as a monument to that. The title might also act as a riposte for how many individuals felt during lockdown; that’s not to compare the horrors of WWII and the pandemic, although some blonde scarecrow did reference blitz-spirit!”

Similarly ‘The Day After Gomorrah’, which closes the album, continues the theme with some grim sampled commentary.

George: “This has been around for a long time and it’s one of those tracks that has been through the mill and back. The sample is of Colonel Kurtz – Marlon Brando in *Apocalypse Now* – and it’s got a very horrific narrative which acknowledges the duality of human behaviours, of good men doing evil things. We’ve always felt that there is a measure of documentary-like approach to our song-writing narrative; this is made easier by having no principal lyrical perspective taking us in a particular direction.”

Saying that, you have Josh from local post-metal band *The Hope Burden* singing on that track; your first ever piece with vocals.

George: “This is one of those examples of elaborating on an idea and expanding it into, for us, uncharted territory. We love Josh’s vocal style and felt he could really add a level of intensity and dénouement that the song required. The vocals and lyrics add a component that elevates it beyond where we alone could take it. We

needed the right fit and in this case it was.”

Iain: “The song has been kicking around in some form or another for a long time. When we finally nailed down its current structure, we could feel the last half of the song really needed that something extra to push it. Josh brings a certain depth and anguish to his vocals that I’ve always admired, we felt like he would be a great fit for this track. It was fun to see someone from outside the band interpret our music in their own way and add a creativity to it we wouldn’t be able to do ourselves. I feel like it’s the perfect way to sign off our first album too, two minutes of a level of savagery not heard from us before, then it’s over.”

The *Hope Burden* are supporting you at your launch gig this month; do you see them as local kindred spirits?

George: “Yes, I love what they do, they will tear your teeth out with their sounds. They know how to take you on a journey and more than make it an experience along the way.”

Iain: “I’ve been a fan of them since I first heard them, bleak and heavy with a nice mix of ambient atmosphere. Their old guitarist Neil was in the proto-*Ghosts In The Photographs* too and a few of the other guys are Banbury lads like me, so we’ve got a few parallels with them; they capture the bleakness of the town perfectly.”

GHOSTS IN THE *Photographs’* album launch takes place at The Port Mahon on Friday the 3rd March. The venue was the last place we saw the band play live, back in 2022 and it’s fair to say they filled the room with a storm of incendiary noise, so we’re hoping for more of the same this time round. The new album features eight tracks, but given the nature of the band, could they envisage making an album featuring just one forty-minute track at some point?

George: “Maybe, we do kind of try to achieve that level of continuity live through segues and samples. I do wonder how many people have the staying power – or patience – to sit through these types of durations and movements, especially with a generation of individuals attuned to a short, sharp attention span, looking for quick fulfilment.”

Iain: “We’ve already released one 18-minute track as an EP, so another 22 minutes isn’t that much of a stretch, but I hope you like drum solos.”

‘This Is Forever’ is released on the 3rd March; get it from Truck Store or at ghostsinthephotos.bandcamp.com

RELEASED

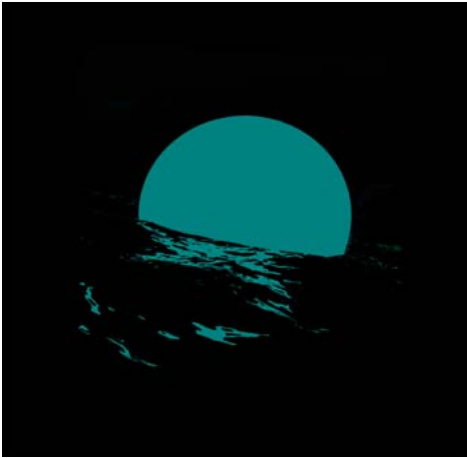
THE PEOPLE VERSUS

‘Pretty Words’

(Self released)

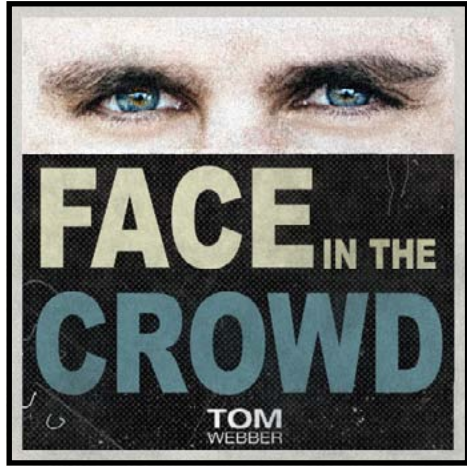
Florence and The Machine are one British band of late that have taken folk influences and reached colossal heights, and as *Nightshift* sits down to take in the latest offering from Oxford sextet The People Versus, we’re immediately reminded by how similarly massive their sound is.

‘Pretty Words’ is a typically high-quality offering from Alice, Jack and co. but this time they return with grittier guitar lines and swirling electronics to add to their arsenal of no-holds barred indie-folk. Singer Alice Edwards certainly doesn’t lack gravitas. As she toys with you lyrically, with effortless couplets like “She will not lure your children, she will not learn your name” she casts a spell over the listener as the incredibly able band build to a huge simmering delight of indie-driven folk. There’s a splendid moment three-quarters of the way where everything dips and the cello and guitar softly build, leading to a glorious crescendo of drums and almost operatic vocals.



Accompanied by a charming little video of a moon over a turbulent ocean, you can’t help but feel like you are lost at sea with the band, knowing that The People Versus will see you through ‘til dawn. It’s three minutes of a band coming to the peak of its powers and it’s certainly not pulling any punches. This is the sound of a band building up to something quite special.

Caitlin Helm



TOM WEBBER

‘Face In The Crowd’

(Self released)

Tom Webber is a young man going places, literally and figuratively, the Didcot singer songwriter having already toured the UK with Nick Lowe, played every festival going and looking set to continue his rise this year.

This new single is 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.

“I’ve been around the same old town for most of my 20 years / Spent a lot of heartache trying to get myself out of here,” sings Tom by way of an opening gambit, before moving onto “But in the wild city, I’m a nobody nowhere man / And I feel I’ve been missing those dirty streets where they know who I am.” The song neatly

condenses the conflicted emotions of leaving: the memories left behind when moving into bigger ponds where you become a smaller fish. Like Jake Bugg 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.

If Tom Webber achieves what he is easily capable of, all manner of bright lights beckon for him, but he needn’t lose what he came from – maybe he can just buy the biggest, fanciest house in Didcot. Hopefully soon everyone in those dirty old streets will know who he is.

Dale Kattack

JODY & THE JERMS

‘Started Something’

(Self released)

Rapidly becoming Oxford’s most prolific band, Jody & The Jerms build up to the release of their third album next month with another slice of buoyant indie pop, seemingly born in a time before the word indie was bespoiled of its meaning. ‘Started Something’ forsakes the band’s usual guitar chime and spangle for a decidedly jaunty piano melody, but as ever it’s Jody’s voice that is the star of the show, again outing her inner Kirsty MacColl for a carefree folk-pop tune that suggests Jody & The Jerms might be knocking out songs at a rate of knots but not at the price of quality.

Dale Kattack

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GHOSTS IN THE

PHOTOGRAPHS

‘This Is Forever’

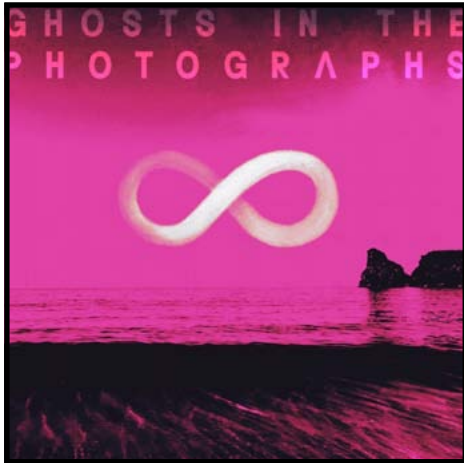
(Self released)

On paper, post-rock is quite a simple formula; take the traditional instrumentation of rock and try to emulate the sweeping structure and dramatic theming of classical orchestral music, then throw in some spoken word samples and glockenspiel; easy, right. However, the Devil is very much in the details. There is lots of space to explore ideas of rhythm and texture when you’re not limited by verse-chorus-verse structure, but when songs are routinely 8-10 minutes long you’ve got to have a lot of ideas and keep it engaging all the way through.

Ghosts In The Photographs have been pumping out post-rock sounds the size of glaciers for nearly decade now, but that this is their debut album probably says more about the state of arts funding in the UK that it does the band’s productivity. Known for their live shows that hit like Thor’s hammer, on record the trio somewhat reign it in, landing closer to Explosions In The Sky rather than the likes of Pelican. Not that this is a bad thing; post-rock is all about dynamics and that’s hard to achieve when everything’s turned up to 11. This tamer rendering of the band pays dividends; there are moments of buoyant uplifting joy, and dark walls of crushing intensity. Lead single ‘Bad Milk Blood’ distils all of this into a notably bite-size package, but the absolute highlight is the closing track ‘The Day After Gomorrah’. Every item on the post-rock checklist is squeezed in, but the arrangement is done with such finesse that there is no hint of being trite or predictable, plus the ferocious screamed vocals, courtesy of The Hope Burden’s Josh Day, are a true surprise and work brilliantly as a one-time addition to the instrumentals.

If you’ve never listened to post-rock before you could do a lot worse than Ghosts In The Photographs as your entry point; they blend emotions and genres with ease into a tapestry that sings with reverb-drenched optimism and slaps you round the face with an anvil of brutal riffage; an excellent sonic cocktail.

Matt Chapman Jones



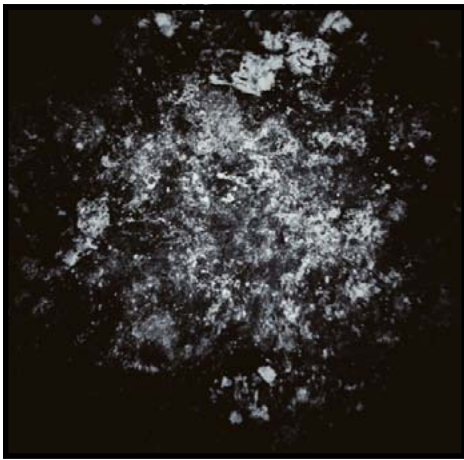
BARRELHAUS

‘Just Get On With It’ / ‘Self Help for the Helpless’

(All Will Be Well)

The closure of key venues and the impact of the pandemic have been far from helpful to a flourishing music scene in Oxford over the past few years and, understandably, much of the best new music has emerged from the bedroom, with solo performers allowed to peddle their wares more easily without the concomitant hassles of booking agents, vans, parking restrictions, day jobs, and available sound engineers to get in the way. So, it’s good to witness new outfit BarrelHaus serve a real statement of intent with the first of two double A-side releases over the coming months.

Make no mistake, this is music designed for a live setting. Opener ‘Just Get On With It’ lollops along at a fair old pace, unmistakably evoking the spirit of Queens of the Stone Age, albeit without that band’s increasingly tawdry off stage controversies. Marc Challans, like his bandmate Ian Mitchell, previously a member of Little Red, as well as another local combo Master of None, is the mastermind behind the track which veers cinematically above the



MOSA

‘Helicopter’

(Self released)

The bottom line is, this is a beautifully, beautifully realised piece of music. We say beautifully twice because it seems rhythmically apposite to its fluid, waltzing gait.

But ‘Helicopter’, a first outing in eighteen months for Mosa, (aka David Ashbourne, ex of rootsy folk trio Samuel Zasada) is not so readily forthcoming as its musical box cuteness first portrays; there’s a chiming resistance playing across its 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; the askance theme from *Tales of the Unexpected*.

It all involves darkness and mood, and at seven minutes long is not so much a single as the last track on an album, a coda of lament while walking home alone after a wayward night out. The vocals seem from the moon, and by



general chug before quietening down deftly in its very final stages to a delightful shimmer.

‘Self Help for the Helpless’, presumably not an oblique reference to a certain other Oxford band, is penned by Mitchell and is a decidedly more sludgy proposition, wallowing in didacticism with its refrain about not being scared to fail, while being punctuated by guitar riffs straight out of the 1970s – and loud. With admirable project management skills, BarrelHaus have a full LP, ‘Dirty Hymns and Antonyms’, ready to go for May while they’ll be out gigging in March.

Rob Langham

tap dancing on the digital rewind button we manage to extract a fair percentage of the lyrics, an abstract poetical turn which could either be about a long stare into the mirror, or visiting an elderly companion in a hospice. Truth is, not knowing doesn’t take from its power, because like Cocteau Twins’ Elisabeth Fraser, the voice is all cadence, the final instrument in the mix of an overall quality cut. As for the title, we’re none the wiser, other than I suggest you give it a whirl.

Paul Carrera

JUNIPER NIGHTS

‘Time To Rest’

(Self-released)

For a good few years Juniper Nights have been a reliable local act, enlivening many a bill with their warm indie elegance (think Easter Island Statues with a slight taste for the twinklier end of Radiohead). ‘Time To Rest’ is their latest track, and the first to capture a new line-up on. It’s not a world away from their earlier work, with James Gallagher’s soft and sweet vocals as winning as ever, adding character and taste like aural dolcelatte. The song is a little let down, though, by a politely chugging Travisoid rhythm, of roughly the speed and intensity of the miniature train that pootles round the grounds of a country house; the song is about crap jobs, but instead of the anger or wit of ‘9 To 5’ or ‘Take This Job And Shove It’ it just sounds as though the daily grind has exhausted and defeated the band; it just needs a bit more clout to land. For those about to rock, we salute you; for those on the miniature train, there’s a signal box next to the floral clock.

David Murphy

BRUNO MUERTE

‘Errors’

(All Will Be Well)

There will be people of a certain age who find themselves at a point of near-obsession with certain aspects of 1980s musical culture. So it seems to be with Bruno Muerte, whose seven-track debut 10” ‘Errors’ follows a variety of shorter, digital releases. They sit at an intersection of mainstream 80s synth-pop (when that often meant quality – think OMD, Human League, even Duran Duran), retro-futurist library music that labels like Castles In Space and Ghost Box pump up these days, and the razor-sharp modern electro-pop created by a cavalcade of artists like CHVRCHES and M.I.A.

For a style so beholden to music of the past (although, really, what music isn’t), ‘Errors’ is as much a collection of reference points as it is a set of New Things. So, opener ‘Science of Errors’ and, later, ‘The Society of The Spectacle’ sound like re-recorded incidental music from a lost 1983 episode of *Micro Live* – chunky stompalong rhythms, short swoops of synth blurt, and pleasingly buoyant electronic arpeggios. There is enough texture and structure to set out Bruno Muerte’s stall as being songwriters as much as being meta-musical knob-twiddlers.

‘CongaCop’ has touches of early hip-pop à la the 1984 *Breakdance* soundtrack. It’s more of a groove, a show-starter, a festival-pleaser, albeit with some slightly awkward vocal samples shoehorned in. It leads to the excellent ‘Phil D_Ophear’ which, once it has its squelchy blip-blop intro out of the way, is the best of the album: a head-nodding, subtle and downbeat electro rhythm across which sonic squiggles are scattered. It’s not a million miles away from some of Aphex Twin’s electro experiments and benefits from a lack of outright silliness or shenanigans. ‘Lost Droid’ works from the model laid out by Herbie Hancock’s ‘Future Shock’: elastic rhythms that connect together not-quite-soulless melodies and richly-layered Tangerine Dream-style soundscapes. The album is slightly let down by its final two pieces. ‘Wibli Wobli’ is just annoying, its “vocal” are liquid gargling sounds that interfere with a pretty decent *Terminator*-soundtrack seriousness, and ‘Satomi’ is an abstract combination of knowingly naïve keyboard fiddling and (actually quite pleasant) piccolo trills. Taken together, the combined jokiness of these two tracks undermines the quality often on display from the previous five.

Simon Minter



RELEASED

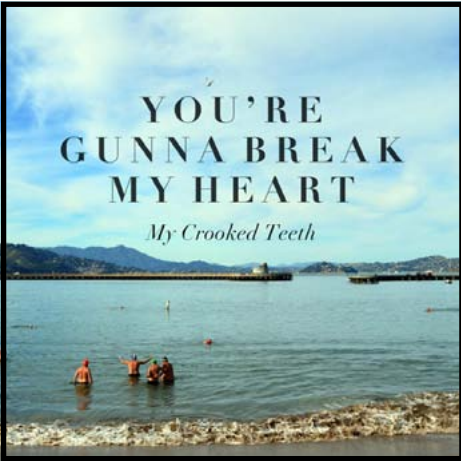


AIKZ
‘Anti Social’
(Self released)
Local MC Aikz and producer/beatsmith Third Degree present 13-track collaborative album project ‘Anti Social’, a rumination on being a square peg in a social round hole and perceived ‘misfit anxiety’.
The album kicks off with the attention grabbing ‘Intro’, flexing a solid beat with a montage of frequencies; ‘Shut it down’ is a rowdy, rambunctious tune with a strong hook and soulful horns. The beat sonics and

MY CROOKED TEETH
‘You’re Going To Break My Heart’
(Self released)
Perennial Oxford favourites My Crooked Teeth return with their first single of 2023. Jack Olchawski delivers a short dose of Americana in a little under three minutes with this ditty on the potential loss of love.
Based around a quite straight-up style of country that was popularised by the likes of John Denver or Glen Cambell rather than Chris Stapleton and Luke Combs, it benefits from a good standard of modern production. That being said, the composition is still very simple, with some clever lyrics from Jack and some simple guitar chords. In the third part of the song a honky-tonk piano joins in to add a sense of joviality that intriguingly plays against the sad lament of the lyrics, and brings some light

EMMA HUNTER
‘Morire’
(Self released)
Morire is Italian for dying and fading, and here the subject of Emma Hunter’s new single is doing just that – fading into the bottom of the bottle, choosing drink over love. The song follows on from an earlier Emma belter ‘Snake’ from her debut EP and sounds similarly huge in

production throughout most of the album are unashamedly influenced by the late 80s, early 90’s East Coast Boom Bap sound and although not always the most original, the production is never too derivative and has enough inventive skill to create a perfect sonic blanket for Aikz, who brings war in the pen. Over melancholic strings, hard as nails beats and vinyl cut wizardry from Jabba, Aikz reflects on a number of issues, both personal and social. Of course there are the obligatory braggadocios lyrics, as well as lyrical reflections on secret fears and wounded observations, all done with a defiant, wry wit.
‘I Still Dedicate’ is a poignant reflection on dysfunctional family conflict and helpless disintegration; Third Degree utilises a Jonny Cash vocal sample perfectly, the mournful overtones, haunting strings and skull snapping snares create a juxtaposition that is uneasy and beautiful. The highlight is ‘So Villainous’, a moody Pulp Fiction-style head nod joint that suits the aggy flow of Aikz to perfection. Final track ‘Outro’ closes proceedings fittingly with a trembling, tear-stained beat and a tasteful Dorothy Moore ad lib vocal sample, and overall this is a strong, well executed album, the flow and incisive lyricism plus brilliant turntablism from JabbaThakut, given a sympathetic, astute and soulful soundscape by Third Degree.
Lester Sideye



into the latter end of the track. If you are a fan of older country ballads, particularly Hank Williams, then this is for you, and if you aren’t, it’s still a hugely enjoyable song.
Damon Boughen

musical scope.
Emma Hunter has, we might have mentioned once, twice or several times, a voice to absolutely die for and she uses it with dramatic elegance to portray gothic romantic tragedy on a cinematic scale. Tom Bruce’s inventive, tumbling tom-heavy drums ratchet up the sense of drama as that voice soars, Mariachi trumpet blasts ominously and midnight surf guitars shimmer darkly.

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DAZE
‘Good Days, Bad Days’
(Quickfix)
“I’m feeling funny / Fuck these butterflies in my tummy” sings Daisy Eaton on ‘For A While’ on the new EP from local electro-jazz-pop trio Daze, inadvertently summing up the appeal of the band as they mix up a gently exuberant form of summery pop with some deeply angsty lyricism.
Like Glass Animals gene-spliced with Arlo Parks Daze create woozy, softly funky music over which Daisy gets to lay bare her romantic turmoil all the while sounding like no-one in the room has a care in the world. The bubbling ‘Misunderstanding You’ – a single from last year – is perhaps the highlight of the four tracks here, lovely and languid, almost celebrating its melancholy and sense of betrayal; similarly ‘21.15’, another recent single, makes light work of heavy emotions, swimming through calm, clear jazz-pop waters while the cheating paramour is conspicuous by his absence (“It’s quarter past nine and you’re nowhere to be seen / My friends were right”). By contrast ‘Dare’ is spiky – “Pack your bags and get out our home” sings Daisy, as close as she comes to losing her cool, which given the subject matter of her lyrics is some feat.
There’s very much something of the bedroom-based sound to Daze: arrangements are sparse, the melodies simple, but it’s credit to them that they take such basic ingredients and make them sweetly engaging, even more so that they do so while making you feel like summer is imminent.
Sue Foreman

For all its turbulence and the shadow of death that hangs over it, ‘Morire’ is intensely elegant, a perfectly structured epic that retains its poise however much the room spins. On the one hand it’s likely to be the darkest, bleakest song to come out of Oxford for the foreseeable; on the other, it sounds like a joyous celebration of the vastness of life and all the tragedies within it. Absolutely wonderful.
Dale Kattack

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<p>THE LATHUMS FROM NOTHING TO A LITTLE BIT MORE</p>	<p>LANA DEL REY DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE'S A TUNNEL UNDER OCEAN BLVD</p>	<p>DMA'S HOW MANY DREAMS?</p>
<p>DE LA SOUL 3 FEET HIGH AND RISING</p>	<p>PINK FLOYD THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON LIVE AT WEMBLEY 1974</p>	<p>THE EIGHTIES MATCHBOX B-LINE DISASTER HORSE OF THE DOG</p>

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G1G GUIDE

WEDNESDAY 1st

THURSDAY 2nd

JONNY PAYNE & THE THUNDER + BEDD + FLAMINGOS: **The Bullingdon** – Emotive, pop-friendly Americana and indie-surf

Sunday 5th

PERSONAL TRAINER / MAX BLANSJAAR / EB: The Bullingdon

Back in Oxford after supporting Amsterdam neighbours Pip Blom in this very venue back in 2019, and more recently headlining Divine Schism’s Oh, Community! mini-fest, Personal Trainer are once again guests of DS and once again playing the Bully after this show outsold its original Modern Art venue in double quick time. If you’ve not seen them before you’re in for a treat. A slightly mind-melting treat but a treat nonetheless. Seven-strong, each member of Personal Trainer is also in several other Amsterdam bands which might explain the genre-defying nature of the band: equal parts LCD Soundsystem, Talking Heads, funk revue, art happening, shirts-off hardcore communion, and pep rally. Or maybe Mark E Smith leading a slightly wayward lounge jazz band, or The Sugarcubes without Björk going krautrock, or possibly dEUS on a meltdown trip. All of these things are true and accurate, often at the same time. Here at *Nightshift* we love it when we find a band who seem, to all intents and purposes, to be made up of spare parts of other bands and who probably shouldn’t work as a unit but somehow do. And do so brilliantly. They’re a proper spectacle live and the lanky keyboard player and trombonist is a spectacle all by himself. Oxford’s own Amsterdam connection Max Blansjaar brings his inventively lo-fi Beck-infused pop to the party, while poet/rapper/singer EB adds her own flavour of pop fun to the mix.



March

from Witney songsmith Jonny Payne and his band.

HAYSEED DIXIE: O2 Academy – Classic songs covered bluegrass style by the Stateside hillbilly crazies, renowned for taking on AC/DC, Queen. Motorhead, Led Zep, Sabbath, The Darkness and more, touring most recent album ‘Blast From the Grassed’ expanding their palette to Toto, Eurythmics, A-ha, Soft Cell and more.

TUBULAR BELLS 50th ANNIVERSARY EXPERIENCE: The New Theatre – Recreation of Mike Oldfield’s classic album. **CATWEAZLE: The Handle Bar** – Oxford’s longest running open night continues to showcase singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and more each week.

JACK HALLS + CHEAP PETROL + 2AM BLUE: The Jericho Tavern
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon – Musician Tom Dalby hosts his weekly open night.

FRIDAY 3rd

GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS + THE HOPE BURDEN: The Port Mahon – Album launch show from this month’s *Nightshift* cover stars, taking us on a journey into epic post-rock noise and grandeur. Great support from Banbury’s malevolent post-metallers The Hope Burden – *see main interview feature*
ME LOST ME: The Library – Return to town and Divine Schism for Jayne Dent’s Newcastle-based Me Lost Me band; their darkly atmospheric loop-based action, taking traditional north eastern folk music into stranger places.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with KING PANIC + LIFE UNDERGROUND + THURIFER + HELEN PEARSON: The Gladiator Club – Good vibes and a welcoming party atmosphere as ever at this month’s KK shindig.
SOUL SISTA: The Bullingdon – Disco, funk and soul club night.
BON GIOVI: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribute night.

SATURDAY 4th

SIMPLE ft. CHLOE ROBINSON B2B DJ ADHD: The Bullingdon – House and techno club night with Chloé Robinson, formerly known as Barely Legal, best known for spinning various varieties of bass music, from garage, to dubstep, to grime, but more recently for playing house and techno sets.
DAZE: The Library – EP launch from the local indie trio, channelling Glass Animals and Arlo Parks in their sweet, summery sounds.

THE MIGHTY REDOX: Gladiator Club – Album launch show for the local party-hearty stalwarts, mixing up lively funk and blues with ska, folk and madcap pop.
THE LITTLE MIX SHOW: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Tribute night.

SUNDAY 5th

PERSONAL TRAINER + MAX BLANSJAAR + EB: The Bullingdon – Amsterdam’s spectacular genre-defying rockpopjazzfunkpunk beasts hit town – *see main preview*
OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms – Weekly open mic session.
SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Port Mahon (3pm) – Free afternoon of live Americana, blues, folk and pop from It’s All About the Music.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon – Weekly Irish folk session.
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm) – Weekly open session.
EMMA KENNEDY: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

MONDAY 6th

LITTLE CLARENDON: The Bullingdon

TUESDAY 7th

FLUORESCENT ADOLESCENT: The Bullingdon – Indie disco.
THE ELECTRIC JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford On Thames – Fortnightly open jam session.

WEDNESDAY 8th

JUNODEF: The Library – Dark-hearted alt.pop melancholy from the Swedish-born, London-based trio at tonight’s Divine Schism, the band touring new single ‘Diane’s Robot’ and drawing comparisons to Fever Ray, PJ Harvey and Warpaint.
BRICKWORK LIZARDS + OWL LIGHT TRIO + LARKSPUR: Tap Social – Benefit gig for Oxfam’s work in the Turkey/Syria earthquake area, with Turkobilly ensemble Brickwork Lizards mixing up Arabic and Turkish sounds with middle eastern folk and jazz. English, Irish and Brittany folk from Owl Light Trio, and British, Swedish and Bulgarian traditional sounds from Larkspur.
MIKE SILVER + SAME AULD STORY: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Wychwood Folk Club welcomes singer, songwriter and storyteller Mike Silver to the Shire.

THURSDAY 9th

CATWEAZLE: The Handle Bar
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 10th

RAVING TRIPPY: The Bullingdon – Psychedelic house and techno club night.
GUNS 2 ROSES: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribute, right.
INDIE DISCO: Tap Social – 80s and 90s indie classics on vinyl with DJ Dominic Utton.

SATURDAY 11th

METAL 2 THE MASSES: The Jericho Tavern – First heat of the regional rock and metal battle of the bands to win a slot at Bloodstock, tonight featuring Bring To Bear, Indecorum, Shoot To Kill and someone else whose logo makes their name impossible to decipher.
MUSICAL MEDICINE: The Bullingdon – House and disco club night with Raw Silk.
THE PETE FRYER BAND: Manor Bar, Garsington – Rock and blues classics from the veteran local singer and guitarist and chums.
THE BRYAN ADAMS EXPERIENCE: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribu... oh, you know.

SUNDAY 12th

OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms
SAM TRIGG & THE SOMETIMES BAND + LARKSPUR: The Jericho Tavern – Canalside vibes from the local boat-based outfits.
SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Bullingdon (3pm) – Free afternoon of live Americana, blues, folk and pop from It’s All About the Music.
THE MIGHT REDOX: The Tree, Iffley (3.30pm)
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)
SCAMPY: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

MONDAY 13th

OLIVIA DEAN: O2 Academy – Sweet, soulful pop, jazz and soul in the vein of Carole King and Amy Winehouse from the east London singer who cut her teeth working with Rudimental and was named Amazon Music’s 2021 breakthrough artist of the year.

TUESDAY 14th

SELF ESTEEM: O2 Academy – Choreographed brilliance from Rebecca Taylor and chums – *see main preview*

WEDNESDAY 15th

NEON TEEPEE + CEDARS OF LEBANON: The Bullingdon – Local bands showcase.
KAREN SHARP: Iffley Church Hall – Melodic jazz from award-winning saxophonist Karen Sharp and her band, Sharp having played in Humphrey Lyttelton’s band as well as working with American greats like Scott Hamilton, Warren Vache and Bucky Pizzarelli over the years.

THURSDAY 16th

WILLE & THE BANDITS: The Bullingdon – Rock, blues, Latin and folk from Cornwall’s Wille & The Bandits back in town and on

tour to promote new live album ‘The Kernow Sessions’, the band having variously been compared to Led Zeppelin, Hendrix, Cream and Santana as they mix up rootsy rocking and blues with electronics and convoluted song structures.

EMMA HUNTER + LONDON GRAFFITI: The Jericho Tavern – Emma and Tom launch their epic new single ‘Morire’ with a dark mix of gothic surf rock, Mariachi and flamenco.
ORLANDO WEEKS: O2 Academy – The former Maccabees frontman returns to Oxford after his show here in November, touring recent album ‘Hop Up’, a buoyant, optimistic set of mostly synth-led songs inspired by parenthood.
CATWEAZLE: The Handle Bar
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon
MARK ATHERTON BAND + SCAMPY: Loose Cannon Brewery, Abingdon – Making Music in Abingdon local artists showcase.

FRIDAY 17th

ROBERT FORSTER: The Bullingdon – Return to town for the former Go-Betweens mainstay – *see main preview*
BOSSAPHONIK with ME & MY FRIENDS + LIZ IKAMBA: Cowley Workers Social Club – The monthly world jazz dance club night hosts Me & My Friends, fusing 70s West African and Caribbean vibes with English folk, plus delicate Afro-soul and Congolese riffs from Liz Ikamba. Host Dan Ofer spins a goodly selection of Latin, Balkan, African and nu-jazz tunes on the decks.
GOLDIE LOOK’ CHAIN: O2 Academy – Newport With Attitude keeps the comic rap bandwagon rolling.
TIM FRIERS & THE MERCINARIES: The Jericho Tavern
FUSED: Fat Lil’s, Witney – 90s and 00s rock, pop and emo covers.

SATURDAY 18th

OH, COMMUNITY!: Common Ground (2-11pm) – Divine Schism host an all-day mini-fest in aid of YWMP at the community project off Abingdon Road with a selection of indie and DIY acts, including a return to town for former-Talulah Gosh and Heavenly legends Amelia Fletcher and Rob Pursey alongside Hue from The Pooh Sticks. There are also sets from Trust Fund, Leather.head, Mumbles, Lou Terry, Radiant Heart, Mōney, Emma Hunter, The Pinch and Daze.
NIRVANA UK + THE FOAM HEADS: O2 Academy – Tribbbbbzzzzz
KING KING: O2 Academy – Soulful blues rocking from the Lincoln-formed outfit.
OSMOSIS: The Black Swan – Cajun-style funk-ed-up blues.
REGGAETON OXFORD: The Bullingdon
ALL FLOYD: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Tributey tootie fruitee.
DOG OF TWO HEADS: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribute band you say?

SUNDAY 19th

THE PROTOMEN: O2 Academy – Epic, operatic prog rocking from Tennessee’s Protomen, making their Oxford debut tonight,



Tuesday 14th

SELF ESTEEM:

O2 Academy

Self Esteem’s show here back in 2021 and her appearance at last year’s Kite festival were two of the best shows *Nightshift* has witnessed in recent times: supremely choreographed sets of song and dance that were big on swagger – Queen-like pomp, disco fun, Madonna-level pop brilliance and stomping energy – and made us wonder why she wasn’t the biggest pop star on the planet. Perhaps this year will change that. After a decade as part of Slow Club, Rebecca Taylor, a singing, drumming, guitar-playing polymath, tired of the endless middle-tier touring, being skint and increasingly musically frustrated. So she left and became a pop star, leaving behind her band’s musical insularity and, inspired by Lady Gaga and Ru Paul’s Drag Race and encouraged by her friend and musical hero Jamie T, letting her inner theatricality out and began writing brilliantly honest songs that mixed up big, catchy choruses and glitterstomping beats with something artier and more leftfield. Like previous radio hit and contender for best track of 2021 ‘I Do This All The Time’. It was the lead single from her superb album ‘Prioritise Pleasure’ which found Taylor leading a clarion call for women to enjoy life on their own terms rather than what men or society wish or expect. Lyrically she’s sometimes painfully honest and deals with the complexities of the subjects she deals with, but it’s as captivating as it is catchy. Tonight’s show is already sold out but if you have a ticket and haven’t seen her before believe us: you’re in for an absolute treat.

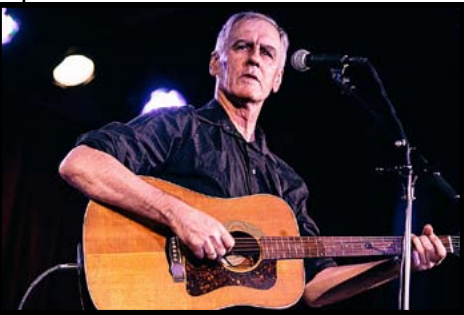
continuing their ongoing series of Mega Man-inspired concept albums, drawing on the likes of Queen, Meatloaf and Styx for musical inspiration.
CIAN DUCROT: The Bullingdon – Soulful pop from the singer, touring new single ‘I’ll Be Waiting’.
OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms
FRANKLIN’S TOWER + THURIFER + PHIL GARVEY & KAZ: The Tree, Iffley (4pm) – Klub Kakofanney host a free afternoon of live music, including Grateful Dead tribute Franklin’s Tower.
SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Port Mahon (3pm) – Free afternoon of live Americana, blues, folk and pop from It’s All About the Music.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)

JAMES LAINEY: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

MONDAY 20th
THE JOY FORMIDABLE: O2 Academy – return of the rather wonderful Welsh noise-pop trio, touring their most recent ‘Into the Blue’ album, continuing to mix jagged, Sonic Youth riffery with dreamy, shoegaze melodies and psych-rock vibes.
BILLY OCEAN: The New Theatre – Back in the shire after his show here in 2021, the veteran pop and soul hitmaker heads out on tour, reliving hits like ‘Caribbean Queen’; ‘Get Out of My Dreams, Get Into My Car’, and ‘When the Going Gets Tough, The Tough Get Going’.

FEAST OF FIDDLES: Parish Hall, Benson – Nettlebed Folk Club relocates to Benson after being forced to forsake their home of nearly 50 years, tonight with their annual celebration of traditional fiddle, with Peter Knight and Chris Leslie leading a line that includes Phil Beer and

Friday 17th
ROBERT FORSTER: The Bullingdon
For indie fans of a certain vintage, The Go-Betweens are as important as The Smiths or Buzzcocks, and their influence endures in myriad literate, heart-on-sleeve guitar-wielding romantics and dreamers. The band was formed in 1977 at the University of Queensland by Grant McLennan and Robert Forster and released six albums of increasingly glorious pop music until they disbanded in 1989, and another three in the 00’s after briefly reforming. Sadly McLennan’s death from a heart attack in 2006 put an end once and for all to the band but Forster remains a potent songwriter, a self-assured dandy who’s both knowing and arch, and warmly romantic, both sides of his character coming out on new solo album ‘The Candle & the Flame’, his eighth, his voice still one of the most distinctive in indie, commanding and confident, and on songs like ‘She’s a Fighter’, an ode to his wife Karin’s battle with cancer, showing he has lost none of his ability to hit an emotional nerve. His last visit to Oxford, back in 2015, was a sold-out show in the none-more-intimate setting of the Quaker Meeting House, so tonight’s return will give more fans a chance to revisit his brilliance or discover him anew. And if you never heard The Go-Betweens before, or you simply crave some joyously poetic pop, go and investigate their entire catalogue immediately.



Dave Mattacks.

TUESDAY 21st
THE ELECTRIC JAM: The Catherine Wheel, Sandford On Thames

WEDNESDAY 22nd
LISA O’NEILL: St. John the Evangelist – Rich, rarefied Irish folk from the singer lately made famous by *Peaky Blinders* – see main preview
BLACK HONEY: The Bullingdon – Izzy Baxter Phillips’ rock warriors return for an intimate show – see main preview

THURSDAY 23rd
THE UNDERCOVER HIPPIE: The Bullingdon – Feelgood pop vibes, lightweight reggae grooves and political commentary from Brighton’s Billy Rowan.
APOLLO GHOSTS + LIVING BODY: The Port Mahon – Lo-fi indie sweetness and harmony pop in a Pavement vein from Apollo Ghosts at tonight’s Divine Schism show, the band back in town after playing DS’s outdoor mini-fest at Florence Park last summer. They’re joined by Leeds’ militant anti-capitalist crew Living Body.
CATWEAZLE: The Handle Bar
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 24th
HACK POETS GUILD: The North Wall – Inventive contemporary folk from the coming together of Lisa Knapp, Marry Wilson and Dead Rat Orchestra’s Nathaniel Mann, together sharing musical space with the likes of Stick In The Wheel et al as they takes rootsy sounds and broadside ballads down unexpected paths on debut album ‘Blackletter Garland’, and joined for this tour by Oxford’s own cello and loopmeister Duotone.
THE DEADBEAT APOSTLES + PAPA NUI: The Handle Bar – Livewire blues rocking, soul and country with some punk vim and vigour from the Deadbeats. Fusion pop and dancey vibes from papa Nui in support.
TOTAL STONE ROSES: The Bullingdon – Tribute note.
ABSOLUTE BOWIE: O2 Academy – Tribute note.
TOM WALKER: O2 Academy – The Glaswegian singer-songwriter returns to Oxfordshire for the first time since playing Truck Festival back in 2018 and set to release his second album.
HMS MORRIS + SALVATION BILL: Modern Art Oxford – Helping to launch MAO’s new Carey Young exhibition Divine Schism host Cardiff’s skewed Welsh language electro-rockers HMS Morris alongside Ollie Thomas’ dark, observational Salvation Bill band.
WHO’S NEXT: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Tribute trylobyte.

SATURDAY 25th
GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with AKORRA + SILENT WEAPON + ARTHUR



Wednesday 22nd
LISA O’NEILL: St. John the Evangelist
Raw, austere, deeply emotive Irish folk from County Cavan singer Lisa O’Neill, returning to Oxford for the first time since her glorious show at The Bullingdon in 2020, just before Covid broke. Since then she’s earned a whole new set of fans via *Peaky Blinders*, her ‘Blackbird’ and ‘All the Tired Horses’ perfect for the atmosphere of the programme. This time round she’s touring her new album ‘All of This is Chance’, again exploring folklore, legend, nature and stories of the common folks and the often tragic events of their lives. Her previous release was the acclaimed album ‘Heard a Long Gone Song’, which earned her myriad folk awards and nominations, its songs mixing loss, heartbreak and political commentary across original tunes and traditional traveller ballads and, like near neighbours Lankum, bringing a droning intensity to the genre. Her voice stands comparison to Lankum’s sublime Radie Peat – possessed of an earthy, unusual timbre that rings out the darkest, deepest emotions from her songs – either the crushing loss of ‘A Year Shy of Three’ or the angry defiance of ‘The Rock the Machine’. The subject matter is often as old as music itself – ‘The Factory Girl’ with its tale of a poor working girl rejecting the unwanted advances of a wealthy man – but in O’Neill’s hands, brought to rich new life and taken to darker corners. Wonderful stuff and SJE a perfect setting for such an otherworldly talent.

OSOFSKY: The Port Mahon – Quality triple bill at this month’s GTI with epic synth-rocking from Akorra, launching their new single ‘All Eyes’; the band, featuring members of Tiger Mendoza, Bruno Muerte and Ocean Ruins, coming in somewhere between Curve, Garbage and Gary Numan. They’re joined by Umair Chaudhry’s malevolent electro-core incarnation Silent Weapon, taking Godflesh, Scorn, Throbbing Gristle and Whitehouse on a synthtastic ride into the heart of the apocalypse. Former Overload frontman Arthur Osofsky opens the show with his performance poetry.
INSPIRAL CARPETS: O2 Academy – What remains of the classic 90s line-up head out on tour again, with original singer Steven Holt leading the line alongside guitarist Graham Lambert and keys maestro Clint Boon. From ‘Saturn 5’ and ‘This is How It Feels’ to ‘Joe’ and ‘I Want You’, all the old hits are right here, right now.
UK FOO FIGHTERS: O2 Academy – Oof.

CROSTOWN CONCERTS

ROBERT FORSTER
The Candle And The Flame Tour
FRIDAY 17 MARCH
THE BULLINGDON OXFORD
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

DMA'S
LIVE UK 2023
SUNDAY 09 APRIL
WATERSIDE THEATRE AYLESBURY
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

modernlove.
PLUS SPECIAL GUEST **LIZZIE ESAU**
TUESDAY 11 APRIL
THE BULLINGDON OXFORD
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH WASSERMAN MUSIC

THE OZZIES
EYESORE TOUR
WEDNESDAY 19 APRIL
JERICHO TAVERN OXFORD
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

RITUAL UNION PRESENTS JOHN
Friday 05 May 2023
Jericho Tavern Oxford
plus special guests **Grandmas House**
by arrangement with ATC

RITUAL UNION PRESENTS TALK SHOW
Tuesday 09 May 2023
Jericho Tavern Oxford
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JOHN COOPER CLARKE
I WANNA BE YOURS
2023 TOUR
SATURDAY 03 JUNE
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LISA O'NEILL
UK TOUR 2023
PLUS SPECIAL GUEST **SEAMUS FOGARTY**
WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH
SJE ARTS CENTRE, OXFORD
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH EARTH AGENCY

THE ORIELLES
TUESDAY 28 MARCH
O2 ACADEMY2 OXFORD
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH WASSERMAN MUSIC

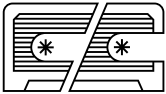
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with support from **ZEBRA**
GOOD TIME / HARD TIME
TOUR 2023
Thursday 20 April
O2 Academy2 Oxford
by arrangement with wasserman music

RAZORLIGHT
TUESDAY 25 APRIL
O2 ACADEMY OXFORD
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

CHAPPAQUAS WRESTLING
THURSDAY 18 MAY
JERICHO TAVERN
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

PSYCHEDELIC PORN CRUMPS
SATURDAY 27 MAY
O2 ACADEMY2 OXFORD
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PURE REPRESENTS

BELLE & SEBASTIAN
uk tour 2023
thursday 13 july
O2 Academy Oxford
by arrangement with x-ray



METAL 2 THE MASSES: The Jericho Tavern – Second heat of the regional rock and metal battle of the bands to win a slot at Bloodstock, tonight featuring Sore Teeth, Lestweforget, Voodoo and Stone Soup.
HOOKED ON JUNGLE: The Bullingdon – Club night.
THE STANDARD: Fat Lil’s, Witney – Current and classic pop hits.

SUNDAY 26th
OPEN MIC: Harcourt Arms
SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Bullingdon (3pm) – Free afternoon of live Americana, blues, folk and pop from It’s All About the Music.
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)
LISA MARSHALL: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

Wednesday 22nd
BLACK HONEY:
The Bullingdon
A welcome return to Oxford for Black Honey as guests of Truck Store, who host tonight’s relatively intimate show to promote the band’s third album, ‘A Fistful of Peaches’ – the follow-up to 2021’s Top 10 ‘Written & Directed’ – with ticket’n’reord bundles available for the most committed fans. And Black Honey do have committed fans if their last couple of Oxford shows are anything to go by, including a sold-out gig at the O2 Academy last time round. The band spent their early days seemingly intent on avoiding too much attention, playing low-key shows and house parties in their native Brighton while having precious little information about themselves available online. Things soon changed as the world sat up and took notice with singer and bandleader Izzy Baxter Phillips having all the necessary sass of a true rock star, with an elegant, versatile voice and sharp wit to match. It’s her voice that remains the centrepiece of Black Honey’s sound, which moves from stylishly sad, through poppily pretty and into quietly haunting via surf rock, ethereal indie, grunge and Ennio Morricone soundtrack music, before getting its gnarly rock on when duty calls. Baxter drew regular comparisons early on to Lana del Ray and Nancy Sinatra, but increasingly it’s a new generation of singers who are being compared to *her*. They were always too good to be kept a secret.



MONDAY 27th
TUESDAY 28th
THE ORIELLES: O2 Academy – Indie like it was meant to be from the Halifax trio – *see main preview*
WEDNESDAY 29th
THE MATT GOSS EXPERIENCE: The New Theatre – Dart dodging and beer-drinking bulldogs with Britain’s brightest former pop star.

THURSDAY 30th
MEANS OF PRODUCTION + MOOGIEMAN + PLAGARYTM: The Library – All Will Be Well Records host local post-punk electro-pop-acid-house duo Means of Production alongside a stripped-back electro-leaning set from the weird and wonderful pop world of Moogiemann.
BLACK TISH II + MANNEQUIN + BEAVER FUEL: The Jericho Tavern – It’s All About the Music local bands showcase.
KRANIUM: O2 Academy – Reggae and dancehall from the New York-based Jamaican singer, best known for his 2013 global hit ‘Nobody Has To Know’.
CATWEAZLE: The Handle Bar
DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 31st
JODY & THE JERMS + THE SHAPES + BAND OF HOPE: The Bullingdon – Effervescent indie pop inspired by The Primitives, Blondie and Kirsty MacColl from the local stars. Classic r’n’b, new wave, soul, punk and folk from The Shapes in support.
DESERT STORM + INHUMAN NATURE + THUUM: O2 Academy – The local sludge, groove and desert rock titans launch their new album ‘Death Rattle’, their sixth, still leading the local heavyweight scene over a decade after making their breakthrough.
DEAF HAVANA: O2 Academy – Return to town for Norfolk’s pop-friendly stadium rockers – whose staying power sees them approaching veteran status as they tour their latest album, ‘The Present is a Foreign Land’.
BLACK PARADE: O2 Academy – 00s emo anthems club night.

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.



Tuesday 28th
THE ORIELLES:
O2 Academy
The success of The Orielles, and other likeminded bands in recent times, is another victory in the ongoing war to make indie mean something after two decades of corporate appropriation, polish and homogenisation. The Halifax trio first made a name for themselves with sets at Dot 2 Dot and Carefully Planned festival, as well as a flexidisc (what else?) that accompanied a colouring book (of course) on Art is Hard, and have gone on to charm everyone who crosses their path since, their music a hazy, ramshackle tribute to Spector-esque 60s pop, 80s indie and 90s slacker rock, particularly Pavement and Steve Malkmus’s drawly, daydreamy idiosyncrasy, all wrapped up in sugary vocal harmonies, guitar fuzz and surf twang. Those vocal harmonies come courtesy of sisters Esme and Sid Hand-Halford who sound like they were born and raised on the West Coast rather than West Yorkshire and have brought the sunshine to God’s own county via their music, which, as well as The Shangri-La’s and Ronettes, touches base with The Breeders and The Raveonettes at times, while guitarist Henry Wade brings a spikiness that harks back to post-punk and Postcard Records. Where radio hit ‘Let Your Dogtooth Grow’ was all jangly sweetness, songs like ‘Sugar tastes Like Salt’ were noise-pop wrecking balls and it’s live where The Orielles shine brightest, lighting up two Truck festivals as well as opening for Magic Gang on tour. Lively, lovely pop music that comes with added bounce and their contribution to the cause of proper indie continues to make them heroes worth following as they tour last year’s ‘Tableau’ album.

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CASSELS / SINEWS / AND WHAT

Modern Art Oxford

And What, a local two-piece outfit featuring a singer/guitarist and drummer, are also members of the bands Basic Dicks and Richard Lewis. Their limited online presence suggests they’re either fairly new or anti-internet, the former seeming more likely as they weave and thrash their way through a short set that brings to mind Lydia Lunch or associated no wave bands like Ut, from late 70s New York. Everything sounds almost out of tune and time but listen carefully and there are clear signs this may be by choice rather than lack of ability, adding to the intrigue. By the end we’re won over, even with the unanswered questions. Sinews may be just seven months old (in gig terms) but they’re shaping up nicely. The controlled energy is still there, now

honed by experience and, while they’re as uncompromising as ever, there is more going on musically. Last summer they posted a clip suggesting a move in a doomy direction but tonight it’s the familiar thrash punk/metal side that’s featured. Fun this may be, but they’re swimming in a very big pond and need some killer songs or something else special to make them stand out from the crowd. It’s exactly a year since Cassels released their ‘A Gut Feeling’ album, tonight played in its entirety. Brothers Jim and Loz Beck continued their production style of vocals, guitar and drums with very little treatment or effects, each song with a three-word title telling a clear story, usually with a disturbing twist. The confines and acoustics of MAO’s

basement offers no opportunity to recreate the album’s dry, precise musical palette, and many of us take up the earplugs offered on entry. Though lyric-heavy the songs give only limited clues as to what motivates the band, but that tension makes up a large part of their appeal. ‘Your Humble Narrator’ is a case in point, ticking like a timebomb before exploding into an almost funky miasma of power chords and cacophonous drums. The loud-quiet-loud approach to song construction has been overused to the point of cliché, but it’s an intrinsic part of Cassels’ DNA. ‘Dog Drops Bone’ is an almost unbearable experience, as it inches along until the tension cracks and the drums kicking in brings waves of relief. Even Jim’s claim to have forgotten some of the words could be a ruse, this is a world where none of the usual rules apply.

Art Lagun

SHOVEL DANCE COLLECTIVE

Florence Park Community Centre

“Folk music is for the working class,” says Shovel Dance Collective’s Mataio Austin Dean as the band finish playing selected songs from their album ‘Water is the Shovel of the Shore’. Class struggle is a major theme in their work. This concept is delineated by their name, Shovel Dance Collective: “labour is the ‘shovel’ and ‘dance’ are the forms of cultural life,” according to a recent interview with *The Quietus*. The natural imagery in these shanties is emphasised in the studio versions; field recordings capture the movement of water and wind, underscoring pastoral imagery that explores the theme of the worker versus the ruling class, reminiscent of radical Blakeian concepts adopted by traditional folk culture, in their common distrust of the state. This sense of radicalism heightens the crowd’s solidarity, illustrating its continual relevance in art. One member ends the song, ‘Lovely on the Water’ saying: “[this is] mass imperialistic death, from the view of those who pick up the pieces.” Shanties aided in extracting the last ounce of energy from fatigued workers, particularly sailors. By including this particular shanty in their work, they

effectively foreground the theme: the unscrupulous ruling class inducing loss and abuse in working-class lives for surplus. “But the Queen does want soldiers / Thousands will be slain”: these lyrics narrate the soldier’s departure in spite of the danger. The vocals sit in a neutral chest voice range, as they reverberate alongside the gritty ballad. The variation they perform includes the upheaval of violin and harp, with the resounding bass of the zither, encapsulating the comfortless lower-class experience artfully. Combining experimental music with folk makes traditional folk increasingly multi-dimensional. Shovel Dance Collective’s take on ‘The Golden Vanity’ explores colonisation as a shanty about Sir Walter Raleigh, one of the leading colonists of North America. It contributes to contemporary discourse around colonial figures, inventing a magnetic and current interpretation. The deep harmonisation between the collective’s members fortifies the image of the vigorous strife of a laboured hunter. This is also characteristic of ‘The Bold Fisherman’, the first song on their album, which articulates the life of working-class whalers of the time. Tonight’s setlist incorporates comparable songs that create a cohesive representation of the proletariat theme.

Hannah Masih

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with FLIGHTS OF HELIOS / STARBELLY / THE BALKAN WANDERERS

Gladiator Club

Entering through what feels the homely, time capsule that is the Gladiator social club, we find the decent sized back room that Klub Kakofanney, the longest lasting live event in Oxford, have turned into a friendly, welcoming music and social event over the last year or so. Things get off to a tricky beginning, due to two sound tech Covid casualties, but after a brief wait, the irrepressible Balkan Wanderers, back in action with a new singer and bassist after five years in hiatus, get things off to a ramshackle start, by turns, rollicking, joyous and melancholic, often in the same song, like an eclectic polyglot mixtape mash of styles, from English folk, Catalan and Turkish sound to smatterings of dancehall reggae in the last number. It’s a very solid debut for the relaunched band. Starbelly, look great and sound good most of the time, offering, a thrashy, dirty, mascara-ruining, solid rhythm section, with bruised crooner style vocals. They’re self described as jagged, fairy tale glam rock, which as self summations go, is pretty accurate. Despite the charismatic glitter sludge vocals and powerful rhythm section, a couple of the songs don’t always hold our attention, but a confident attitude

and lots of personality make this an interesting ruckus. Flights of Helios get off to a shaky start, with sound and technical issues. Their opening track is a vocal effects-drenched, desert blues, electronica-prog tune, with Chris Beard using his expressive falsetto to great effect. There are no easy three-minute pop tunes here; instead this is an extended workout, with moments of Pharoah Sanders-style spiritual jazz sonics. ‘Magpie’ is a rockier jolt out of our languid musings, however technical issues continued to disrupt the flow and seem to knock the band off kilter and the set doesn’t quite land in places. But here comes ‘The City That Ate Itself’ to close proceedings and end on a high note, a snarling skank of a tune, great spoken/sung vocals with a slightly hysterical Mad Professor feel, the ‘Don’t Get Emotional’ hook a nagging, menacing refrain that stays in your head, and the all too brief spoken word section by Harriet Butler is a quiet, but powerful, change of atmosphere. Flights’ rhythm section bring a controlled chaos to proceedings that dances in the shadow of a precarious future and gives a terrific end to an understandably shaky set.

Lester Sideye

JACK GOLDSTEIN / FLUID TOWER / ERIN SNAPE

The Port Mahon

Promoters Golden Coral Desert (behind whose name is the familiar face of Max Blansjaar) have nicely decorated The Port Mahon with coloured fairy lights, and as concert goes fill the room none of them expects those same lights to come down before the night’s over. But first we’re treated to a set by Oxford-grown singer-songwriter Erin Snape. Drawing from her 2020 album ‘First Impressions’, she makes a remarkable first impression. Her lyrical indie music and intricate guitar play are reminiscent of Laura Marling but that doesn’t mean her music is derivative; quite the opposite, as Snape experiments with both sound and song. ‘Life Imitates’, for example, is written in the so-called Phrygian mode, a dark and unusual style that fits the track’s cynical content (“Art is artists sat in artisanal cafes / Or so art would have you think”). From here we move to Fluid Tower, a project of Max Levy from Garden Centre. There is a raw power to Fluid Tower’s music, which consists of Levy’s unsteady voice over keyboard and samples. The performance sometimes feels like a late-night karaoke, with Levy dancing like

nobody is watching. For the last song of the set he sticks his head inside the venue’s defunct fireplace and sings up into the chimney; hopefully his voice carries across Oxford’s rooftops. Although Jack Goldstein’s music has that same emotional intensity, he channels it outwards rather than inwards. He doesn’t play from the stage but amidst the crowd, with an infectious energy that inexplicably causes the fairy lights to come unstuck from the ceiling. Goldstein decides to take them down and wear them around his body. He therefore becomes the literal light at the centre of the room, and proceeds to play joyous, heartfelt high-carb hyperpop like his life depends on it. The set mostly features tracks from his recent album ‘the world is ending and I love u’, written by Goldstein in the aftermath of losing both his parents during lockdown. The way in which he has turned this tragedy into a decidedly positive communal experience is truly admirable. As Goldstein sings on ‘Sailing’: “We’re going to let love into the soul again.” Indeed! *Caspar Jacobs*

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BOSSAPHONIK presents LOKKHI TERRA
Cowley Workers Social Club

Lokkhi Terra have special powers. They utilise the untrammelled Power of Sound to artfully summon magical forces in any venue they play. Such powers – manifested in space and time – make people move in frenetic, strange and unexpected rhythmic patterns. It also induces uncontrolled smiling. According to Chief Lokkhi Terra-ist/keyboardist Kishon Khan, the name is a Bengali phrase referring to a very attractive person who is also a tiny bit cross-eyed; the ‘beauty in imperfection’, if you will. Very little of any musical imperfections are visible tonight,

but there are a good few crossed-eyed/star-struck fans. Introduced – unapologetically – as Dan Ofer’s favourite UK band to have played at Bossaphonik, they, in many ways, archetypally capture the spirit of Bossaphonik itself. Last here eight years ago, they manage to fuse Cuban, Afrobeat and Bangladeshi (and, oh joy, dub reggae – their version of ‘Blazing Horns’ by Jamaican Tommy McCook is sublime) musical styles seamlessly. Such diversity can be detected in their LP titles: ‘No Visa Required’, ‘Che Guava’s Rickshaw Diaries’ and recent album

‘Cubangla’. Funky Cuban tracks, such as ‘Gandinga, Mondongo y Sandunga’, ‘Habanera’ and ‘Aguanile Bonko’ sit aside Bengali stompers such as ‘Bhromor’ and ‘Lal Mete’. The first two ‘songs’ of the set build up slowly in the classic Afrobeat superstar Feta Kuti style (they have often played with Kuti-sidekick Dele Sosimi; some of the dynamic chops are bound to have sunk in), before they burst into joy. Exquisitely talented vocalist Sohini Alam then joins them and it steps up a gear. Lokkhi Terra manage to be both chilled and nicely atmospheric

for those weary workers sitting down in the comfy seats of the Cowley Worker’s Club after a long week’s work. However, once the enticing rhythms work their magic, it is virtually impossible to remain seated. They weave intricate sonic tapestries. It helps having both a drummer and multiple percussionists, meaning that a rhythmic pulse is present throughout; in addition truly wondrous things can be achieved with a six-string bass. They end with a bubbling cover of Duke Ellington’s ‘Caravan’, leaving a dazed and ecstatic crowd of Bossphonikans sated: for now at least.

Leo B

CAROLINE POLACHEK

O2 Academy

In the week that it’s been out, those of us who have been listening to Caroline Polachek’s latest LP ‘Desire, I Want To Turn Into You’ have found it typically excellent; she’s delivered us another slate of twisted love songs, appropriately weirdly situated, from the Bronze Age (the Nebra Sky Disc on ‘Hopedrunk Everasking’) to volcanos (‘Smoke’). But we didn’t know that on Sunday night, four days before its release, and when she declared her intention to perform the new record in full, the fear of the sophomore slump was struck into our hearts. Not for long. We need to get the voice thing out of the way. It turns out that yes, she does actually sound like that, which is a minor miracle to behold. I’m reaching for words like coloratura, which it turns out is apposite (she has recently written an aria for an Oliver Leith opera on the theme of the life of Kurt Cobain), but the larger point is that she has a very versatile instrument at her command, and one that is more than capable of realizing the breadth of her material. She fits over a 90s breakbeat (‘Fly To You’, with Dido and Grimes, sadly absent) as easily as with stadium rock redolent of the decade

before (‘Welcome To My Island’). Every time the audience think they’re getting a sense of where she’s going – oh, this is the ‘bangers’ portion of the concert (‘So Hot You’re Hurting My Feelings’, ‘Bunny Is A Rider’, ‘Sunset’) – she’ll set off in a completely different direction, like the plaintive psychedelic organ of ‘Butterfly Net’, or ‘Blood and Butter’, which she claims is an English pastoral, and indeed engages a harmonic landscape that would be at home on a dulcimer, or in the Garden of Jane Delawney. The high point is surely a nearly-a capella rendition of ‘Parachute.’ We’ve never heard the O2 so awed. There is much more worthy of mention. Opener Doss’ thumping and relentlessly fun hour of hyperpop on the decks, for one thing. I think there may have been an unreleased Yaeji track in the mix. (‘It’s the music,’ reads the LED screen behind her. Then, perhaps more to the point, ‘Drugs.’) I have not mentioned Polachek’s band, who acquit themselves of their task of producing a studio’s worth of synth crackles with aplomb; Maya Laner’s bass defies gravity all night long; even the lighting is immaculate. On the off chance there are still tickets for the rest of her European dates, go. **Shaw Worth**

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WHAT’S MY LINE?

A monthly look at jobs in local music.
This month it’s **MASTER RHYTHM’s** **DARREN HASSON-DAVIS** and he’s a **DRUM TEACHER.**

How long have you worked in this job?
“Drum teaching 22 years; other music services eight years.”
What is one thing you have to do as part of your job that the average person might not know?

“To have a space that people around the drums understand, or can’t hear.”
What’s been the single biggest highlight of your career so far?
“Providing lessons from Key Stage 2 through A levels with many families in Oxford.”

And the lowlight?
“Deciding to do lessons rather than go to my cousin’s wedding.”
How much and how did Covid affect your job?

“I was able to do lessons over video calls, which was a great way to stabilise normality.”
Who’s your favourite ever Oxford musical artist?
“I’m going to be biased but hopefully not cliquey here; I have been inspired by Osprey who has involved me working with so many bands over recent years and I’m very excited about the music of the band



MarysGarden who have reformed, and which I’m now drumming in.”
What’s the single most important piece advice you’d give to someone wanting to do your job?
“Share your passion and abilities; expect students to get better than you and find their own sound.”
Who’s the most awkward person you’ve ever had to deal with in your job?
“When I ran Yamaha drum classes in schools, an after-school class teacher decided not to like the classes.”
When was the last time you heard genius?
“Two days ago when someone called someone else a genius.”
Have you ever compromised your integrity in the course of your work?

“When I was teaching 90 students a week, I decided to build a studio in my back garden at the time and had 50 students a week coming to my house. It caused serious disruption to my neighbours and headline local news, but if I hadn’t done that, I wouldn’t have founded Master Rhythm Studios!”
Would you swap your job for any other and if so, what?
“Teaching was my full time occupation for many, many years. It’s become a part of what I do now. Emma Coombs from the band Death of the Maiden takes on new students for me at the moment, whilst I re-calibrate in other areas of life. I would never stop teaching but would like to focus on non-beginners.”
Are you rich?
“Financially stable. Improving on relationships.”
Do you consider your job glamorous?
“The inspiration of the lessons is glamorous. The evolution of the drum kit is rooted in American street entertainment and glamourised further by great British artists. However, I love teaching music notation and advanced rhythmic concepts, and how cross-movement opens up neural networks.”
What’s your favourite thing about Oxford’s music scene?
“In the 90s through to the 00s it was about the vastness of it, including the comradery of the people running venues. Today, it’s about the musicians that want to play, play, play.”

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Dr SHOTOVER: To(r)y Story

Ah, there you are, Young Jackfruit. Welcome to the East Indies Club bar. Pull up a pew and spring for a round, why don’t you? If this were the Tory Party you’d stump up a donation of a cool twenty thousand in order to sit with us, the inner circle, so count yourself lucky. Talking of the Tory Party, have you heard the latest? Apparently the next sequel of *Tory Story* will feature the voice of Rishi Sunak as Would-He, the old-fashioned pliable plaything, and Lee Anderson as Fuzz ShiteYear, the space-age new kid on the block. The former sees himself as embodying traditional poshboy Tory values (‘Thatcherism with Nice Trainers!’). The latter imagines he is the straight-talking voice of the right, embracing no-nonsense anti-wokery. (‘Hang the Poor!’). They are both wildly delusional, of course, as the Daily Vile readers are still wanting to vote for Mr Potato-Head, aka Boriolanus. Meanwhile sadly no-one, but NO-ONE takes Bo-Peep, aka Ms Truss-Fund, seriously, even though she really fancies her own spin-off franchise. Answers on a postcard please as to what that should be called. But now I invite you to raise your glasses and join me in a toast – To Insanity and Beyond!
Next month: The Lyin’ King vs Finding Tory



*Dishy-Rishy: ‘Gosh, it’s Teddy Heath! Welcome back, sir!’
Teddy H: ‘Where’s my European Common Market gone?’*

INTRODUCING....

BarrelHaus

Who are they?
BarrelHaus is a blues-rock duo from Oxfordshire made up of Ian Mitchell (*vocals/guitar*) and Marc Challans (*vocals/guitar/drums/production*). The pair previously played together in the bands Little Red and Master of Nothing. “We formed to see what would happen, just for fun really. As a band we’re barely toddlers. We had previously worked together on other projects but this is quite different; I think there’s more hope in this.” The pair’s debut single ‘Just Get On With It’ / ‘Self Help For The Helpless’ is out now with an album due in May.
What do they sound like?
Meaty, beaty, big and bouncy blues-rock with the emphasis on heavy-duty riffage, like an optimistic, melodic Queens Of The Stone-Age. Or, in their own words: “Cathartic fuzz over twisted little pop songs.”
What inspires them?
“The blues, heavy riffs, fuzz, feedback, Sabbath, melody and *volume*.”
Their career highlight so far is:
“Becoming musical toddlers; this is all very new, as we only have our first single out this month. Also writing the album, which is out in May, that was a lot of fun; we worked hard on making it the best it could be and we are really looking forward to its release and seeing what people think.”
And the lowlight:
“The inability to spend all day, every day making music; that’s the dream, though.”
Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:
“Difficult to choose just one, as Oxford has an incredible music scene but we guess if we had to pick, we were once fortunate enough to support Ghosts in the Photographs in one of our earlier projects, and



we were both blown away by what they were and are doing. Really looking forward to getting their new album.”
If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be:
“Black Sabbath – ‘Vol.4’”
When is their next local gig and what can newcomers expect?
“The Port Mahon on the 29th of April. Expect the drummer to look a lot like a small MP3 player and there to be a lot of riffs played at a very high volume.”
Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:
“So many good people, but the loss of venues is really sad.”
You might love them if you love:
Queens Of The Stone-Age; Black Sabbath; Fu Manchu; Tame Impala; John Spencer’s Blues Explosion.
Hear them here:
@barrelhausmusic on Twitter

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

20 YEARS AGO

Following the release of their second album, ‘My Elixir, My Poison’, artfully noisy buggers **Meanwhile, Back In Communist Russia** were the featured band in March 2003’s *Nightshift*. “Why is it deemed pretentious to make music like ours,” they asked. “We don’t sit down and say, ‘let’s make this really pretentious and intellectually challenging’. We do whatever we want to. Whether that makes us punk or not, it’s honest creativity. Do you think all those new rock revolution bands have a say in what they’re doing? Do the Vines sit there and say ‘we want this six-minute slow song as the next single’? Do they fuck! Their managers, label and the industry control them. There are many band today considered ‘cool’ who are pretentious and not as real as they seem. The Libertines are rich wasters who hang around the cool places in London. The Strokes are a cooler version of Menswear, who were a 90s version of The Bay City Rollers. Bands who spend all their time dumbing down, wearing ‘ironic’ rock band t-shirts and trying to get in the *NME*’s cool list by getting drunk in the right places can fuck off. Bands who do whatever they want regardless of a scene are the true punks and innovators.” Which pretty much told everyone. And this after the band had recently come second to **Kajagoogoo** in a Radio 1 poll to decide the worst band name of all time. They’d also reached the Top 10 of Peel’s Festive 50 and remain one of the most unique bands Oxford has produced, helping change the local musical

landscape immeasurably during their time together. Glowering purposefully atop the month’s demo reviews was a young bunch of newcomers called **Youthmovie Soundtrack Strategies**, here compared admiringly to Shellac, Slint and Cocteau Twins, and who, perhaps even more than **Meanwhile, Back In Communist Russia**, would go on to shape the future of Oxford music.

10 YEARS AGO

“We have carved out a dimension where whatever we do, or feel, or think, is right, simply because we created it that way,” proclaimed Grace Exley, frontwoman of the brilliant and bonkers **Goggenheim**, who graced the cover of March 2013’s *Nightshift*. They were a band very much in a league of their own when it came to strange, subversive music that cherry-picked jazz, psychedelia, funk, punk, disco, Krautrock, pop and plenty more and who were the most flamboyantly fun band in town. Seriously, what we’d give to see them reform, even if just for one show. Among this month’s releases was the now classic ‘Tales From Terra Firma’ by Stornoway, another band who we’ve dreamed of reforming since they bid us farewell, and who fulfil that wish next month. Time for a celebratory drink or two. Talking of shows, among the highlights of the gig calendar were **Johnny Marr**, **Jessie Ware**, **Gabrielle Aplin**, **Palma Violets** and **Bastille**, all at **The O2 Academy**, while flying the flag for local music were **Deer Chicago**, **ToLiesel**, **X-1**, **Jordan**

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

O’Shea, Welcome To Peepworld and the oddly-monikered **Who Put Bella In the Witch Elm?** Answer to that question and whatever happened to some of those other bands on a postcard, please.

5 YEARS AGO

There was once an unwritten *Nightshift* rule that you could only have three front covers. **Desert Storm** are one of a select number of acts to breach that rule (test yourself to name the other two, trivia fans!). But then it’d take more than a few fanciful rules to stand up to Desert Storm’s breaching. The local rock behemoths were celebrating the release of their album ‘Sentinels’ and set to head off on another UK and European tour. “We don’t think many people realise how much it costs being in a band, both financially and on your personal life,” they declared, while chatting fondly about their barnstorming set at the previous year’s **Common People** festival; “When you’re on a bill with Sean Paul and Groove Armada you have to be heavier and more brutal than you’ve ever been,” they said, and they weren’t wrong. This month’s Introducing act were now-local-faves **Self Help**, while Oxford releases included **Death of the Maiden**’s ‘Soldier’, **Low Island**’s ‘Other Life’ and **Molly Davis**’ ‘My Buoy’, while on the live front we had **The Blockheads**, **Sleeper** and **Space** at the **O2 Academy**; **Gwenno**, **Mungo’s Hi-Fi** and a briefly reformed **Youthmovies** at **The Bullingdon**, and **Husky Loops**, **Saint Agnes** and **The White Lakes** at **The Cellar**.

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TRACKS
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TOP TRACK

GO LEEMA

Older readers and those with discerning taste will remember one-time local electronic music stars Maiians, who burned briefly but very brightly in the Noughties before scattering to the four corners of the world. Matt Goolding, one of two drummers in the band, has stuck around town though and is now making music by himself under the name Go Leema. Perhaps unsurprisingly percussion plays an important part in his solo stuff, even if it's a near-ambient journey into electronic textures. Take the sporadic tumbling toms on 'Dozer', an eight-minute high point of the selection of tracks he's sent us, or the relentlessly rhythmic nature of the piece, which pulses and stabs elegantly but forcefully across the great starry swirl of the galaxy, conjuring visions of shadows and spectres as it goes, as sleek and subtly propulsive as a starliner. It's minimalist music but fills the room and leaves a strange silent void when it finishes. Amid this month's pile of tracks that too often sputter and start and fail to achieve the melody or power they strive for it sounds like an effortless slice of musical finesse. So there you go Matt: top of the pile with room to spare, and if you can persuade your erstwhile bandmates to reconvene in Oxford and play some more gigs for us we'll stick you atop the pile every month from now til Christmas, there's a good lad.

MARTIAL DARE

Possibly chums of Private Parts and General Malaise, Martial Dare are a three-piece band whose singer, Tash, is pictured here lying atop a fridge freezer for reasons we're too inartistic to fathom. Their song, 'Dirt Track', however, is pleasingly easy to like, initially at least. Pensive and resolute in keeping its powder dry it treads closely in PJ Harvey's footsteps, but as we wait for it to blow up a bit or ratchet the tension higher, it's tends to fuzz and fizz outward but not upwards, sounding a bit tinny when it needs to be dense and ominous. Tash keeps things witchy

vocally but the guitars shimmer and flutter unthreateningly, lacking real punch, only at the very death getting their grunge on, which is what we kind of expected but needed sooner rather than later. It's neat enough but really needs to explode or blossom to fulfil its early promise. And this being Spotify, as soon as it finishes, we get Polly Jean and 'The Sky Lit Up', maybe by way of reminder of what we had hoped for.

THE ASSIST

Another song that isn't particularly dislikeable but you wish would do something a bit more as it bounces its merry way from start to finish. We've taken a critical hatchet to The Assist in a previous review we seem to remember but this song, 'Better Days', isn't too bad, with a sense of optimism about it, but it does fall into that post-Arctic Monkeys hole vocally with a singer dispensing School of Life philosophy with an accent that's doubtless genuine but does sound a bit like Kevin & Perry's teenage attempts to speak like Mancunian scallies. Running the gamut of blokey rock from Reverend & the Makers to The Skinner Brothers and several stops in between, it avoids a bludgeoning by dint of hinting spring might be on its way musically. Seems The Assist really did catch us on one of our Better Days. Next time we might not be so lenient.

TIVERTONS

Though of course, what we need right after a dose of blokey indie rock is another dose of blokey indie rock, though this time without an ounce of subtlety or a decent melody, just some basic guitar chords and a slightly gruff sub-Liam fella hollerin' with all the élan of a wild boar that stood on a Lego brick in the middle of the night. Oh, hang on a minute, there is a bit of a tune in that guitar solo. Sadly the tune in question is 'Some Might Say'. Geography-loving readers might recognise Tiverton as the name of a small town in Devon. Maybe Tivertons the band could move there. Permanently. Or at least until we say they're allowed out, which amounts to the same thing if they keep producing music like this.

THVNDERHEAD

There's nothing like a slab of metal to cleanse the palate after too much cloying bloke rock and right on cue come Thvnderhead with a seven-minute-plus track called 'Furthur' (*sic*), the band having had to use a random v in their name after the u accidentally ended up in the track title. They describe themselves as a progressive metal band but we still hope

they'll clean us out like a breezeblock with a can of Fabreze taped to it. They're rather more prog than metal though on this evidence and it takes nearly two minutes before the big churny riffage kicks in, and even then they're prone to dipping back into more contemplative waters after several more minutes. We sort of hoped for some ogreish vocals too but this is an instrumental, and as it variously thunders and drifts along, all dense, carefully hewn textures, it feels more like part of something bigger than a stand-alone track. In fact the band do mention it's a precursor to a full LP, hopefully a concept album about Balrogs, Valhalla and vodka. In the meantime this is decent enough in a heavyweight way but not something you'd ride into battle to.

BEVS

Another about turn in musical flavour with some jazzy hip hop here from Witney born-and-raised, Bristol-resident rapper Bevs who's previously worked alongside electro duo The Subtheory. On his track 'Happiness' Bevs offers woozily lightweight, brassy hip hop beneath a nicely breathless flow of rhymes that counterpoint each other well – urgent and laconic at the same time. It's reminiscent of early jazz-rap acts like Digable Planets or even De la Soul at times, though it might benefit from a slightly sparkier melody to lift it from good to great.

GLASS TEMPLES

A brother-and-sister-led trio formed during Covid lockdown, inspired by the likes of Wolf Alice, London Grammar and Nothing But Thieves, Glass Temples conjure a decent amount of epic on their track 'Changing the Tide', the fulsome swells of instrumentation matching singer Zoe Smith's questing vocals at each stage, so the song has the feeling of a strong, steady tidal surge. If the lyrics sometimes fall into 'moon-in-June' territory, Zoe properly belts them out with an understated power that never veers too far into overwrought power balladry territory, and if there's a bit of a bedroom-bound feel to the song (dare we say sterility?) hopefully a few gigs will help the trio expand their sound into something a bit more organic and become the band this offering suggests they're capable of being.

SIMON MEAKIN

Simon Meakin is better known as the hangdog head boy of local folksters Beware This Boy, purveyors of sometimes doleful political ballads told from a

personal perspective. With his bandmates now either departed or working all hours God sends, he's gone solo for his latest song, 'The Old English Oak of London Town'. There's no great shift in tone or style though as he strums purposefully and laments rather than sings a story of a tree growing in the centre of a city, seeing its environs change immeasurably as 500 years pass. In some ways it's almost a metaphor for Simon's own music, stood solid in its traditions, steadfast in the face of uncertainty and changing fashions, and for all its woebegone surface appearance it's really a song of hope. And we hope Simon can get a new band around him and get back to gigging because his songs and stories make him a good guy to have around.

TOILET TRACK

THE LUNAR KEYS

Any remaining doubts that *Nightshift* are irrevocable bastards should be laid to rest as we flush The Lunar Keys firmly down the Toilet for their song 'Maniac'. Why? Because it, like all their previous songs, is in aid of charity, so were probably denying an orphaned toddler vital surgery by panning the band, but frankly sod the band and sod the orphaned toddler, because this is intolerable bilge. The song is apparently about "someone you know that preys on your vulnerabilities and gaslights you. Someone that invokes the maniac inside of you." And by thunder this makes us want to run riot with heavy blunt weaponry. Musically it's bogstandard bluesy rocking of little discernible distinction, dusted, or rather ladled, with overwrought power ballad vocals that sound, as ever in these cases, like someone straining on the toilet as they evacuate the words into the world. Mostly by dint of the repeated song title in the lyrics we're reminded of Michael Sembello's grotesque mid-80s contribution to the *Flashdance* soundtrack; if that movie was about Jennifer Beals striving for dancefloor grace and poise, this song is more akin to a mortally wounded cephalopod thrashing about inside a dumpster while a herd of burning heifers bellow their displeasure by way of a soundtrack. Good grief, guys: burning cattle, dying octopi and tragic toddlers, do you see what you've made us think about? The raging lack of empathy and compassion you've dredged up in us? This is on you, not us. Now pass us that hammer and we'll put everyone out of your misery.

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00'S EMO ANTHEMS

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THE BULLINGDON, OXFORD

NOBLE JACKS

FRI~17~MAR~23

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JERICO TAVERN, OXFORD

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THE BULLINGDON, OXFORD

BLACK HONEY

FRI~14~APR~23

THE BULLINGDON, OXFORD

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WINNERS**

SAT~07~OCT~23

O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD

**THE ELECTRIC
SWING CIRCUS**

THU~23~MAR~23

THE BULLINGDON, OXFORD

**THE UNDERCOVER
HIPPI**

WED~19~APR~23

O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD

TRAGEDY

SAT~11~NOV~23

O2 ACADEMY, OXFORD

THE DUALERS

& // ZAIA, DJ TONY NANTON

FRI~31~MAR~23

O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD

DESERT STORM

'DEATH RATTLE' - ALBUM LAUNCH
& // INHUMAN NATURE, DRAMA KIDS,
THUUM, UNDERBELLY

FRI~21~APR~23

O2 ACADEMY2, OXFORD

GEMMA HAYES

SAT~10~FEB~24

O2 ACADEMY, OXFORD

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