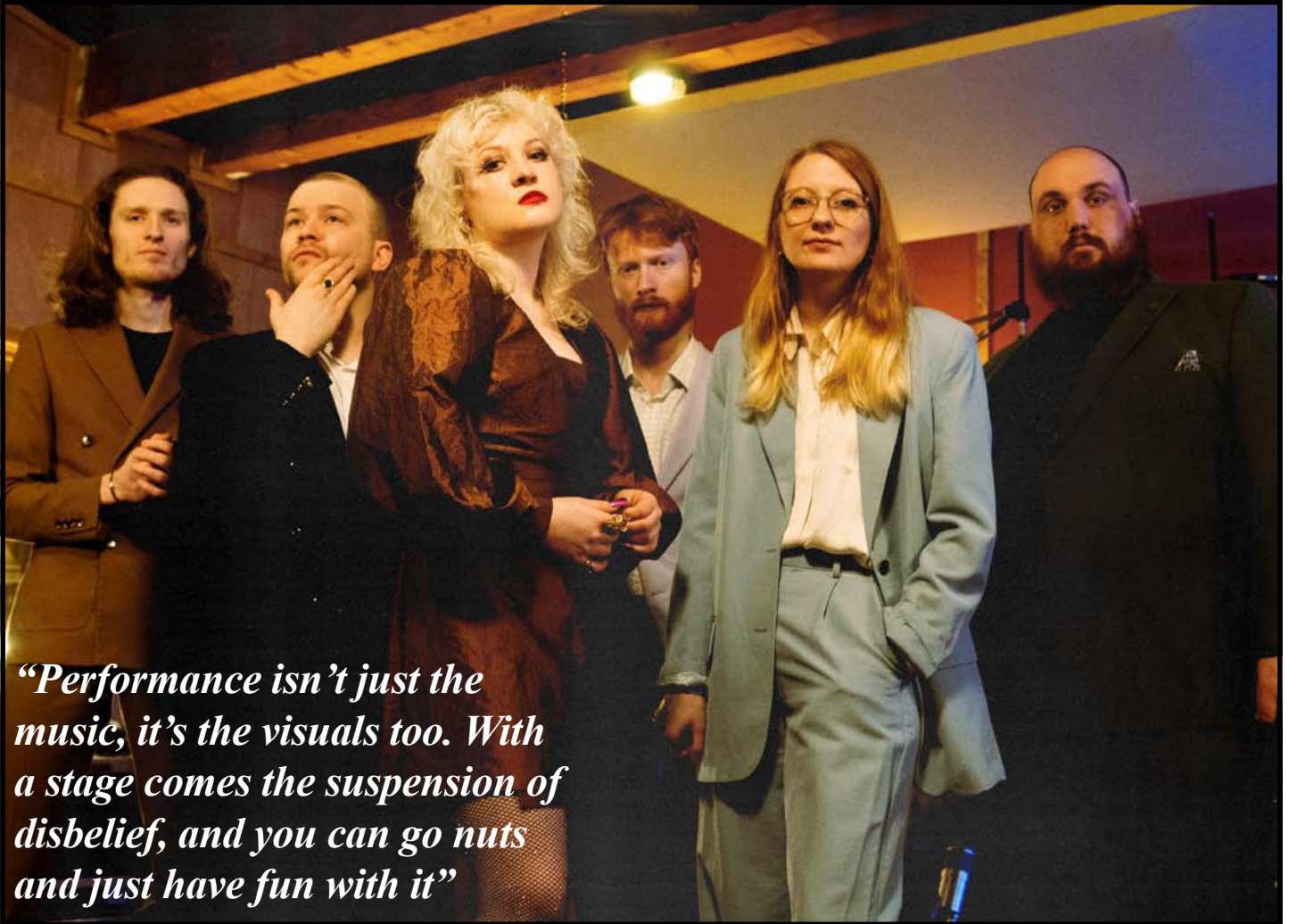


NIGHTSHIFT

Free every
month
Issue 318
May
2023

Oxford's Music Magazine

photo: Jamie Lee Cuiher



“Performance isn’t just the music, it’s the visuals too. With a stage comes the suspension of disbelief, and you can go nuts and just have fun with it”

The People Versus

Pizzazz, persistence and perfect pop from Oxford's rising stars

Also in this issue:

STORNOWAY return!
Introducing **THE BOBO**
At work with **OCM**

plus

All your Oxford music news, previews and reviews and four pages of local gigs for May

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THE BULLINGDON

MAY 2023

GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Monday 1st May
May Day After Party
Doors: 6PM

Tuesday 2nd May
Little Clarendon
Izzy and Martha
Little Clarendon Friends
Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 3rd May
Billy Locket
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 4th May
Halina Rice
Immersive Liveset and AV
Doors: 7PM

Friday 5th May
Noble Jacks
Doors: 7PM

Friday 5th May
UKING (G)
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 6th May
Dancing King ?Q?U?E?E?N?
The Abba Disco
Doors: 11PM

Thursday 11th May
Therapy?
Doors: 7PM

Friday 12th May
The Last Dinner Party
Doors: 7PM

Friday 12th May
The Bully Boiler
Blowing Off the Steam...
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 13th May
Musical Medicine
Mr. Scruff
Doors: 11PM

Thursday 18th May
Tiff Stevenson:
Sexy Brain
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 18th May
Indie Discoteque
Doors: 11PM

Friday 19th May
Black Tish
Doors: 7PM

Friday 19th May
Soul Sista
Summer of Love
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 20th May
Basic
Girls Don't Sync
Doors: 11PM

Sunday 21st May
Gary Delaney:
Gary in Punderland
Doors: 7PM

Monday 22nd May
BC Camplight
Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 24th May
Pete Boss & Matt Edwards
Doors: 7PM

Friday 26th May
Mista Trick Collective
Doors: 7PM

Friday 26th May
The Bully Boiler
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 27th May
Terraforms
Celebrating 15 Years
Logistics + DJ Storm
Doors: 11PM

Friday 2nd June
Come Grime with Me
Doors: 11PM

Sunday 4th June
Chuck Prophet
Doors: 7PM

Friday 9th June
Soul Sista
Summer Loving
Doors: 11PM

Monday 12th June
The Oxford Imps
End of Term Extravaganza
Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 13th June
Fluorescent Adolescent
Doors: 11PM

Saturday 17th June
Simple
Object Blue & TVSI
Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 21st June
Wunderhorse
Eads
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 22nd June
Alison Russell
Doors: 7PM

Friday 23rd June
Pearl Handled Revolver
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 1st July
Party Time Again
Celebrity International
Likkle Platinum + Kirky Vibes
Empire Sound
DJ White Magic
Doors: 11PM

Thursday 13th July
James Oliver
Doors: 7PM

Friday 14th July
Front Row Festival
Candid
Silvi
La Phooka
Velvet Starlings
Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 19th July
Rev Peyton's
Big Damn Band
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 22nd July
Reggaeton Party
Doors: 11PM

Friday 28th July
Ang Grupong Pendong
Doors: 5PM

Saturday 29th July
Terraforms
Twisted Individual
Doors: 11PM

Friday 11th August
Space Elevator
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 19th August
Special Kinda Madness
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 19th August
Reggaeton Party
Doors: 11PM

Friday 25th August
Audio Friends
3LIAS
Maxquerade
Marble Sun
Nazz
Doors: 11PM

Friday 8th September
Richard Marriott
& Chris Jordan
Doors: 7PM

Friday 15th September
Badly Drawn Boy
Doors: 7PM

Friday 22nd September
Darren Harriott *Roadman*
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 30th September
Rawdio
Doors: 11PM

Sunday 8th October
Coach Party
Doors: 7PM

Friday 13th October
The Style Councillors
Doors: 7PM

Sunday 15th October
John Kearns:
The Varnishing Days
Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 18th October
Dom Martin Band
Delta Fuse
Doors: 7PM

Friday 20th October
Cut Capers
Doors: 7PM

NEWS



THE DAISIES are set to reform for this year's **Charlbury Riverside Festival**.

The band, one of the most popular acts in Oxford in the early and mid-1990s, and famously the first band ever to play at The Zodiac when it opened in 1995, split in 1998 having released one album, 'Kowloon House', and toured America; the core of the band, led by singer and guitarist Jamie Hyatt, went on to become Medal, who signed to Polydor.

This year's Riverside takes place over the weekend of the **29th-30th July**. Talking to *Nightshift* about the reunion, Jamie, who these days fronts the band Bedd as well as running Glasshouse Studios, said: "Lee Christian who runs the second stage at Riverside has been nagging us for years to play. We thought, why not. We've all kept in touch and have been chatting on WhatsApp about the old days and about what we're doing in life now. I don't remember the old songs at all and as I don't own any physical copies of our album and singles. I've been trying to work out the songs from YouTube where a version of 'Kowloon House' resides. It'll be pretty scruffy but hopefully fun. We're just planning on playing this one show, to get together and hang out as much as anything else. Hopefully there will be a few people in the crowd to help me out with the words."

The weekend will also see a one-off reunion for **Smilex**, fronted by Lee Christian. Among the acts joining them on the Quickfix Stage will be last year's headliner Sonny Eriksson, Critter Cabal, Toronto's Blackout Orchestra, Gigsy and Chiika, while the main stage sees performances from Desert Storm; The Mighty Redox; Tiger Mendoza; Beard of Destiny; Dolly Mavies; Bedd and WALL among many others with over 50 acts playing across three stages. Visit riversidefestival.charlbury.com

KANADIA headline this year's **Glofest in Florence Park**. The local rockers top the bill on **Saturday the 17th June** where they'll be joined by Jody & The Jerms and Souled Out as well as DJ James Ussher. More acts are set to be confirmed. The volunteer-run community festival is a ticketed event which takes place in the evening following a free family day, Flofest. Advance tickets, priced £7, are on sale now from Wegotickets.com.

GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS are among a host of Oxford acts set to play this month's **Are You Listening?** festival in Reading. The post-rock trio and recent *Nightshift* cover stars who released their debut album 'This Is Forever' in March, join The Bobo, Chiika, Tiece & The Pieces, Mila Todd and Kid Kin on the line-up at the multi-venue event on Saturday the 6th May. The day, which features over 70 acts across nine venues, is headlined by Black Honey, Thomas Headon, and Jeffrey Lewis & the Voltage. Tickets and full line-up at areyoulistening.org.uk.

WITNEY MUSIC FESTIVAL returns this month. The two-week festival takes place at various venues across the town from the **26th May – 10th June**, culminating in the traditional concert on The Leys. This year's final day headliners are dance music duo **Phats & Small**. They'll be joined on the main stage on Saturday 10th June by Happy Mondays' Bez, playing a DJ set, as well as a live PA from Rowetta. The show kicks off at midday with sets from Jilted Generation, The Skadinals, Sons of the Seventies, The Subtheory, The Scott Gordon Band and more. Friday's Leys show is topped by The Marley Experience, who'll be joined by Dolly Mavies and Fallen Angels among others. Full festival line-up details will be announced soon.

THE CORNERMEN release a charity EP this month. 'In This Together' is released via Plastic Head. The band formed at the Cornermen Support Service, which began in Moreton Boxing Club last year to help with men's mental health and suicide prevention. All money from the record will go back into the charity. More information at thecornermenmusic.com



BRIAN BRIGGS has been talking about **STORNOWAY's** reunion and forthcoming new album.

The band announced their full-time comeback on the 13th April, revealed a brand new single, '**Trouble With The Green**', and with the news they will release their fourth album, '**Dig The Mountain**' on the **8th September**. Subsequently the band announced an autumn tour of the UK with a date at **Oxford Town Hall on Saturday 21st October**.

Stornoway split in 2016 following an emotionally-charged and sold-out show at The New Theatre having released three albums since they formed in 2006. Their debut album, 'Beachcomber's Windowsill' was named Best Oxford Album in a vote conducted by Truck Store in 2022.

"The pandemic gave me a chance to pick up my guitar, and I found myself writing music again," explained Brian, talking to *Nightshift* in the wake of the announcement. "It was a hugely inspiring time and rediscovering songwriting has been the most exciting thing to happen to me for years. I sent some demos to Jon in the hopes that he might be up for having a play with the arrangements and unsurprisingly it started to sound a lot like Stornoway. We'd kept in touch and had been meeting up annually for a private gig in London, which kept reminding us how much we missed performing with each other too.

"Sadly there will be no Rob this time though; he is pursuing his own musical adventure, Kritters, and spends much of his time in the USA. The amazing Oxford drummer Felix Higginbottom from Low Island will be joining us live.

"The songs were written before even the idea of a Stornoway reunion was discussed, and without any plans for the music. The songwriting was driven purely by the joy of creating – the freedom and adventure it provided – and consequently it's a very playful album. We had a huge amount of fun making this music, with a wide range of instrumentation and textures. Perhaps because it started as a solo thing, there is plenty of vocal harmony because that was an instrument I could easily experiment with. The involvement of Mike Lindsay (Tunng/Laura Marling) added more sonic wonk; he pushed us out of our comfort zones with his own sense of adventure bringing elements of the mix closer, and adding a range of vintage effects. We also enjoyed collaborating with other musicians, Fyfe Dangerfield, Sam Lee and Yi Jia, who contributed vocals, and poet Paul Henry contributed lyrics.

"We chose the Town Hall for its uniqueness and beauty; it's a stunning venue and probably the most atmospheric of the larger Oxford venues, with the exception of the Sheldonian. We had an amazing time playing there on our 'Tales From Terra Firma' tour and can't wait to go back. We're hoping we might even persuade Jon to play some organ again..."

MARK WILDEN returns to Truck Store to host his free open legal surgery for local bands again this month. The intellectual copyright barrister and musician will be on hand to answer any legal or copyright questions from artists on Friday 12th May from 4-6pm.

BBC INTRODUCING IN OXFORD continues to showcase local musical talent for now, every Saturday between 8-9pm on 95.2fm and on DAB. The show, presented by Dave Gilyeat, is available to listen to online on BBC Sounds.



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BITTER PILL **BIG DECK ENERGY** MONTHLY DNB
18.05 15.06 20.07

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Dick Edwards.

A quiet word with

The People Versus

photo: Jamie Lee Cuhner



“I’D LOVE TO THINK WE have a sense of pizzazz, that’s showbiz baby! But I’m slightly saddened at how us dressing up a bit made us stand out so much. I like to think performance isn’t just the music, it’s the visuals too that stick with people. With a stage comes the suspension of disbelief, and you can go nuts and just have fun with it.”

SO SAYS ALICE EDWARDS, talking to *Nightshift* about the singer’s stage presence, one that had us previously describe them as “like Cyndi Lauper channeling Marilyn Monroe” after witnessing The People Versus live for the first time. As Alice says, a sense of glamour and pizzazz shouldn’t be a talking point in music but The People Versus are an enthralling spectacle and Alice is a real presence onstage. And that presence is about to be noticed far beyond Oxford as The People Versus have been selected to play at the North By North East music festival in Toronto in June, an international showcase event that rivals Houston Texas’ South X South West as a place for aspiring stars to get noticed on an industry level.

THE PEOPLE VERSUS formed a few years back when guitarist Jack Wilkinson, then living in London, decided to form a band “to avoid doing my degree.” The musicians he recruited subsequently told him he “wasn’t a good enough vocalist to be a lead singer” and so he advertised again. Ten people

responded. Alice’s was the second audition and “we cancelled the other eight.” After that band split up, Jack and Alice, by now living in Oxford, decided to try out a new song Alice had written at the popular open mic session at The Harcourt Arms in Jericho. Here they met and recruited keyboard player Danny Evans and roped in cellist Ben Crone from the previous band. Later they “told” drummer Owen Stepney he was in the band (“We don’t think he realised he could say no”), and most recently recruited Cathy Ife on bass. Subsequently the band have released a string of singles and a live EP, culminating in March’s gloriously cynical but summery ‘Pretty Words’, which sees The People Versus completing the shift from their earlier folk-pop sound to a more elaborate and celebratory style of electronic pop.

AT THE END OF THIS MONTH the sextet will play a brace of shows at The Jericho Tavern to help fund their trip to Canada. The first show sold out in a matter of hours with the second added straight away. Being picked to play NXNE is a huge deal for any unsigned band but getting the gig is typical of The People Versus’ go-get-‘em attitude to making things happen, as Jack explains. “I do nerdy case studies on bands which have had successes I want for The People Verses and NXNE kept coming up. It’s a bit like a

wedding fair but instead of couples getting married it’s mostly attended by bands and industry people. We don’t know how many times we’re playing over there but we’ve been working hard behind the scenes to maximise the opportunities we get. Our manager Oli has been working hard lining up meetings”

THAT THE FIRST NIGHT OF the fundraiser sold out so quickly is testament to The People Versus’ incredibly loyal fanbase.

Danny: “We’re very grateful for all those people who come to watch us and then come again with five friends in tow. We’ve got the best fans. We’ve recently been made into Funko-Pops by one of our most supportive fans, Robyn; if that’s not above and beyond I don’t know what is.” The fundraiser gigs show, though, that it’s not easy being a self-financing indie band in this day and age; how are small bands meant to get their feet on the ladder in an age where record label deals barely exist and streaming pays less than a pittance? Jack: “I wish I knew! The advice I’ve been building our strategy off is that it’s a lot easier to have lots of tiny income streams than it is to turn one income stream into a salary for six people. That said, I think the only way to stay sane is to be in a band because you have to be and if the money comes that’s great, congratulations! But if you are looking for fame and money there

are much faster, more economical ways than being in a band.” And despite the prestigious nature of NXNE, it won’t be The People Versus’ first foray abroad to perform. Alice: “We went to do some shows in Denmark, with Takk Andreas and Hanne. It was fantastic, the gig culture over there is quite different: healthy government funding, a greater onus on the venue rather than the artist to sell tickets, and they fed us dinner before each show. We were so surprised and thankful at every turn; I worry though that we rather scared our friends away from ever performing in the UK.”

AS MENTIONED, ALICE was the second singer to audition for Jack’s band and all the other auditions were subsequently cancelled. Alice really is an exceptional vocalist as well as a great performer, possessed of a wonderfully crystalline, mellifluous voice that reminds us at times of the hugely underrated Kate Jackson, formerly of the brilliant Long Blondes. We wonder what it was that struck Jack about Alice’s voice. “If I could put it into words my pitch writing would be much better than it is. But that is just it, I can’t. I’d heard people talk about how voices moved them before but I’d never been in the same room as one on the next microphone. I think it’s like when you meet anyone who has something a bit special at their craft, the room goes quiet. I knew my instincts were right the first time we performed together at an open mic and you could hear a pin drop in a busy pub.” For their part, Alice replied to the ad as it was “the only one that didn’t seem creepy.”

“It can be tricky to get a read on people via listings websites; a lot of people simply lie about things; it’s the internet, *c’est la vie*. If you’re a man making contact with a woman over the internet do suggest meeting in a public space, instead of your house where there is limited public transport, at night. Regardless, I was looking for people to collaborate with as I’d hit a wall, and I knew that working with other musicians would really challenge me and help me grow. I could tell that Jack was committed and serious about starting something worthwhile, and from the clips of him performing live I could tell that his vibe would complement mine and hopefully vice versa!”

AND SO THE FOUNDATION of The People Versus were laid. But it wasn’t until Jack and Alice moved to Oxford – where Jack’s family live – that the band fully came together at The Harcourt Arms, a special place for them.

Danny: “I think one of the main reasons why the Oxford music scene is so strong currently is its wealth of open mics. You’ve got to start somewhere. For us, The Harcourt Arms and its open mic really helped, not only in meeting each other, but also developing and growing, and partying obviously. It’s like a second home and Ian the landlord is always really supportive of us, as he is with all the other musicians who come through his doors.”

The People Versus have also found their sound. ‘Pretty Words’ and last year’s single ‘Again & Again’, which found them compared favourably to The Sundays and Alvvays, have marked them out as one of the best new pop acts around and all the evidence suggests they’re only going to get even better. How did their sound evolve? Their earliest material was more folk-leaning and they’ve moved towards a more electronic and pop sound since with Ben’s cello adding real gravitas to songs; is that deliberate or just natural progression?

Alice: “It was both a deliberate move and a natural progression. I started as a teen singing into my laptop with an acoustic guitar, very folk and folklore inspired; it is and always will be a passion of mine. But that’s not really the music I listened to, and the first order of business was to find people to help me rock it up. It was the pandemic that really pushed us more electronic; Jack wanted to learn more production skills and sent me instrumental tracks that I sang over and sent back. It was our only real option locked down 40 miles away from each other.”

THE PANDEMIC WAS particularly trying for the band with not only shows cancelled and having to write virtually but also Jack getting a cancer diagnosis. How do the band look back at that period now and do they feel it made them stronger?

Jack: “It certainly set our expectations. I am still surprised when I get replies to my emails with positivity and plans rather than ‘we’d love to innit, but covid’, or ‘this person is on furlough’ auto responders. Without going into too much nasty detail, being in a bed with tubes in your neck, meaning you can’t sit up, sure as hell helps you get your priorities in order. The nature of treatment during a

pandemic meant I had a lot of time alone, part of it in a literal lead-lined room. The upside is it is one good way to really light the fire for what you want. Nothing like gut wrenching fear to illustrate the trivial and light up the path.”

And light up the path The People Versus do musically. Their music feels so ebullient even when it’s emotional; is that a reflection of their characters and approach to life?

Alice: “I certainly try to look for the joy in the everyday, I think it’s so easy to fall into focusing on the negative that making an effort to look on the bright side is something I strive for. I love having feelings;

“I just have such a love of the entire concept of narrative; I can and will project a narrative onto anything.”

I love sad creepy chords; I love the dramatic and theatrical; I think that your attitudes and spirit really does get reflected in any creative work you do. Jack insists on using major chords far too often, but I have to let him have some. But also, when we perform we love to have fun, and we love the crowd to have fun with us.”

The band’s song ‘Lonely Teen’ feels particularly poignant and personal, a rare moment of obvious reflection in their live set.

Alice: “I’d just had a rather deep phone call with a friend discussing how she communicated with her parents about her mental health, when in her culture it’s very much a non-topic. Then I had a rather deep conversation with my parents about going on antidepressants and about how it would help my mental health. Then I had another rather deep phone call supporting another close friend about his coming out to his parents. It was quite a heavy afternoon... I wrote the lyrics that night thinking how a problem shared isn’t always a problem halved, but being a supportive voice can make such a powerful difference. Really, the whole track is me desperately trying to make sure my friends know how much I love them.”

By their own admission, at school Alice was the kid with their nose buried in books – particularly fairytales and folklore, both of which remains a big influence on their lyrics and singing. “Reading and enjoying stories, and then thinking critically about them and generally being completely lost in my own thoughts for long stretches of time, I just have such a love of the entire concept of narrative; I can and will project a

narrative onto anything. In every song I write, there is a whole essay I’ve written to myself as to keeping the story consistent in my universe, so whenever I perform I think of the same things at the same times. I think that consistency and conviction is something people can pick up on and find engaging, even if they can’t put their finger on why, let alone what I’m singing.”

MUCH OF WHAT THE People Versus have achieved so far, including recruiting members, the NXNE shows and also persuading Stornoway’s Oli Steadman to manage them, has come from simply being prepared to ask or

badger people, something Jack in particular excels at; what single piece of advice would he give to a new young artist coming up and wanting to make a mark?

“My mum says continuously ‘if you don’t ask, you don’t get.’ That, combined with a sense of guilt if I’m idle for too long means I send a lot of emails. My advice I think would be that one well researched email with a name, relevant opportunity pitch and some information that shows you’ve taken the time to actually reach out and have done your research rather than a copy and paste email you’re sending to a thousand other contacts goes a long way. That and polite follow-ups. It took me realising that someone offering us a festival slot had literally fallen out of my inbox by accident before I realised how important follow ups are. They aren’t ignoring you, there are just a lot of people asking for their attention.”

How did Oli get to be involved with the band?

Jack: “I didn’t give him much of a choice. I cornered him at Truck whilst he was doing an interview with BBC Introducing Oxford’s Dave Gilyeat and didn’t really give him the option of saying no. I hope he is working with us out of love rather than fear... Oli has been amazing with us, a steady hand in frantic times and a fountain of information and guidance. He also takes excellent jumpy footage at gigs when it gets lively.” And the band are set to work with Charlie Andrew, who’s produced Alt.j and Wolf Alice, later this year; how did that come about? Jack: “For another interview we did, Alice answered that her favourite album was ‘An Awesome

Wave’, which prompted me to do some research on the personnel involved as we’re always trying to work with new people to learn more about what we do. I found out the producer was Charlie and doing some deep diving into discographies I saw that he’d worked with a friend in London! After some introductions and emailing of management we convinced him to come down to Beam Me Up festival and after seeing we knew which way to hold the instruments we got some dates in the diary!” You played Truck Festival last summer; how was that and what festivals have you got lined up for this summer?

Danny: “Truck was great, especially as it’s the local big one. The Introducing tent was always packed which is great for all these bands playing this festival for the first time. Some people even came over from Sweden to see us. We’ll have to try to play a festival here this year to return the favour! This year we’re excited to be playing Underneath the Stars and some others we don’t know if we’re allowed to say yet!”

And of course NXNE in June; what’s one thing The People Versus are most looking forward to seeing or doing in Canada aside from playing? And if one Canadian artist could come and watch them play, who would they like it to be?

Jack: “I think we’re only about an hour and a half away from Niagara falls, so that’s on my list. I think my gut reaction was Neil Young, but I have a feeling we’d only irritate him, so I’m gonna go for Peach Pit; we’d love to open for them on a tour. Incredible band.”

WITH SO MUCH TO LOOK forward to and such an optimistic outlook to musical life, 2023 is set to be a great year for The People Versus, but before we let them go off and enjoy it all, on the subject of that band name: who would they most want to fight and who’d win? Jack: “We’d fight people who misspell The People Versus and they’d win because there seems to be millions of them. This is not against people who call us The People Verses, no problems there. Cute pun. This is against the people that despite the fact that it is three common English words still manage to misspell them. With people like Khruangbin on the line up spelled correctly. A personal favourite was “The Pereople Venues”

The People Versus play at The Jericho Tavern on Saturday 27th and Sundy 28th May. Visit thepeopleversusmusic.com for news and music.

RELEASED

MILA TODD

‘Death To The Operator’

(Self released)

“Throw the hatred out of my mind but it’s a losing fight,” sings Mila Todd on her new EP’s opening salvo ‘Dress Code’. Ethereal strings immediately create an uncomfortable ambience, mutated bass drums kick in before the beautiful vocals weave in and out of the ghostly sonics, organised noise and hypnotic soundscapes. There is a lot of space between the vocals that is never wasted and when the hook kicks in, it is understated and powerful; “Violence is not the way but today that’s how I wanna communicate” is a lyric that is very relatable and stays with you long after the track is over.

‘Dolls Dream’ begins with scattershot programmed percussion before Mila’s treated vocals creep into the atmosphere; brilliant polyrhythmic drum programming and a delicate, mournful, plucked keyboard motif weaves a fractured spell, whilst the drums pummel in and out of the bruised, heartbreak, hardcore creation. The often indecipherable lyrics on the track have a Martina Topley Bird feel about them, throwing out ghostly, anguished moans, hurts, and defiance.

Closing the EP is title track, ‘Death To The Operator’, an instrumental, full of mashed sounds heaped on top of one another, with a



nocturnal, unruly energy. There is a general unease here that shapeshifts by turns into mischievous, playful inventiveness and seismic electronica hybrids.

Anger is either repressed or expressed. Repression is a denial of reality, and we know that anything repressed goes inward, where it turns to poison. We have a tendency to reduce creativity to attractive things, with very little meaning. This is not happening with Mila Todd’s EP, instead she is making art as a response to injustice, creating things as a way to change the world. Nina Simone asked “Are you ready to burn buildings?” Mila Todd most definitely is, and we should be grateful for it. **Lester Sideye**

PECO

‘Amnesia’s Ritual’

(Upcycled Sounds)

Sonically, ‘Amnesia’s Ritual’, Pecq’s brilliant new EP, is an amalgamation of all that we know and love from the duo: DIY beats, dreamy soundscapes, and powerful vocals. Thematically, though, the release transcends their entire discography: a raw, unapologetic interrogation of grief prompted by the loss of a close friend; the EP fosters an impassioned depth near-impossible to find in projects as brief as this.

The pairing of heart-wrenching lyrics with a wonderfully catchy melody is one that does justice to the duo’s talent on ‘Left Behind’. If the power of “Don’t they know it’s too soon to paint over the one place where I can still picture you?” isn’t enough, the track is accompanied by a harrowingly beautiful music video, a wonderful standalone single, and a fitting introduction to the EP’s emotional journey.

‘Block The Noise’ then takes a sonic shift; the use of a looped garage-style beat and sampled, distorted vocals produces a full, textured track from seemingly fragmented, electronic pieces. The vast range of sounds experimented with is nicely neutralised by the crackling rain which transitions into the last two tracks. Fragments of this are worked into the tranquil, atmospheric sound of ‘The Analyst’, which contains the best vocal performance of the record. The stunning

delivery of the chorus – “Everything hurts just a little” – alongside this more peaceful sound feels like acceptance in the face of last track’s disorientation and confusion.

The final track, ‘Beginning’, is short but powerful, breaking off abruptly and offering a sudden echo by way of an end to the record. From start to finish this EP is beautifully impactful; this emotional milestone in the band’s career is one you simply cannot overlook. **Madison Collier**

PREMIUM LEISURE

‘Algorithm’

(Self released)

After something of a hiatus since 2021’s ‘Easy FM’, Premium Leisure return, building up to their debut album, ‘Bug Blood’, in the autumn. With ‘Algorithm’ Chris Barker continues to view life through a glass brightly and with an ear to the optimism of the 1960s and 70s, the song’s almost funky sense of psychedelia conjuring fresh summer vibes, while there’s a New Wave feel to the meandering guitar lead. It’s been noted before that Premium Leisure are a band who sound tailor-made for sunshine and festival stages and this new single arrives right on cue for the season. Cast off your cares and woes and boogie on down, brothers and sisters. **Bekti Manish**

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THE BOBO

‘For Me, The Sun’

(Self released)

Nightshift is glad to be sitting down when we put on this new EP from The Bobo. Bold, crisp production complements what is a fully formed sound, reminding us of Billie Eilish, PJ Harvey, and moments of Kate Bush.

EP opener ‘Wish I Knew’ sounds like a song for the opening credits of the next big HBO drama, a stylish modern refrain in a minor key that sweeps through you while singer Maria Rozalska seduces you with lines like “What was I to you? I wish I knew,” all framed by rhythmic vocal samples that just won’t let you go. ‘Jeremy’, featuring long-time collaborator Kid Kin, is a breezier affair with synths and linear guitars that evoke a sunnier image in our minds. The opening line of the chorus points to something more sombre though, as “Where’s your head? Where’s your heart?” is sung with ethereal beauty.

‘Could Have’ continues in a similar vein, as Rozalska subtly sings “Do you wish I was there?” over a floaty soundscape of piano, synth and occasional crunching beats. As the song takes you on a journey, the penultimate section is punctuated by the vocal refrain “ouch that hurt”, which leads to a different groove, seeing you swim out into the shallows of the coda and beyond.

‘Dancing’, also featuring Kid Kin, is a pleasant and similarly airy affair, and while tender and well executed, it’s in these moments where The Bobo wanders into Regina Spektor territory that we find ourselves wanting a little more of what the opening track offered, because as well executed as the track is, something seems to dip slightly here, leaving you wanting a little more of what came before.

Closer, ‘Number 8’, doesn’t disappoint though as we return to a moodier and sultrier affair. A simple guitar arpeggio is punctuated by atmospheric and gorgeous vocals, prompting cinematic daydreams only the production budgets of super-rich film companies could ever hope to deliver; this is visual music of the highest order. **Caitlin Helm**



BARRELHAUS

‘Dirty Hymns And

Antonyms’

(All Will Be Well)

How many musicians does it take to make rock’n’roll? No, that’s not the start of a joke, but have you heard the one about the drummer, roadie and the guitarist who walk into a bar...

Anyway, BarrelHaus are new local two-piece but the amount of sound they make would make you think there were half-a-dozen of them. If we didn’t know better, we could be persuaded to believe this varied set of bluesy riffs and grooves was a previously unheard side-project from the Josh Homme-verse; the vocals ring out over the bassy riffs, and the drums keep everything moving perfectly without getting in the way.

It would be easy to make some comparisons to other loud duos from the last twenty years – yes, we’re talking about Royal Blood and Death From Above 1979 – and there are similarities to those bands here, not from the number of people who made ‘Dirty Hymns and Antonym’s but the epic punch-to-the-gut they all hand out with their down-tuned fuzzi-drenched guitars. In fact BarrelHaus manage a trick which to these ears those previously



mentioned haven’t achieved – not sounding samey across a full album.

This album is really well put together; there’s never a dull moment and always something fresh: an unexpected solo here, a peppy, more jangly, indie kind of number here, constantly holding your attention. Every song here is great. They say this is a debut album, but it feels like a live set from a band that has been around for years and has honed a perfect setlist from a broad back catalogue. **Matt Chapman Jones**



THE MIGHTY REDOX

‘Interstellar 23’

(Self released)

Sometimes it pays to follow the old adage not to judge a book by its cover. If I did that, I would have stayed well away from ‘Intrastellar 23’, the sixth album from The Mighty Redox,

plagued as it is by artwork that looks like the video for the classic ‘Blue’ by Eiffel 65 if it was rendered in Microsoft Paint. Seriously, Google it.

Beyond the artwork the music is distinctly the opposite. In fact, despite Mighty Redox being six albums deep, this is genuinely one of the most experimental and inventive releases I’ve been asked to review. Starting with the raucous ‘Wake Up!’ that contains an alarm clock used as an actual instrument, followed by the charming ‘Another Sunny Day’, the album then spins off into another direction with ‘Ship of Danger’. This one features some stunning creative guitar work mixed with more flute than a Gill Scott Heron album.

Whilst the space theme that knits all eight tracks together can at times grate, ‘Interstellar 23’ broadly contains enough fun, creativity and interesting song construction to make for an enjoyable listen. In a time of a cost of living crisis and high inflation, this is 37 minutes of pure escapism that, cover notwithstanding, may just be the tonics that these times need. **Damon Boughen**

ENJOYABLE LISTENS

‘That’s Where The Blood Is’

(Fierce Panda)

Anyone who’s caught one of Luke Duffett’s live shows will know what a fabulous performer he is – equal parts manic, debonair, elegant and utterly daft. Usually performing just with his phone he’s a lounge crooner, cabaret showman and New Romantic dandy in one, the place where Midge Ure meets Rick Astley meets Vic Reeves.

This single certainly has more than a little something of Ultravox about it, all big synths

and slick production (not bad for such a lo-fi set-up) and a tune only slightly nicked from ‘I Remember (Death In The Afternoon)’. It’s very much the right side of kitsch retro-pop – too authentic and heartfelt to be ironic or hipsterish. Enjoyable Listens made his way to Oxford via time spent in London but we’re more than happy to call him one of our own on the strength of this. **Sue Foreman**

ALEXANDRA HAMER

‘All Of Us & Everything’

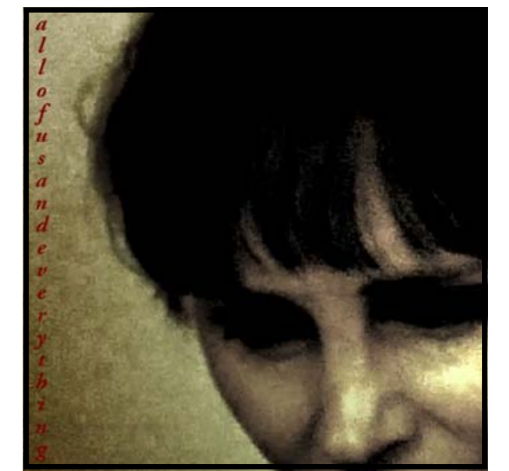
(Self released)

While her history on the local scene goes back much further Alexandra Hamer really began to reveal herself as a solo artist over lockdown, drip-feeding us a series of songs – originals and exotic covers – that revealed a musician with a global vision and a singer of quiet emotional intensity.

‘All Of Us & Everything’ is her debut album and collects some of those earlier songs alongside a set of new ones for a journey into heartbreak, defiance, celebration and love. For an album written and recorded at home it often sounds grandiose in its scope, from sweeping orchestral sounds to lush piano, and of course that voice – capable of conveying the most extreme of emotions while remaining as pristine as porcelain.

The title track and opener is possibly the gentlest song about environmental catastrophe you’ll hear, though in a rarity for the record it does crash in towards the end. ‘The Birds, The Trees & You’ is Alexandra at her most optimistic, finding love on a nature discovery trek, the sounds of birds and rain providing the backdrop to the melody. ‘I’m Still Me’ and ‘She Lives’ find her affirming and celebrating her trans identity with a steely serenity and, for all the sadness within, a playful edge in lines like “She lives in a most unconventional way / She lives in a large and spectacular way” – albeit followed by the line “But she’s still alone in the dark”. A plea for simple acceptance as a person is rendered by way of almost devotional sorrow, her voice a musical portrait of purity. The greatest heartache though comes at the close and the tragic ‘Gone’ a song about her younger brother who died last year; it’s such a simple, hymnal piece but the emotional punch it packs is staggering.

This is Alexandra Hamer’s strength: bringing something akin to airiness to songs of deepest sadness and internal conflict. The range of influences goes well beyond the everyday – from French chanson and Scandinavian folk music to Russian torch songs and lullabies with perhaps the briefest stop-over at Radiohead’s fragile splendour. This isn’t an album for parties or even communal listening, more for a solitary experience, where its quavering passion and gentle power can become transcendent. **Dale Kattack**



GIG GUIDE

May

MONDAY 1st

MAYDAY AFTERPARTY: The Bullingdon – Keeping the party going after May Morning.

TUESDAY 2nd

PETER DOHERTY: O2 Academy – The Libertines and Babyshambles indie bard brings his solo show back to town.

LITTLE CLARENDON: The Bullingdon – Rearranged show for the university band.

WEDNESDAY 3rd

BILLY LOCKETT: The Bullingdon – Emotive balladeering from the singer and pianist.

Friday 5th

JOHN:

The Jericho Tavern

In the modern age giving yourself a virtually unsearchable online name is either the height of foolishness or a fuck-you statement of intent. Having witnessed John playing twice previously in Oxford we'll go for the latter option as the south London duo's suffocating post-hardcore bounced off the walls and bodies of those who thronged to see them on those dates. However hard they try and make it for people to find them, theirs is a noise you should neither want nor try to avoid, and if they're best encountered up close and personal in venues this size, they deserve the biggest stages available to humanity. They've had a taste of bigger things already as they've previously supported the likes of Idles, USA Nails and Pulled Apart By Horses, kindred spirits all. Their music is tightly-wound, high-intensity noise rock that's all sinew, no fat or filler, shirt off, getting the job done hard and fast and doubtless leaving a few bloodstains in its wake. So, given how great they are, why have they lumbered themselves with a bandname it's so bloody hard to find online? Because they're both called John, that's why. Sometimes things are that straightforward and to the point. Like their music. And if you can't find them, maybe they'll come and find you. And then you're in trouble.



DAOIRÍ FARRELL: The North Wall – The Dublin folk singer and bouzouki player comes to town to promote his fourth album, 'The Wedding Above In Glencree'.

THURSDAY 4th

HALINA RICE: The Bullingdon – Immersive electronic music, technology, art and visuals from the London artist.

THE TIGER LILLIES: Oxford Playhouse – Surreal, darkly humorous Brechtian gypsy-punk cabaret from Martyn Jacques' enduring cult trio, out on tour to coincide with the release of 'The Worst of The Tiger Lillies', a career-spanning Best Of, so expect strange, macabre songs covering the 30+ years of the band's lifetime, taking in Vaudeville, street theatre, opera, bleak adult comedy and chanson.

TRIP HAZARD + THE FACTORY LIGHTS + ALCON BLUE: The Jericho Tavern

CATWEAZLE: The Handlebar – Oxford's oldest open night continues to showcase singers, musicians, poets, spoken word, performance art and more every Thursday.

DALBY'S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon – Tom Dalby hosts the weekly open session.

FRIDAY 5th

JOHN + GRANDMA'S HOUSE: The Jericho Tavern – The two-headed noise machine returns – *see main preview*

NOBLE JACKS: The Bullingdon – Rowdy folk-rocking at The Haven Club tonight from Brighton's fiddle-led, Levellers-inspired hoedown crew, and previous tour support to Ferocious Dog.

MOONAROON: The Harcourt Arms – Farewell show from the local folk crew and Harcourt residents, signing off with a set of Irish dance tunes and songs.

KLUB KAKOFANNEY with ZAIA + DADA PARADOX + TRI: Gladiator Club – The monthly shindig welcomes local dub reggae outfit Zaia along for some groove-led fun, plus indie and anti-folk from Dada Paradox.

LONDON GRAFFITI + TUBER MURPHY: The Port Mahon – Funky-folky indie from London Graffiti at tonight's It's All About the Music show.

SATURDAY 6th

HAIRCUT 100: O2 Academy – Special warm-up show from the 80s hitmakers ahead of their Shepherd's Bush Empire gig to celebrate the 40th anniversary of debut album 'Pelican West', so expect classic hits from the time, including 'Favourite Shirts (Girls Meets Boy)'; 'Fantastic Day', and 'Love Plus One'.

DANCING KING: The Bullingdon – Coronation

special ABBA disco.

HIPSHAKIN': The Harcourt Arms – 50s and 60s rhythm'n'blues, rock'n'roll, jump jive, jazz, boogaloo and early soul from the Hipshakin' DJs.

METAL TO THE MASSES: The Jericho Tavern – Rock and metal battle of the bands to win a place at this summer's Bloodstock.

RADIO BALLADS: Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood – Wychwood Folk Club hosts a tribute to Ewan MacColl, Peggy Seeger and Charles Parker's groundbreaking BBC folk show of the 50s and 60s, featuring Jez Lowe, Bob Fox & Julie Matthews.

SUNDAY 7th

OH, COMMUNITY!: Common Ground – Another small but perfectly formed DIY mini-fest courtesy of Divine Schism, today featuring cheerfully childlike slacker-pop and indie punk in the vein of Jonathan Richman and Pavement from Brighton's Holiday Ghosts alongside Byrds and Big Star-informed hardcore punk from Ex-Void; hysterical freakcore chap Garden Centre; pitch-shifted electro-pop from Dream Phone; dreamy, downbeat electronica from this month's

Introducing star The Bobo; post-hardcore noise from Sinews and more.

OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms – Weekly open session.

THE SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Port Mahon (3pm) – Free afternoon of Americana, folk, blues and roots.

FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon – Weekly Irish folk session.

THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Tree, Iffley (3.45pm) – Swamp blues, funk, ska, folk and more from the veteran local party starters.

OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm) – Weekly open session.

HITS OF THE BLITZ: The Cornerstone, Didcot – Vera Lynn and more at the celebration of 30s and 40 music.

AMANDA ANDJELKOVIC: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

DIRTY DEEDS + THE UNBLESSSED + ARISEN + JOSH MUNDELL + JAE + TREVOR WILLIAMS + CATSHAKER: The Swan, Wantage (3pm) – All-dayer in aid of baby charity Tommy's.

MONDAY 8th

FOALS: O2 Academy – Long since sold-out show from the local heroes in conjunction with Truck Store and rearranged from last year, the band celebrating their latest album 'Life Is Yours'.

TALK SHOW: The Jericho Tavern – Dark, snarling rave-inspired punk from London's Talk Show, the band finding a dirty middle ground between Idles, Shame and Underworld.

WEDNESDAY 10th

THURSDAY 11th

THERAPY?: The Bullingdon – Andy Cairns' rockers return – *see main preview*

BLUE BAYOU + TONGUE + ADAM HOUNSFIELD: The Jericho Tavern – 60s pop, ska, funk and folk-inspired indie from new local band in town Blue Bayou.

CATWEAZLE: The Handlebar
DALBY'S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 12th

KID KIN + GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS + WILDERNESS STATES: The Library – Intricate, epic post-rock, shoegaze and electronica from Kid Kin, back in action and joined by recent *Nightshift* cover stars Ghosts in the Photographs with their post-rock and post-metal soundtracks, plus Wilderness States, the new band from former Ideal Marriage man David Freeman.

THE BULLY BOILER: The Bullingdon – House, techno and garage club night.

Thursday 11th

THERAPY?:

The Bullingdon

By our reckoning it's close to 20 years since Therapy? last played in Oxford so there'll be generations of local gig goers denied the opportunity to witness them in full rock and roll glory. Which is strange really given the band have been a going concern since 1989 and have never stopped releasing records with Andy Cairns and Michael McKeegan still helming the punked-up power-trio; last time round was alongside The Wildhearts, a band with whom they share an ability to play it loud, fast and heavy while retaining a strong melodic edge. It was that melodic edge that earned them their brief fling with mainstream success with songs like 'Nowhere' and 'Screamager', but Cairns and co. were just as happy playing it nasty and brutish as the uncompromising 'Suicide Pact – You First' demonstrated. This time round they're promoting their latest album – their 16th – 'Cold Hard Fire' and tonight's show is being run in conjunction with Truck Store, so ticket and album bundles will be available. Early tracks from the new album suggest little by way of mellowing, that mix of melody, sharp, serrated riffage and thunderous rhythm still much in evidence. The band could easily be playing a larger local venue but the Bully should be the perfect setting to experience what they're capable of dishing out.



FAUX FIGHTERS: Fat Lil's, Witney
MONTHLY BLUE FRIDAY SESSIONS: The Midget, Abingdon – Artisan Blues' monthly blues session finds a new home.

SATURDAY 13th

THE PINK DIAMOND REVUE + MEANS OF PRODUCTION: The Port Mahon – Essential double bill of electronic music with Reading's psychedelic electro-surf duo The Pink Diamond Revue back in town alongside Oxford's own minimalist post-punk synth-pop and acid house outfit Means of Production.

THE TESKEY BROTHERS: O2 Academy – Smoky, groove-led blues and soul in the vein of Otis Redding, Wilson Pickett and BB King from Melbourne brothers Sam and Josh Teskey and band, back over in Europe to tour new album *The Winding Way*.

MUSICAL MEDICINE with MR SCRUFF: The Bullingdon – The long-running disco and house club night welcomes cross-genre selector Mr Scruff to the party.

HIPBONE SLIM & THE KNEEJERKS: The Harcourt Arms – 60s garage rock, r'n'b, rock'n'roll and beat.

ALL WILL BE WIRED: The Library – New bi-monthly electronic music night from local label All Will Be Well, tonight featuring Edinburgh's futuristic industrial artist Forever Alien, Wycombe's sample-led synth-popster and recent *Nightshift* Track of the Month winner Cholly, and bleak, unrelenting techno from Nippy Havoc.

METAL TO THE MASSES: The Jericho Tavern
TIVERTONS: The Black Swan

SUNDAY 14th

BAR ITALIA: The Jericho Tavern – Dreamy, lo-fi indie-grunge and shoegaze from London trio Bar Italia, now signed to Matador Records and touring new single 'Nurse!'.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms

THE SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Port Mahon (3pm)

FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Tree, Iffley (3.45pm) – Blues and rock classics from the veteran local singer and guitarist and chums.

OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)
EMMA KENNEDY: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

MONDAY 15th

TUESDAY 16th

WEDNESDAY 17th

MIKE & THE MECHANICS: The New Theatre – Billed as Mike & The Mechanics Refuelled! Might we politely suggest fuelling them with a stick of dynamite up the exhaust pipe and giving them a jump start off the edge of a cliff.

LOU LYNE & THE BLUE ALMOND PROJECT: Holywell Music Room – Album launch show from cellist Louisa Lyn Patterson, part of Brickwork Lizards and who's played with St Etienne and Nick Cope among others.

JOHN PARRICELLI: Iffley Church Hall – Jazz guitar from Loose Tubes founder John Parricelli, whose CV includes work with Annie Lennox, Goldfrapp, Robbie Williams, Katie Melua, Ed Sheeran and Mike Oldfield amongst others.



Thursday 18th

CHAPPAQUA WRESTLING:

The Jericho Tavern

Chappaqua Wrestling's singing and songwriting team of Charlie Woods and Jake Mac came together in that oldest of fashions: schoolmates with a shared love of music. Growing up near Brighton the pair bonded over a love for Mancunian bands, particularly Joy Division and The Happy Mondays. Such was their love for it they both moved to Manchester for uni where the band was formed in 2017. Subsequently they moved back to Brighton before relocating to south London but those musical roots run deep and it's hard not to hear echoes of The Mondays and the heavier end of Oasis, as well as elements of Yorkshire indie rock heroes The Cribs and of course the rocking politics of The Clash, in Chappaqua Wrestling's grungy indie-cum-post-punk sound. Assured rather than swaggering, they make a big old sound and it's easy to imagine far bigger venues than this beckoning once the band's debut album 'Plus Ultra' is released this month. They mix the personal with the political with songs like 'Full Round Table', 'Wayfinder' and 'Wide Awake' dealing with personal rejection and national dejection and have the kind of noisily accessible sound that can unite grassroots gig aficionados with a wider audience. So, a good chance to catch them in intimate surroundings while it's still possible.

THURSDAY 18th

CHAPPAQUA WRESTLING: The Jericho Tavern – Grunged-up shoegaze from the Brighton/London crew – *see main preview*
MEMORIALS: The Port Mahon – Divine Schism hosts an Oxford debut from Memorials, the band formed by former-Electralane frontwoman Verity Susman alongside Matthew Simms, who's played with Wire and It Hugs Back, together creating an eclectic collage of motorik pop, psychedelia, electronic soundscaping, free jazz, drones and loops.

PAGE OF SWORDS + LEE SWITZER-WOOLF + JACK CADE: The Library – Dark, reflective gothic folk-pop in the vein of Jim White, Johnny Cash and Jackson C Frank from erstwhile Little Red and Master of None chap Ian Mitchell, out on a Cult of the Narrative tour with Jack Cade and Lee Switzer-Woolf.

INDIE DISCOTEQUE: The Bullingdon – Indie club night.

SENSATIONAL SIXTIES EXPERIENCE: The New Theatre – Body parts of various hitmakers from the decade relive the magic of the era.

CATWEAZLE: The Handlebar
JIM MORAY + THREE IDLE WOMEN: The

Unicorn, Abingdon – Macclesfield’s English folk revival pioneer Moray returns to Abingdon, his eclectic approach to classic songs seeing him drawing on African music and rap as well as traditional acoustic instrumentation, and with a flair for both tenderness and drama that’s seen him winning BBC Folk Awards as well as playing with the likes of The Oysterband, Bellowhead, Billy Bragg and Eliza Carthy.

DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 19th

WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park – The eco-friendly folk festie returns – see main preview
BLACK TISH + SILENT WEAPON + HE DIDNT: The Bullingdon – Heavy-duty emb and industrial rock from Brussels/Oxford duo Black

Friday 19th – Sunday 21st

WOOD FESTIVAL:

Braziers Park

Genteel yet rebellious, WOOD remains a pioneer in UK festivals, spearheading the approach to eco-friendly sustainability via all means possible, from cycle and solar-powered stages to its eschewing of plastic onsite. Family-friendly and welcoming, among the highlights of this year’s gathering are **ANGELINE MORRISON** (pictured), who soundtracks the Black British experience via her mix of wyrd and psych-folk, 60s beatpop, soul, folklore and myth; **ELANOR MOSS**, a Yorkshire-based singer and guitarist in the vein of Joni Mitchell who’s played with Benjamin Francis Leftwich and The Howl & The Hum; fellow Yorkshire musician **GEORGE BOOMSMA**, who’s performed alongside Richard Thompson, Scott Matthews and Kathryn Williams among others; south London’s deeply evocative singer-songwriter **HANNAH WHITE**, whose ‘Car Crash’ won her Best Song at the UK Americana Awards, and **IDA MAE**, the ever-gigging duo who spent years touring the length and breadth of the US, touring with Willie Nelson and Alison Krauss along the way. Many more besides, including wonderful Irish singer **JOSIENNE CLARK**, who’s been compared to Sandy Denny, and **KATHERINE PRIDY**, acclaimed for her haunting voice and finger-picking guitar playing. Much more besides, including a strong local contingent including **NICK COPE**; **DREAMING SPIRES**; **JALI FILY CISSOKHO**; **KATY ROSE BENNETT**, and **BAND OF HOPE**, plus talks and discussions hosted by **HUGH WARWICK** and featuring **ROBIN INCE** and **PEGGY SEEGER** among others. This year WOOD celebrates Year of the Otter, so come dressed accordingly.



Tish, channelling Einsturzende Neubauten, Skinny Puppy and Depeche Mode, plus malevolent electro-doom from Silent Weapon and brooding minimalism from He Didnt.

BOSSAPHONIK with VIPERTIME + MAMBO PANTHERS: Cowley Workers Social Club – The monthly world jazz dance night welcomes Vipertime, mixing dancefloor jazz with Ethiopian influences and punk energy, plus Oxford’s own Latin beats outfit Mambo Panthers, playing a mix of cumbia, Cuban son, salsa, funk and swing. Host Dan Ofer plays a mix of Latin, Afrobeat, Balkan and nu-jazz on the decks.

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

BILLY BRAGG: O2 Academy – The unstinting firebrand troubadour returns to town after his last show here back in 2017, the Bard of Barking as relevant now as he was back in his first creative flowering in the 1980s – an inspiration on the likes of Frank Turner and Kae Tempest and still a champion of new radical political pop with his Leftfield stage at Glastonbury – his mix of romantic longing and socialist soapboxing keeping the flames of social justice burning.

SOUL SISTA: The Bullingdon – Funk, soul and disco club night.

SOLIDARITY FOREVER: Gladiator Club – Benefit gig for the Keep Campsfield Closed campaign with electro-activist and recent *Nightshift* cover star Mila Todd alongside socialist street choir Didcot Red Kites, plus an open mic session.

MARIE BASHIRU AND MIDORI JAEGER: Market Tap – A double dose of acoustic music at Tap Social’s new Covered Market bar hosted by Oxford Contemporary Music, with soulful sounds from Marie Bashiru alongside jazz-folk singer and cellist Midori Jaeger.

LADY MAISERY + AMELIA COBURN: Harwell Village Hall – English folk harmony singing from Rowan Rhiengans, Hannah James and Hazel Askew.

SATURDAY 20th

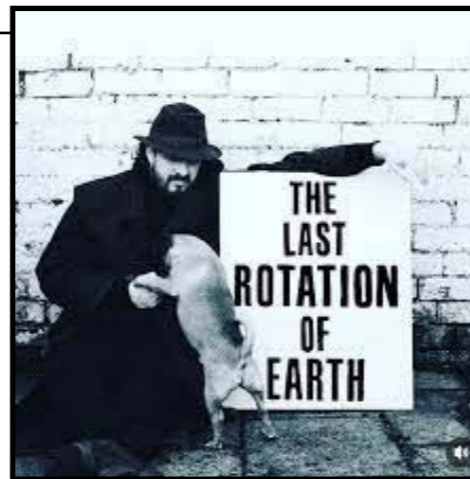
WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park GARY: Modern Art Oxford – Octavia Freud’s metaphorical everyman odyssey gets a full live outing, following the eponymous Gary as he traverses the political world on a lost weekend via an eclectic selection of electronic music. The evening also features stand-up comedy and Gary-related games.

THE NIGEL BROWN BAND: The Harcourt Arms – Eclectic and versatile sounds from the local singer-songwriter and open mic host.

METAL TO THE MASSES: Jericho Tavern

SUNDAY 21st

WOOD FESTIVAL: Braziers Park ALGIERS + HELEN GANYA: O2 Academy – A righteous storm outta South Georgia from Algiers, Franklin James Fisher’s righteous, declamatory soul fronting his band’s funk-ed-up garage rock, hip hop, Bad Seeds atmospheric and Suicide-inspired pulse as he takes aim at oppression, injustice and power, the band over in the UK to promote new album ‘Took’, drawing a line from the Black Panthers to modern day police racism and brutality. A James Brown-led spiritual gospel choir from the Church of the Machine Apocalypse. Great support from Brighton-based, Scottish-Thai musician Helen Ganya, who



Monday 22nd

BC CAMPLIGHT:

The Bullingdon

Self destruction and music have long been uneasy bedfellows and BC Camplight has embraced both with equal fervour. Born in New Jersey, the child named Brian Christinzio and raised on a diet of opera, showtunes and rock’n’roll was prone to depression and hypochondria from an early age. Later in life he would cancel tours convinced he was suffering from serious illness and after releasing two critically acclaimed but commercially unsuccessful albums (his backing band went on to become War on Drugs) and being dropped by his label, he turned to drink and drugs, compounding his mental health problems. By his own admission he would probably have ended up homeless and worse but when a fan on Facebook recommended relocating to Manchester he went for it and it changed his life. He found new bandmates and a partner and released another well received album, ‘How To Die In Manchester’. But of course it all went wrong again. He suffered a severe leg injury and couldn’t fly; consequently he overstayed his Visa and was deported, missing not only the chance to play Green Man, End of the Road and *Later...* but also his own wedding. Finally, though, he got back on course with his fourth album, 2018’s superb ‘Deportation Blues’, with its urgent, frazzled earworm of a lead single ‘I’m Desperate’ on Bella Union, while 2020’s gloriously tender, witty and passionate follow-up, ‘Shortly After Take Off’, was hailed as a gently skewed pop masterpiece. Now he returns, in the wake of relationship break-up with a new record, ‘The Last Rotation of Earth’, and tonight’s show, in conjunction with Truck Store, is a celebration of his enduring artistic brilliance in the face of so much personal adversity.

previously went out under the name Dog In The Snow.

OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms

SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Port Mahon (3pm)

FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon

OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)

SCAMPI: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

MONDAY 22nd

BC CAMPLIGHT: The Bullingdon – Special Truck outstore show from the Mancunian songsmith – see main preview

SAUL ADAMCZEWSKI
(Fat White Family / Insecure Men)
Adventures In Limbo Album Tour
Sunday 23 April
Jericho Tavern Oxford
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PCL & AUTONOMY

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

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

TALK SHOW
Tuesday 09 May 2023
Jericho Tavern Oxford
plus special guests
CEIL
by arrangement with ATC

'PLUS ULTRA' DEBUT ALBUM TOUR
CHAPPAQUA WRESTLING
THURSDAY 18 MAY
JERICHO TAVERN OXFORD
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

PSYCHEDELIC PORN CRUMPETS
PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS
ACID DAD
UK + EU TOUR 2023
SATURDAY 27 MAY
O2 ACADEMY2 OXFORD
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PURE REPRESENTS

JOHN COOPER CLARKE
I WANNA BE YOURS
2023 TOUR
WITH SPECIAL GUEST
MIKE GARRY
SATURDAY 03 JUNE
PLAYHOUSE OXFORD
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH EDGE STREET LIVE

BELLE & SEBASTIAN
thursday 13 july
O2Academy Oxford
by arrangement with x-ray

Grade 2nd
... is coming in hot in 2023
Thursday 7th September
Oxford, Jericho Tavern

Badly Drawn Boy
Something To Tour About:
25 Years of Badly Drawn Boy
Friday 15 September
The Bullingdon Oxford
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH 15 ARTIST/
TEN TONNES
THE DANCING ALONE TOUR
SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER
O2 ACADEMY2 OXFORD

WILLIE J HEALEY
BUNNY TOUR 2023
FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER
O2 ACADEMY OXFORD
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TUESDAY 23rd

SPARKS: The New Theatre – The glam greats bring their quirky operatic pop world to town – see *main preview*

SHARRON KRAUS + SARA WOLFF: The Port Mahon – A homecoming show for Sharron Kraus who's spent most of the last decade and a half living in Sheffield but returning to Oxford with her captivating psychedelic pagan folk songs and tales and tonight playing songs from her most recent album, 'Kin'. She's joined by literate experimental folk singer and multi-instrumentalist Sara Wolff.

SOUND BRUSH ft. CHARLOTTE KEEFE: Old Fire Station – Oxford Improvisers night.

WEDNESDAY 24th

PETE BOSS + THE BLUEHEARTS + MATT EDWARDS: The Bullingdon – Slowhand blues from Oxford's Clapton-inspired guitarist Pete Boss, alongside rocking electric blues guitarist Matt Edwards.

Tuesday 23rd

SPARKS:

The New Theatre

Is it really five years, almost to the day, since Sparks lit up South Park with their show-stealing performance on the main stage at Common People? Seems so here's a return trip for the brothers Mael, the operatic odd couple whose complex, intricate mix of glam-rock, synth-pop and high camp has made them one of the most undeniably unique bands of the past 50 years. That last outing showed their musical performance stars are undimmed with Russell's instantly recognisable falsetto leading the charge while Ron remains a mischievously intense presence behind his keyboard. Expect all the big hits: the peerless Moroder-produced 'The Number One Song In Heaven'; outsider anthem 'Try-out For the Human Race'; the high-wired 'Amateur Hour' and of course 'This Town Ain't Big Enough For Both Of Us'. Sparks are a band who aren't afraid to be silly – 'When Do I Get Sing My Way?' – but carry it off with elegant aplomb and still sound classy. They still love a good pun and aren't resting on any laurels despite their legendary status, as new album 'The Girl Is Crying In Her Latte' amply proves. Relentlessly quirky, witty and energetic, Sparks are one of those rare acts who sound like no-one else and influential as they are, no-one has matched them at what they do best.



LULO REINHARDT & YULIYA LONSKAYA: St Michael at the Northgate Church – Gypsy swing mixed with classical sounds and music from North Africa and India from the grand-nephew of the legendary Django Reinhardt, teaming up with award-winning guitarist Yuliya Lonskaya.
BLUE BAYOU + DOGMILK + JULIAN GREENWOOD: The Library

THURSDAY 25th

WOMBO + DOGVIOLET + YOGZI: The Jericho Tavern – Off-kilter indie-pop from the Kentucky trio – see *main preview*

STEPH PIRRIE: The Harcourt Arms – Live jazz from the singer and trumpeter and her band.
SPINNER FALL + MAISY'S RAINBOW DREAM + MYSTERY BISCUIT: The Library – Serrated hardcore sounds and 80s US punk in a Dischord style from local power trio Spinner Fall, alongside psychedelia and post-rock from Mystery Biscuit.

CATWEAZLE: The Handlebar
DALBY'S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon

FRIDAY 26th

MISTA TRICK COLLECTIVE: The Bullingdon – Live electro swing, vaudeville and drum&bass from the Bristolian DJ and his live band.

ENUMCLAW: The Jericho Tavern – 90s Pacific North-West vibes from Washington State's Enumclaw, drawing on Nirvana, Pavement and Built To Spill on their post-grunge slacker rock, the band now signed to Fat Possum imprint Luminelle and tonight making their Oxford debut.
SELF HELP + SHADY BABY + BLUE BAYOU: The Port Mahon – Militant but melodic indie-punk from local stars Self Help.
BIG BOY BLOATER & THE LIMITS: Fat Lil's, Witney – Classic r'n'b, rockabilly, blues and surf from singer, guitarist and radio DJ Big Boy Bloater and his band back in town, promoting recent single 'The Beat With 50,000 Eyes', having previously toured with Imelda May.

SATURDAY 27th

PSYCHEDELIC PORN CRUMPETS: O2 Academy – Riff-heavy, hirsute and tripped-out Led Zep-meets-Tame Impala psychedelia from Perth's Psychedelic Porn Crumpets, over in Europe to tour new album 'Night Gnomes', the band having supported musical soulmates King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard, Royal Blood and Black Mountain.

THE PEOPLE VERSUS: The Jericho Tavern – Already sold out fundraising concert from this month's cover stars – see *main interview feature*

RICH RAINFORD & THE BANKSIDE BLUES BAND: The Harcourt Arms – Bluesy rocking from the local singer-songwriter.

TERRAFORMS: The Bullingdon – The drum&bass club night celebrates its 15th anniversary.

GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with LIFE UNDERGROUND + LAKE ACACIA + ANT KELLY: The Port Mahon – Big, chunky melodic rock, indie and classic rock'n'roll from Bicester's international crew Life Underground at this month's GTI; they're joined by synth-rock duo Lake Acacia, channelling Muse and Royal Blood, plus Shapes and Factory Lights frontman Ant Kelly, soon to be releasing his debut solo album.

DMA'S: O2 Academy – Return to town for the Aussie Britpop-inspired trio, this time round promoting fourth studio album 'How Many Dreams?'.

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Thursday 25th

WOMBO:

The Jericho Tavern

Wombo's single 'Dreamsicle', from their 'Keesh Mountain' EP, clocked up almost a million plays on Spotify, which might not seem much compared to music's giants but for an indie band out of Kentucky it's quite an achievement and their star is even further in the ascendance in the wake of last year's 'Fairy Rust' album, which has drawn across-the-board praise for its mix of off-funk dreaminess, skeletal song structures and rough-round-the-edges approach to tunesmithery. The trio, led by singer and bassist Sydney Chadwick, claim to be inspired by the fairytales of The Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Anderson more than other music, which would explain the sometimes childlike dreaminess of Chadwick's gauzy singing voice, while the deliberately muffled feel to their music accentuates a slightly otherworldly vibe to songs like 'Sour Sun'. Musically they draw on 90s acts like The Breeders – who they're due to support ahead of their headline tour of the UK and Europe – and even Le Tigre at times, Chadwick's bass leading the melodic line where it's joined by Cameron Low's detuned post-punk guitar. To coincide with this tour Wombo have released 'Fairy Rust & Selected Demos', an expanded version of the album, though their substantial charm comes from never over-polishing those demo recordings. They're lo-fi but high grade.

SUNDAY 28th

THE PEOPLE VERSUS: The Jericho Tavern – Second show of the weekend from this month's cover stars fundraising for their trip to NXNE.
OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms
THE SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Bullingdon (3pm)
FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon
OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)
LIZA MARSHALL: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

MONDAY 29th

TUESDAY 30th

WEDNESDAY 31st

DMA'S: O2 Academy – Return to town for the Aussie Britpop-inspired trio, this time round promoting fourth studio album 'How Many Dreams?'.



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STORNOWAY Warehouse Studios

“BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND.” This barker’s cry should now adorn future Stornoway gig posters (yes, you heard us correctly) because on the 13th of April 2023, in a show of solidarity with Springtime, Eostre, and natural regeneration, they roll back the stone of a six year band split and glitter-bomb their social media with a reunion cornucopia of heart-stopping goodies: a new album – ‘Dig the Mountain’, slated for 8th September – an

accompanying UK tour; a slew of booked festival slots throughout the summer; a new tea-towel for the merch stall, and even a canned beer product (Stornow-ale) called A Monday Night In June. So it seems that the WOMAD set last August wasn’t their swansong, but merely a prequel to a breathless new chapter. A chapter coming to life tonight, on the evening of the announcement, as we find ourselves part of a

LISA O’NEILL St John the Evangelist

Since we’re in a church it’s probably reasonable for Lisa O’Neill to ask God for a favour. All she wants is for the spotlights above the stage to be dimmed as she suffers from photo-sensitivity and is likely to freeze under their glare otherwise. Several SJE staff toy with a bank of switches and eventually we get semi darkness, the stage illuminated only by a couple of table lamps and a large full moon above it.

Such natural dimness is appropriate for O’Neill’s songs, which are inspired as often as not by nature and our place in it, like the mesmerising ‘Blackbird’, an early highlight of her set in front of a packed congregation, just her and a sparsely plucked acoustic guitar, or the heavier, harsher ‘Birdy From Another Realm’.

Mostly tonight she’s accompanied by her band, featuring harmonium and five-string viola, which accentuate the droning nature of her folk

small invitation-only audience pressed against the dark blue, carpeted walls of the low lit Warehouse rehearsal room, with Stornoway playing a dry run of their first two hour set for more than half a decade in preparation for an 800-capacity, sold-out-in-minutes, gig at Earth in London the following day.

They file in in line from the stairs behind us, percussing DIY/garden tools in ‘tinks & taps’ to open with the unrecorded a cappella of ‘Mary Some Nights’, a rich harmonic folk song reminiscent of the treasured male voices of The Copper Family. The first wave of applause reflects the relief that these unique vocals exist together again, and we are away into what must be the most formidable arsenal of plugged and unplugged songs around.

The extra heartening news is that even on their first public airing, the new songs are already blending in with their core classics: the single, ‘Trouble With The Green’, with its firework melody and Pantone swatch of colour similes averting depression (red sun, low on the page; you can decide if it’s going up or down); Paul Henry’s poem becoming ‘Kicking The Stone’; the high flying ‘Bag In The Wind’, they all swoop and sweep around us like Fulmars on a cliff face, the updraft beneath their wings provided by the dependable backline of Susie Peters on violin and Charlotte Glasson on Saxophone, while Adam Briggs puts in a stellar shift on dulcimer and trumpet, with Felix Higginbottom from Low Island securing the drum stool left vacant by Rob Steadman, now living in the States.

What brought about this glorious resurrection you may ask. Well, Covid can claim a rare victory in having Brian shed-bound in his Gower Wetland Centre day job, with time to rediscover his love of songwriting. You take the weight off any writer’s shoulders and his muses will come out to dance, and in Brian’s case it was his young daughter “crashing around the kitchen as a ballerina” that became her endearing, eponymous theme ‘Anwen’. And then this last winter the none-more-British Co-op stumbled across this none-more-British band’s 2015 gem of a cover of ‘The Only Way is Up’ for their national TV campaign, which launched, in turn, millions of hits on Stornoway’s Spotify back catalogue by a ravenous fresh demographic. Apt serendipity and oh-so very grateful. Welcome Back Stornoway!

Paul Carrera

music and enhance her earthily angelic vocals. She celebrates female energy on ‘Silver Seed’, and the woman who shot and so nearly killed Mussolini, only to spend the rest of her life in a psychiatric hospital, ‘Violet Gibson’.

Each song is introduced by an intriguing back-story and Lisa would be just as engaging as a raconteur, but it’s her music and her singing in particular that grabs your heartstrings – the historical tale with its universal truths that is ‘Whisht The Wild Workings Of The Mind’, and the simple, working class tragedy of set highlight ‘Rock The Machine’. She’s joined by support act Seamus Fogherly for an encore of his song ‘Ghosts’ but it’s a closing rendition of Bob Dylan’s ‘All The Tired Horses’, which brought *Peaky Blinders* to such a phenomenal finale, that brings the crowd to its feet at the end, imbued with simple yet stunning passion and power, confirming Lisa O’Neill as one of the modern greats of folk music. God is in the house, indeed.

Dale Kattack

OTHER HALF / SHORT FICTIONS / BASIC DICKS

The Port Mahon

On stage their bodies jitter with an abrasive intensity; impassioned faces are seen in cameras’ flashes as growling guitars power over deep, overdriven basses. At the Port Mahon tonight the zest, cynicism and individuality of each performance is palpable, typical of the post-punk genre.

Screaming vocals from Other Half deliver striking, sardonic lyricism: “His pointed prick, between his legs / another dire display of how little we have to offer.” The audience is arrested by the short, coarse performance of the song in question, ‘Like a Dog’. The guitar riffs are harsh, and extend over every other line; this accentuates the lyrics: “shirtless and sweaty and shamed,” underscoring the searing, innate humiliation conveyed. The stretched ends of the riff create pauses between each line, which highlights the abundance of energy before it, where drumsticks crash remorselessly. Other Half, in this way, engages the audience with provocative lyrics and performance.

Basic Dicks furiously contest patriarchal narratives in their song ‘Frown’. The band appropriates the irritating, commonplace phrase “You might look pretty if you smile” in their lyrics to construct an

entertaining, tongue-in-cheek reclamation of autonomy. These women do not change their behaviour to please the male gaze. The vocals are unpolished and raw; the female condition isn’t refined; the song is only two minutes long, showing the band’s impressive ability to steer rage sharply and concisely. One notable way the band does this is through spirited sarcasm, as they scream “Life gave me l-l-l-lemons / And I hate fucking lemonade.” Headliners tonight are Short Fictions, an inventive, genre-bending band. Despite employing traditional instruments Short Fictions adhere to a stylistically ambitious approach. Brassy, sonorous vibrancy spills from a trumpet as the guitar plays an exciting undertone. The tone of the song is triumphant and anticipating, while the lyrics are accepting: “So I’ll learn to appreciate the people who tell me the way they feel.” The accepting sentiment in the song feels thrilling as the crowd becomes increasingly animated.

The three performances tonight captivate the audience with one common feature: the artists each have a persevering passion for their distinctive ideas, and play as if wholly possessed by them.

Hannah Masih

BLACK TISH / KILLER KOWALSKI / BEAVER FUEL / HE DIDNT

The Jericho Tavern

He Didnt’s take on bleak musical minimalism takes the form of Nick Peel building walls of noise via simple arpeggiating guitar and voice notes and drones put through loops until they break on the shores with lashings of distortion and a modicum of feedback. It can be difficult initially to get a handle on what he’s doing but his experiments resolve well and are neatly textured, and it’s fun watching him ‘play’ his guitar simply by shaking it and breathing on it at one point.

Nothing bleak about Beaver Fuel who defy the usual laws of improving musically with age by sounding as pleasingly scruffy as they did when they began all those years ago. Songs like ‘Dogma Is For Life, Not Just For Christmas’ and ‘Bubonic Johnny’ are sharp, compact and tight punk tunes in the tradition of TV Personalities and even The Freshies, although perhaps surprisingly the highlight of the set is the more sincere and melodic ‘Treacle Town’.

Killer Kowalski are listed on tonight’s gig poster as Mannequin but the new name is better, the trio regimented but raucous, sounding strangely like a cross

between The Sex Pistols, Devo and The B52s, particularly the singer who’s got more than a little of the Fred Schneider about him vocally. There are songs about travel failures, unfriendly bouncers and polytechnics and if the bassist’s tank top is less than well advised, they look like a very welcome addition to the local scene. After an interminable struggle with a malfunctioning brand new bass guitar, Black Tish bring back the bleak with a set of malevolent industrial throb and rumble and motorik doom, sounding at their best like the great future factory where they make Terminators. That said, the jovial bickering between the duo offers great comic relief and it sometimes feels like Punch and Judy if they formed an EBM band together (or Terry & Doom as one wag puts it). One track sounds like ‘20th Century Boy’ reimagined by Coil, while echoes of James Ray & The Performance swirl around the shadows of Skinny Puppy and they’re the only Oxford band we’ve ever heard play an Einsturzende Neubauten cover. They originally formed in Brussels many moons ago but this magnificent hulking dirge is very much Oxford’s gain.

Dale Kattack

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BIG SCARY MONSTERS BIG DAY OUT

Florence Park Community Centre

As the delightfully bonkers, chaotic scurf rockers **DITZ** point out during today's final set, the Florence Park Community Centre is not unlike a scout hut. One can't be too precious in a somewhat over-lit suburban room lined with stacks of chairs and darts trophies, and performers and punters leave their egos at the door for this excellent all-dayer, to create a welcoming atmosphere with a pleasingly high musical bar. Things start tunelessly, with **CHEERBLEEDERZ**' cheeky

jangle punk, while **SUDS** are the sort of band who bring their own tape hiss and seven-inch crackle, coming off like Madder Rose without the Velvety drug outlook and Yo La Tengo at their sweetest. **SOOT SPRITE** don't quite hit the same melodic high, but still give us some Mazzy Star fuzziness and soothe our Cocteau twinge. A few solo acts play in a tiny side room (if this is a scout hut, the second stage is where they store the old tents and Akela's

secret medicinal brandy) the best of which is Oxford's **EB**, whose magic realist pseudo-rap is like an alternate reality inversion of The Streets, with a statistical love song coming off like an electro Jeffrey Lewis. "I put some feedback into this intro to annoy sound engineers" she grins, which tells you all you need to know. Neo-emo might be a strange concept – it's certainly a silly looking word – but **SPANK HAIR** wear the badge proudly, turning

in a strong sinewy set, whilst also considering which is better: a horse or a donkey; as a pacifist Harry Hill might observe, there's only one way to find out...pontificate at length whilst tuning.

JACK GOLDSTEIN is as impressively maximalist as ever, cramming an improbable number of songs into a single segued ultra-minstrel set. As Jack crawls round the floor with water dripping from his clothes we don't know whether he's a hyperpop prophet or Margate's most abstract floor polisher, but we approve.

As the evening darkens and the bar runs dry, the more raucous bands bring us home. Playful punks **LAMBRINI GIRLS** prove that, if you've got something important to say, say it incredibly loud, but temper it with a bit of humour (and if you can offer your listeners a wee drink whilst you rant, that helps too).

Heroes of the day, however, are **OTHER HALF**. One definition of a great new band is one that reminds you of lots of excellent acts, whilst not really sounding like any of them. Comparing notes with audience members post-set The Jesus Lizard, At The Drive In, Fugazi, Part Chimp, and Mccluskey are bandied about, but none of these capture the cheery insouciance of the twin vocals nor the 70s rock maelstrom behind the drums. Seek them out.

If today's event was an avant-scout jamboree, excuse us, as we're off to sew on our new badges for Beer Tasting, Feminist Discourse and Incipient Tinnitus. *David Murphy*

THE ORIELLES / TARA CLERKIN TRIO / THE PARALLELS

O2 Academy

At early doors tonight's audience is mainly made up of older, out-of-town faces who look a lot like music industry types. This suggests there may be a buzz about local four-piece The Parallels, who are an increasingly interesting proposition. Moving on from the Nouvelle Vague lounge style of single 'Sticky Floors' they now mix jangly guitars with unusual chords, some highly decent songs and general insouciance. The drums come from a backing track while the keyboard player sits knitting in front of her Minilab, pressing one button at the start of every song. Effortlessly cool, to use a cliché.

Tara Clerkin Trio, from Bristol, are an experimental outfit mixing jazz with a 90s trippy vibe. Struggling with a few technical issues they nevertheless make good use of keyboards, loops, vocals, clarinet, drums and

percussion, leaving lots of space around the sounds. It makes a good bridge for what is to follow, though leaving the impression they could achieve something higher.

The first time I saw The Orielles sisters Esme and Sid Hand-Halford (vocals/bass and drums) were 18 and 17, while guitarist Henry Wade was a relatively ancient 21. Six years on and they're almost unrecognisable, visually and musically, but fortunately it's all for the better. A well-received debut LP of solid, modern indie with a lightness of touch, some great guitar work and impenetrable but amusing lyrics preceded a disappointing follow-up. Then last year's 'Tableau' surprised everyone with music seeming to owe more to the cosmic free jazz of Sun Ra than most of what gets labelled indie, a brilliant yet disorienting double album that conjures up that feeling of waking from a

dream and not being sure where you are and which way is up.

Tonight there's plenty of electronics going on, from a new keyboard player as well as Henry, and a number of long, spacey improvisations. 'Chroma II' is a proper song, and a great one at that, providing one of the few links to their early days. Esme's voice is another familiar reference point and the bedrock of their sound, but instead of thinking of Orange Juice and The Pop Group we now feel transported to a 60s happening, though without the innocence. 'Beam/s' exemplifies the dreamlike quality, breathy vocals over a simple melody while Henry wrestles with his guitar, squeezing out unearthly sounds that somehow fits perfectly as it moves along, destroying all concepts of recognisable song structure. There are more conventional songs too, but the improvisations are the most thrilling part of the night, and you simply never want them to end.

This is without doubt the best gig with guitars I've attended for several years and a joy to witness in such a perfect setting.

Art Lagun

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+ Sara Wolff
+ Helen Pearson
23rd May @ Port Mahon

Wombo
+ Dogviolet + Yogzi
25th May @ Jericho Tavern

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LIVE

TIGER MENDOZA / SILENT WEAPON / ARTHUR & HANNAH OSOFSKY

The Port Mahon

When *Nightshift* gets home from tonight's Gappy Tooth Industries show *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* is on telly and the gig suddenly makes perfect sense.

Brother and sister combo Arthur & Hannah Osofsky are humanity before the onslaught, Hannah cutting out blues chords on her guitar – blues being the most human of all music – while Arthur recites his rhymes like Tom Hardy channelling Jack 'The Hat' McVitie channelling Ian Dury. There's a seediness in the words as we move from apples to drug dealers and perhaps humanity needs saving from itself.

Silent Weapon is the cyborg uprising, the conflagration that ends the world as we know it. Perched behind his small bank of machines Umair Chaudhry is merciless and unrelenting as he deals out punishing industrial noise and beats and inhuman death rasps, where Killing Joke go into the blender with Whitehouse and Throbbing Gristle and the end product is a liquid metal death machine that simply will not be stopped. If it's war you want, it's war you'll have.

What can follow such a storm? Well, perhaps Tiger Mendoza is the sound of those machines realising a fully automated world lacks a little soul and some human input is required, so while the electronics still rule, we get voices, melody, an urge to dance, snapshots of something a little bit playful, even. This machine and soul mixes in guitar, snapping drum&bass and hip hop beats and recognisable voices from the likes of Asher Dust and Ocean Ruins' Katy Herridge and offers blue skies, wide oceans and hope after the previous perfect devastation and desolation. Set closer 'Lovesick' brings a full uplift in mood and is a reminder of what a consistently inventive and engaging artist Tiger Mendoza is. Behold: the man machine!

Dale Kattack

OLI STEADMAN
The Covered Market

A solo Oli Steadman set is becoming a regular feature of Folk Weekend Oxford's line-up of local artists. This is the first of two scheduled solo appearances by the Stornoway man, and despite the noon start and telling us he had a late night (after a Stornoway gig in London), he's looking very chipper. He quickly shows he's in good voice by singing a capella Harvey Andrew's passage of time song 'January Man', and not being phased by the lack of a microphone and the sound of ankle bells as Morris dancers pass by.

Passage of time songs crop up at regular intervals in the set which is all covers, another being 'April Come She Will' and Oli tells us he's "kinda obsessed by time passing." Arguably the much covered traditional 'Grey Funnel Line', of which Oli says his favourite version is by The Silly Sisters, falls into this category as "the hardest part in the sailor's day is to watch the sun as it dies away". Perhaps we can expect a passage of time song on Stornoway's new album. Oli's voice, with which he so adeptly conveys a song's emotions is backed by some fine guitar skills which aren't impaired by playing on a borrowed guitar provided by fellow local singer Trev Williams and despite the absent mic and almost constant environmental noise, the man's talent and natural charisma rapidly quietens a good-sized crowd hanging out in the Covered Market's central space. All this happening

before it's time for lunch. Nice one Oli and Folk Weekend Oxford.
Colin May

ALASDAIR ROBERTS / MILKWEED
Florence Park Community Centre

We suspect Milkweed would plead guilty to deliberately cultivating weirdness and mystery. A trio, sometimes a six-piece electric band, tonight they're lo-fi duo of solo female voice and banjo: not traditional banjo but more like something you might hear at Supernormal festival. That's weird but weirdness is ladled on by their lyrics being objects found in Danish burial mounds that their songs – if that's an appropriate word for what they do – excavate, leaving them floating in the air. The voice is striking, the music as disorienting as the lyrics and they are unlike anything we've ever heard. We, and all the room, are hypnotised.

You need to be special to follow that. But we have no doubts that Glasgow's prolific Alasdair Roberts can. He's a contemporary folk singer-songwriter, serial collaborator and in folk super group The Furrow Collective. Tonight, though, he's a solo singer of traditional songs which are almost entirely from his latest collection of these, the superb 'Grief in the Kitchen and Mirth in the

Hall' – album seventeen as a solo artist. Most are Scottish, one or two are Irish and one Canadian, all learnt from other singers and from the sound archives of the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh.

While Roberts is sustaining Scottish culture's historic legacy, several of the songs are also stories for our time. For instance 'Eppie Morrie' – resistance to attempted forced marriage and rape, and 'The Wonderful Grey Horse', an allegory for doing good, who turns up at historical events from the fall of man onwards and "never will stop till the Tories he will make yield".

Whatever the source, being a master storyteller Alasdair Roberts makes the songs his own. The warm-accented, engaging Glaswegian tenor voice may never have sounded better or conveyed a song's emotional heft more powerfully. His thoughtful guitar playing is exquisite with the embellishments enhancing 'The Bonny Moorhen', a Jacobite-era allegory, and the flash of jazz guitar accompanying 'Young Airly', making us smile.

Ninety minutes passes in a blink of the proverbial eye. It's one of the quietest gigs we can recall, with no clearing of throats, shuffling feet, or whispered chatter, as the audience is as riveted by Alasdair as by Milkweed. Thanks to Divine Schism for the opportunity to hear both in an intimate space and to the sound engineer whose efforts contribute to what was a very special night.

Colin May

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WHAT'S MY LINE?

A monthly look at jobs in local music. This month it's VICTORIA LARKIN and she's DEPUTY DIRECTOR at OXFORD CONTEMPORARY MUSIC.

How long have you worked in this job?
"Ten years."

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

"I'm involved with the talent development area of our activity, which largely supports artists/musicians who want to create and present work in more accessible spaces like outdoors or unusual spaces, or in the digital realm."

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

"It's so hard to choose! Perhaps one of my most formative career highlights was a wonderful show called Audible Forces, which brought together a group of incredibly talented artists to create wind-driven/activated instruments. Working on that team was my first producing experience and it gave me a taster of how exciting, inspiring, fulfilling – and challenging! – it is to go on that creative journey with an artist."

And the lowlight?

"2020 was a tough year but we did our best to support musicians and bring music experiences to audiences. We even managed to do a truly magical outdoor gig with Rachael Dadd and Jas Kayser up in Wytham Woods in the autumn, made a reality with huge amounts of hard work from our brilliant programme producer Lauren Spiceley, just before we were all locked down again."



How much and how did Covid affect your job?

"It had a big impact: we had to start our event plans from scratch and make a new plan for what we could do through the pandemic, sometimes a few times over, but we're a small organisation, so we can be agile, and we're used to risk taking and partnering up, so with the brilliant OCM team we managed to navigate our way through it all."

Who's your favourite Oxford musical artist?

"It's hard for me not to say Inflatable Buddha because, whilst it may be nepotistic – the frontman is now my husband – they were also a very

talented bunch and stonkingly great fun. I spent many glorious gigs jumping around with a crowd of sweaty, happy people to their raucous tunes." **What's the single most important piece of advice you'd give to someone wanting to do your job?** "Make sure you've had an open and honest discussion about what everyone's expectations are at the start of a new project."

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

"I like to be discrete; it's the people pleaser in me."

When was the last time you heard genius?

"The recent Hack-Poets Guild's album and live show has genius running through it. Delving into the Bodleian's catalogue of ballads – some are hundreds of years old – this stellar trio of Nathaniel Mann, Lisa Knapp, and Marry Waterson have created tunes that are both fresh and interwoven with threads from our past. They deserve all the acclaim they're getting."

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

"No, I don't think so."

Would you swap your job for any other?

"I've always fancied archaeology, or market gardening."

Are you rich?

"No, but I do love my job and that's sort of the dream isn't it?"

Do you consider your job glamorous?

"Not really, it's more desk based than you'd think – lots of spreadsheets – and it's very hands on when we're producing an event, so it's more clipboards and waterproofs than glad rags and gift bags. But there are always spine-tingling moments when you're working on an event and that feels like a kind of glamour."

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

"People are passionate and there's always something new emerging."

Dr SHOTOVER: Terry Nation Street

Ah, there you are, Young Jackfruit. Pull up a pew and get an inspirational round in. We are currently making plans for the East Indies Club Coronation Street Party. Relatively simple, you might think... but the street party has turned into a bit of a nightmare alley. First up, Lord Groovie-Daye wants the celebrations to last for a month, because (I quote) 'there are so many bloody brilliant bands in Oxon, yeah?' – and he wants to book ALL of them. [Pitying look]. Meanwhile our Mancunian colleague Lord Vera-Duckworth is insisting that the royal knees-up should be themed around the long-running soap opera known as 'Corrie'. Every time we remonstrate, we are told to 'stop mithering'. Whatever that means. [Dr S takes a long meditative pull on his pint]. Wait a minute... Coronation... Corrie Nation... Terry Nation! Brilliant – DALEK SUITS ALL ROUND! Get me the planet Skaro on the phone! **Next month: Tory Scum! Ex-Starmer-nate!**



'Is it me, or are these LTN protests getting out of hand?'

INTRODUCING....

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

THE BOBO

Who is she?

The Bobo is the dark pop / electronic solo project of Maria Rozalska that began when she moved to Oxford from Poland five years ago; "My dad got me into music by playing Norah Jones, Melody Gardot and Dido when I was little; I played violin for seven years and I was a part of a band back in Warsaw," she says. "The last year of high school I started working on my own music on a demo version of GarageBand on my uncle's laptop. The little experiments became my first EP, 'Tiny Tiny Woe', in 2018." One of the songs featured on the EP, '7,000 Miles Away', found her working on the first LGBT web series in Poland called *Control*. She collaborated with the director Natasza Parzymies on an audiobook and last year was invited to produce the soundtrack for a third series of *Control*. In Oxford she has gigged regularly and collaborated with electronic music artist Kid Kin; their track 'Sprinter (At Last)' was a *Nightshift* Top 10 track and featured on the BBC Hotlist. Her third EP, 'For Me, the Sun', is released on the 9th May.

What does she sound like?

Ethereal, airy and slightly trippy electronic pop and shoegaze that can sound like it's coming at you from a mist, whispery vocals set alongside bubbling synths, chiming guitars and plangent piano, passages of delicate euphoria breaking up the downbeat nature of the songs. Or in her own words: "Melancholic dark pop. My mum used to call my music funeral songs because, well, most of them were – still are – quite sad."

What inspires her?

"Everyday life, struggles, a poem or a book I read. Music is definitely a way for me to channel any suppressed emotions and let it all out."

Her career highlight so far is:

"Probably being invited to work on the *Control* series. It was a great adventure and a creative challenge. I sometimes had to make a song in a week that was then supposed to become the promo single for the season. It taught me a lot."



And the lowlight:

"My first London gig. I had to sell a certain amount of tickets myself; I didn't and on top of that I put the one I sold into a book I brought back to the library the next day. Not only I ended up losing money but when I got to the venue no one really cared about the performances or the artists."

Her favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"I keep discovering new artists but at the moment it's definitely Low Island; their new album, 'Life in Miniature', is fantastic!"

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

"'Chet Baker Sings'. It's my forever go to."

When is her next gig and what can newcomers expect?

"Oh, Community! at Common Ground on the 7th May. I'll be performing songs from my new EP for the first time."

Her favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

"It's wonderful how supportive everyone is and ready to help each other out. Least favourite, or more sad, is the amount of venues that closed down in recent years due to various issues."

You might love her if you love:

Daughter; Mazzy Star; Chvrches; Soko; The Japanese House.

Hear her here:

"Spotify, Bandcamp, Instagram - pretty much everywhere!"

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

20 YEARS AGO

Radiohead glowered gloomily from the front cover of May 2003's *Nightshift* as they announced the imminent release of their new album, 'Hail To The Thief' (I know, twenty bloody years ago! Where's the time gone?) as well as a lead-up single, 'There There'.

Mostly, though, this month's issue was dedicated to the **Oxford Punt**, with each act playing given space to recommend another band on the bill. **Yannis Philippakis** from **Elizabeth** plugged **The Modern**, featuring **Hugo Manuel**, who reciprocated in kind. **Jody Prewett**, then of **X-Hail**, later of **Trophy Wife**, went for **Sexy Breakfast** and **Suitable Case For Treatment**, while **Suitable Case** themselves looked forward to the morning after when "it feels like an over-enthusiastic elephant has buggered your ears and the alcohol fairy has played merry hell with yer insides." **Jack Goldstein** from **Gunnbunny** announced that it would be his birthday on Punt night and he didn't expect to have to pay for any of his drinks, while **Richard Ramage** from **The Relationships** wrote us a special Punt poem, which now we read it back doesn't rhyme very well, but does avoid rhyming Punt with anything unpleasant.

Hot Hot Heat, **Clearlake** and ex-Spice Girl **Melanie C** were among the rest of May's

gigging highlights, the last of which suggests it was a quiet old month, and scanning the rest of the gig guide, we're left to wonder whatever happened to the likes of **Tartfuel**, **Spankboy** or **Bareface**, and if anyone still mourns their passing.

10 YEARS AGO

More Punt action in May 2013 with **The Wheatsheaf**, **The Cellar**, **The Purple Turtle**, and **The Duke's Cut** among the venues now residing in the What Have We Lost drawer. Band-wise **The August List** (also the month's Introducing act) made their presence felt, alongside **Candy Says** and **Ags Connolly**. As well as those **After The Thought** are still with us. Gone and not yet forgotten were **Death of H-Fi**; **Mother Corona**; **Duchess**; **Listing Ships**; **The Graceful Slicks**; **Bear Trap**; **Empire Divided**; **Yellow Fever** and **Traps**. Beyond that rather special night there were gig treats to be had in the form of **Simple Minds**, and **OMD** and **John Foxx** (**The New Theatre**); **Major Lazer**, **Gaz Coombes**, **John Grant** and **Catfish & the Bottlemen** (all **O2 Academy**), **Daughter** (**Oxford Town Hall**), and **The Handsome Family** (**The Bullingdon**), while **WOOD** hosted **Mary Epworth**; **Paper Aeroplanes** and **Danny & the Champions of the World**.

5 YEARS AGO

"If you are seeking then Oxford is an inspirational place, conducive to contemplative thought." Thus spake **Inner Peace** who graced the cover of *Nightshift*'s May 2018 cover, the local hip hop collective talking about their collaborative conscious rap and the strong friendship bonds that tied the expansive group together. "We've been on some adventures together."

The collective were due to play on the *Nightshift*-curated Uncommon Stage at this year's **Common People** in South Park, joining fellow local stars **The Deadbeat Apostles**; **Tiger Mendoza**; **The August List**; **Candy Says**; **Death Of The Maiden**; **Brickwork Lizards**; **Great Western Tears**; **Drore** and a show-stealing **MSRY** across the two days, while the main stage featured headline sets from **The Jacksons**, **James and Ride**. Highlights on that stage were **Sparks** who, coincidentally, return to town this month at **The New Theatre**.

Away from that event, the late, great **Wilko Johnson** was in town at the **O2 Academy**, as were **Frank Turner & The Sleeping Souls**, **Black Honey** and **DMA's**, who are also back in town this month.

Among new local releases this month was **Gaz Coombes'** 'World's Strongest Man'.

HARCOURT ARMS

MAY

FRI 5TH
MOONARON FAREWELL GIG

SAT 6TH
HIPSHAKIN'

SAT 13TH
HIPBONE SLIM & THE KNEEJERKS

FRI 19TH
THE JOLLY GROGSTERS

SAT 20TH
THE NIGEL BROWN BAND

THURS 25TH
STEPH PIRRIE JAZZ

SAT 27TH
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TRACKS

Yin & Yang Audio

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

TOP TRACK

THE FUTURE OF VIOLENCE

The world is, as you might have noticed from what's left of the BBC's news service after all the Tory-inspired cuts, in a bit of a pickle right now. Commentators currently seem more upset by the state of a snooker table than the state of the climate, war is ever ongoing and AI is about to either take all our jobs or send us into a thermonuclear void. So of course *Nightshift*, who tends toward the nihilistic side of pessimism, has picked an act called The Future of Violence as Track of the Month. The band is the work of a guy called Calvin Butcher and this is his second visit to these pages. He hasn't mellowed any since his debut, this track, 'Nightmare 1984' (don't forget to sing along, children!), is a churning monolith of industrial rock, relentless machine beats, shredded riffage and dispassionate cyborg commentary interspersed with end-of-their-tether vocals that speak quite likely of the end of everything you hold dear. Even cake and baby bunnies. The synths sound like the intro to *The Terminator* and at eight-plus minutes the track has a will-not-be-stopped feel to it. Of course it's over the top and over dramatic but then Armageddon is a bit like that. If you do fancy singing along a choice line is: "It's in your brain / It's in your blood / It's gonna crawl into your stomach / And eat your face off / 1984." Preposterous stuff of course but the only song this month that captures the ongoing horror of what really lies beneath Suella Braverman's human skin suit. Cheers everyone!

BILL FRIZZELL

Now this is a cute project and no mistake. Ukulele botherer Bill Frizzell has sent us time-lapse videos previously to accompany his music but this is a step or six up, this time working with Phil Hanaway-Oakley from Flights of Helios and various members of Horns of Plenty to create a neat piece of modern electronic jazz that wouldn't sound out of place on Stuart Maconie's Freakzone, with a woozily hypnotic vibe to it. But the real treat is the accompanying video, a stop-motion piece of a patio Bill (billed here as Bill-Dur) built out of old bricks in his back

garden and featuring a cast of characters including a small army of mugs and a cluster of flow rate meters, all of which develop their own tiny wee characters as the work is completed, eventually formally opened by a Queen's Jubilee mug. Of course it's a bit of sweet-natured whimsy but it's gently mesmerising and watching it could soothe the most agitated toddler. We got through it four times before we dared to listen to the music on its own. And it still sounded great. Aardman would be proud, as would John Coltrane, possibly. How often do you get to say that?

HAYDEN RAMM

As even the most casual reader has probably noticed there are few things *Nightshift* loves more than an earnest young man armed with an acoustic guitar. Mostly because they give us ample opportunity to play with our set of antique poking sticks. We're thinking we'll need to dust them off again for Hayden Ramm's set of homemade confessionals and solemn daydreams as he wanders down Bland Strumming Avenue on 'Admission', but once we get into his stuff there's much to quite enjoy, like what could be a spot of steel guitar slide on 'Human Nature', or 'Nothing With a Happy Ending' where he shows he's best with a piano rather than a guitar at his fingertips. This is most obvious on best song of the lot, 'One For The Road', a featherweight lament where Hayden shows he's got a hint or two of Brian Molko about him vocally but instead of sleazy gothic-glam rock, he's more breathy, intensely reflective balladeer. Young and earnest he might be, armed with an acoustic guitar he might be, and some of his profile pictures make him look almost comically serious and pouty, but we'll keep the poking sticks locked in the draw for now; some really quite lovely moments here should you give them a chance to emerge.

THE JERICHS

Perhaps the thing we like even more than earnest young men with acoustic guitars here at *Nightshift* is earnest blokes with their eyes and ears more on the technicalities of music rather than its soul, and so it can feel at times with The Jerichos, a band whose first song proper here, 'A View From The Bridge To Nowhere', gets its guitar solo in early – and then another one at the end in case you somehow missed it – and generally sounds like the band's prime musical directive is to be sensible, obey all the accepted rules and dutifully read their copies of *Classic Rock* mag each month rather than have, y'know, a bit of fun and silliness, but they are not without hope as 'Man On The Moonbeam' shows, a more lively and soulful song where substance might just win out against technique; again the band seem intent on showing off some clever moves on the old fret board but at least here letting the song breathe a bit more. You can't help

but wonder if they ever really cut loose though, other than for another guitar solo, but if they're not the kind of band you'd book to entertain a room full of excitable, hormonal teenagers, they are exactly the sort of people you'd trust to rent your flat out to, knowing they wouldn't break anything and would probably wash up thoroughly after they'd enjoyed their half pints of something authentic and artisan.

JOHN'S GONE & THE DISAPPOINTMENTS

Perhaps proving we shouldn't judge artists by their genre, John's Gone & The Disappointments here are a punk band of sorts, so we're onside from the off. But the band's name seems to be somewhat apposite even if all things concerned it's more fun than the previous bunch. Initially the slightly yobbish approach to post-Idles rocking, all burly, bulldozing, chunky riffage and no-nonsense, meat-munching vocal swagger seems fit for purpose and even comes with the odd bit of tasteful feedback before it's once more into the moshpit, but it all starts to feel a bit too macho, a bit eight-pints-of-ale-and-push-everyone-around punk rock rather than military-industrial-complex-destroying spit and venom and at times the whole thing sounds like it'd be more at home in a Texan roadhouse blues rock club as it chugs laboriously along, perhaps suffering from clogged arteries. They up the ante significantly for final track 'Smudge', which is both more lithe, disordered and frenetic, sounding more like the kind of aggressive, untamed r'n'b that led into punk in the mid-70s. Benefit of the doubt restored and should original yob rockers Cock Sparrer ever come to town, here's the support act right here.

NINE DAY FALL

Nine Day Fall sound like we imagine John's Gone & The Disappointments slightly unhinged brother might, with or without a few beers inside him. This is more punk rock but of a more scattergun type, any semblance of production values, verses, choruses or good manners dispensed with in favour of a rush to get from start to finish akin to a drunkard running for the loo after an hour stuck on the last bus home on a Friday night. It is absolutely utterly lacking in subtlety but doesn't particularly suffer for all that, wearing its lack of finesse as a badge of honour alongside its Anti Pasti and Discharge badges. Punk rock of a kind that has neither matured nor dated since about 1982. You can argue the toss with them as to its worth or effectiveness but while you were thinking of fancy words they've nicked all the cider in your fridge and are off to liberate some chickens from the farm across town.

LONDON GRAFFITI

Despite the name, which might suggest a

ragged bunch of street urchins using stolen gear to make an anarcho-punk racket, there's nothing yobbish about London Graffiti; in fact they mostly sound like they'd faint clean away should a burly thug with tattoos on his knuckles accuse them of spilling his pint. Not that they're fey, more cultured with a scholarly approach to tidily fidgety indie with the merest hint of folk rock about it. Actually this is possibly what Stormoway might have sounded like if they'd ditched the harmonies and ornithology and started listening to bands like Peace and Friendly Fires sometime in the previous decade or thereabouts. And it's passably pleasant – seems to be a bit of a theme this month – and neatly done, but it's one of those songs you struggle to recall much about once it's finished, even after three plays.

TOILET TRACK

MICHAEL VALENTINE

It's been one of those months when *Nightshift* worries about mellowing with age, having been particularly forgiving with some of this bunch of tracks. But there's always something lurking near the bottom of the pile, ready to rekindle our ire. "I hope you are being kind to yourself and enjoying 2023 so far," chirps Michael Valentine chirpily, immediately setting our teeth on edge with his niceness and positivity. Actually *Nightshift* has been being kind to itself if the empty Easter egg boxes and discarded vodka bottles strewn around the room are anything to go by – our memories of the past few hours are vague and it could actually have been The Future of Violence who made all this mess, but regardless, Michael here's contribution to the party, a track called 'Kingdom of Glory', is a cack-handed Christian rock anthem-cum-power-ballad that comes with a smile so shiny white it actually eclipses the lights of Heaven. We should've known he was a religious sort with that initial greeting and not bothered answering the door, but now he's in we can only grin and bear it and secretly slip a handful of Psilocybin mushrooms in the teapot and wait for Michael to really start experiencing the kind of religious visions he believes will be so enlightening. We also stick The Future of Violence on a loop so the soundtrack to his trip will be suitably rapturous. By all that's holy – sorry, those mushrooms have made us a bit devotional – this is Formica-level blandness on a literally Biblical scale. "Take my hand, into the light of love / Come walk with me, into the gates of Heaven / Body and Blood, shed for our salvation / I follow you, into the Kingdom of Glory," bleats Michael over some insipid acoustic dawdling and we dutifully set about helping him along his way to his promised land by way of a large lump hammer. The Devil really does have all the best tunes.

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

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+ EVA GADD

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PIANO SINGER SONGWRITER

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JERICO TAVERN

THE PEOPLE VERSUS

INDIE HARMONY POP

OCT FRI 20

THE BULLINGDON

CUT CAPERS

9-PIECE BRASS, FUNK, DANCE AND HIP-HOP

MAY FRI 05

THE BULLINGDON

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O₂ ACADEMY2

BLACK PARADE

00'S EMO ANTHEMS

OCT SAT 28

O₂ ACADEMY2

ANDY BELL'S GLOK

ELECTRONIC AND PSYCH

MAY THU 11

THE BULLINGDON

THERAPY?

"HARD COLD FIRE" ALBUM LAUNCH EVENT

SEP SAT 23

O₂ ACADEMY2

THE JOY FORMIDABLE

RIFF SPLINTERED ALT-ROCK

NOV WED 01

THE BULLINGDON

FUTURE UTOPIA

COLLABORATIVE PRODUCER WORKING WITH
ARLO PARKS, DAVE, KAE TEMPEST

MAY MON 22

THE BULLINGDON

BC CAMPLIGHT

ALBUM LAUNCH

OCT SAT 07

O₂ ACADEMY2

**THE ELECTRIC
SWING CIRCUS**

6-PIECE SWING AND ELECTRO BEATS

NOV SAT 04

O₂ ACADEMY

THE DUALERS

UPBEAT REGGAE & SKA
+ ZAIA, TONY NANTON