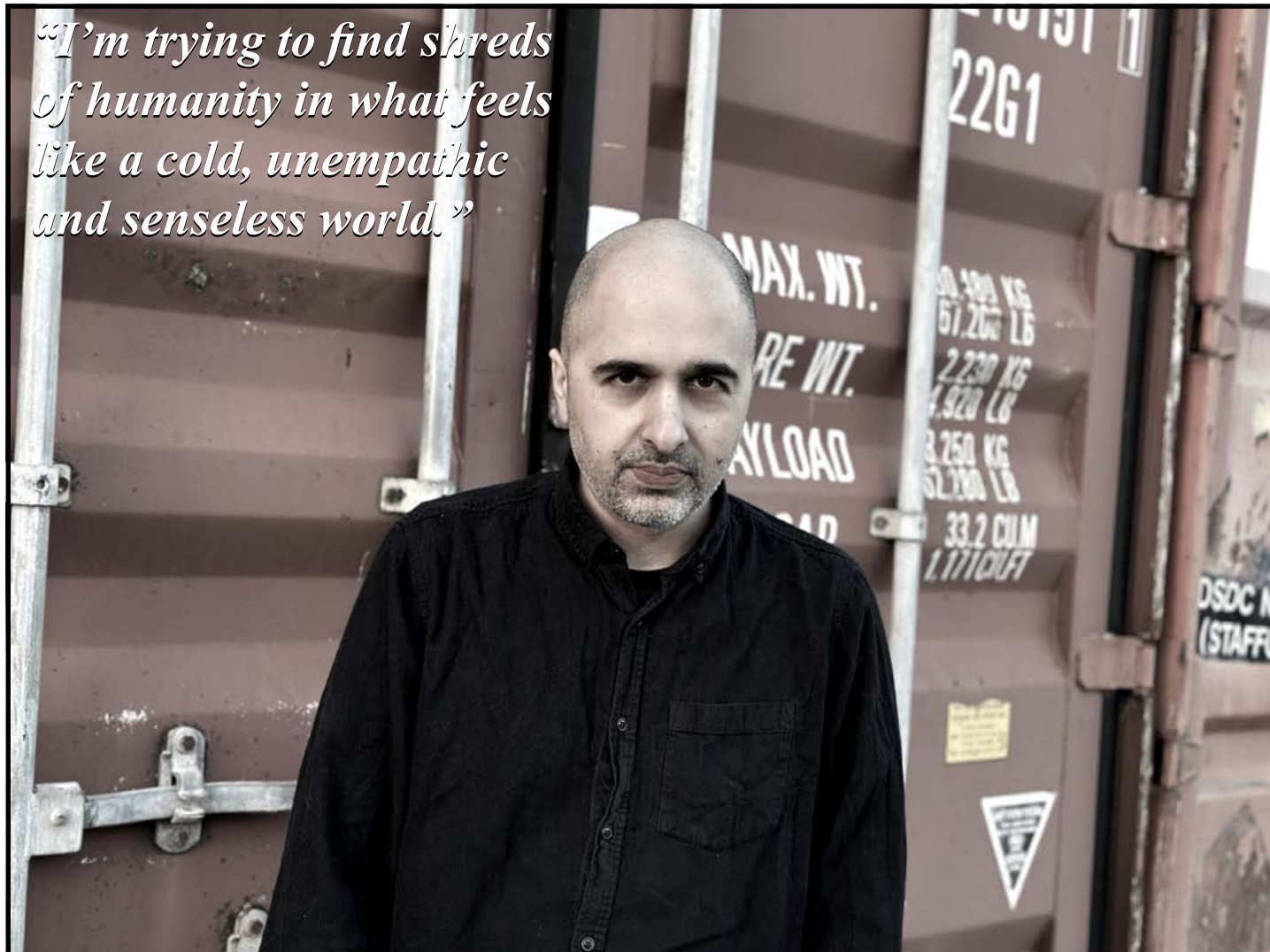


# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month  
Issue 324  
November  
2023

*"I'm trying to find shreds  
of humanity in what feels  
like a cold, unempathic  
and senseless world."*



# SILENT WEAPON

Brilliant brutalism with  
Oxford's Baron of Bleak

Also in this issue:

Introducing **DAKORRA**  
At work with **MARK WILDEN**

Plus

All your Oxfordshire music news, previews,  
reviews and gigs for November

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# THE BULLINGDON

NOVEMBER 2023

GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Tuesday 31st October

UKG (Rave)

**Halloween Special**

Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 1st November

**Future Utopia**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 3rd November

**Steve Williams & Steve Hall**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 3rd November

**The Cosmic Cage 360 Rave**

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 4th November

**Teen Spirit Vs We Are Still Young**

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th November

**Rabidfest 2023**

Doors: 12PM

Tuesday 7th November

**The Old 97's**

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 8th November

**Kosheen**

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 9th November

**Erja Lyytinen**

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 9th November

**The Musicals Party**

Doors: 11PM

Friday 10th November

**Hurricane #1**

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 11th November

Simple

**Lcy & Mixtress**

Doors: 11PM

Monday 13th November

**Pale Blue Eyes**

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 16th November

OFC Present

**In-Flight Movie**

**London Graffiti**

**Purple Grace**

**Nothing Dreams**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 17th November

**Tom McGuire and the Brassoies**

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 18th November

Basic

**Y U QT**

Doors: 11PM

Monday 20th November

**Sunny Sweeney**

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 22nd November

**Brave Rival**

Doors: 7PM

Thursday 23rd November

**Tom A. Smith**

**Harvey Jay Dodgson**

**Tom Abisgold**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 24th November

**London Calling**

**Play The Clash**

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 25th November

Discharged:

**The Final Stop on Hamdi's**

**Extended Cut Tour**

Doors: 11PM

Tuesday 28th November

**Chameleons**

**Feather Trade**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 1st December

**Toology & Ghosts**

**in the Photographs**

**Echochamber**

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 2nd December

Simple

**Peach B2B Midland**

**All night Long**

Doors: 11PM

Friday 8th December

**Tide Lines**

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 9th December

**Reggaeton Party**

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 10th December

Doors: 7PM

**Opus Kink**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 15th December

**Dreadzone**

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 16th December

Old Skool Oxford

**Micky Finn**

**['94-'96 Set]**

Doors: 11PM

Sunday 17th December

In a Different Place

**Mandrake Handshake**

**The Medicine, The August List**

**Deadbeat Apostles, Killer Kowalski**

**Emma Hunter, Mid Air Dogmilk, Cholly**

Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 20th December

**The Jake Kirkpatrick**

**Memorial Gig**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 22nd December

The Shapes Xmas Shindig

**The Balkan Wanderers**

**Jody & The Jerns**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 22nd December

The Operation

**Burt Cope & Traffic MC**

**DR.OP**

**3 Cubed**

Doors: 11PM

Saturday 30th December

**Rawdio**

Doors: 11PM

Friday 19th January

**Nirvana Tribute**

Doors: 7PM

Friday 9th February

**The Total Stone Roses**

Doors: 7PM

Saturday 10th February

**Beam Me Up 2024**

**Deadletter**

**The Rills**

**Dolores Forever**

**Snayx**

Doors: 7PM

# NEWS

email: [editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk](mailto:editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk)

Online: [nightshiftmag.co.uk](http://nightshiftmag.co.uk)



**BARRICANE, TAMARA AND**

**ENJOYABLE LISTENS** are among

the acts that have been added to **IN A**

**DIFFERENT PLACE** in December.

The all-day celebration of Oxford music,

co-promoted by *Nightshift*, Gappy

Tooth Industries and All Will Be Well

Records, takes across both rooms of **The**

**Bullingdon on Sunday 17th December.**

Also announced for the front bar are

**Laima Bite, Old Man May and Simon**

**Veaney**, while **31hours** have been added

to the back room bill. Headlining the back

room are Oxford-London psychedelia

ensemble Mandrake Handshake. They're

joined by The August List; The Deadbeat

Apostles; Killer Kowalski; Mid Air; Emma

Hunter; Dogmilk, and Cholly.

The day runs from 2pm through to

11.15pm. Tickets, priced £12.50, are on

sale now from [Wegottickets.com](http://Wegottickets.com).

**DISCHARGE, HANG THE BASTARD**

**AND CONAN** will headline **BURIED IN**

**SMOKE FESTIVAL** next year. The three

day metal and rock festival runs over the

weekend of the **22nd-24th March** at **The**

**Jericho Tavern** and **The Port Mahon**.

Friday sees a headline set from D-beat

pioneers Discharge at The Jericho, who

are joined by Inhuman Nature, Los

Pepes and Molly Karloff; on Saturday

the action switches to The Port Mahon

where blackened sludge metallers Hang

The Bastard are joined by Desert Storm;

Ritual King; Damaged Reich; Battalions;

A Horse Called War; The Crushing, Public

Execution, and WALL, while the Sunday

sees doom heavyweights Conan alongside

Wallowing; Old Horn Tooth; Indica Blues,

and Silent Weapon.

Tickets for the festival are on sale now,

priced £30 for the weekend or £15 for each

day from [Wegottickets.com](http://Wegottickets.com).

**DEADLETTER, THE RILLS, SNAYX**

**AND DOLORES FOREVER** are the first

names to be announced for next year's

**BEAM ME UP** mini-festival. The all-day

event runs across **The O2 Academy**

and **The Bullingdon** on **Saturday 10th**

**February**. More information and ticket

details at [beammeupfestival.co.uk](http://beammeupfestival.co.uk).

**MELTING POT** are compiling their

annual **Best of Oxford** chart for broadcast

on the show later this year. The fortnightly

show, presented Deadly and Rich, which

showcases new and classic Oxfordshire

music on Get Radio, is inviting listeners to

nominate their favourite tracks of the year.

Send in your top 3 tracks by Oxford bands

or artists to [meltingpot@getradio.co.uk](mailto:meltingpot@getradio.co.uk) by

December 7th. The winner will be announced

on December 28th. This year, the winning

band or artist will win a free recording

session at ARC Studios, Eynsham.

**OXFORD CITY FESTIVAL** returns to

town this month with a host of showcase

gigs at venues across oxford. Organised by

Mark 'Osprey' O'Brien, who is celebrating

40 years of playing and promoting music

in Oxford this year, OCF kicks off on

Thursday 7th with Mid Air, The Foam Heads,

Firegazer, The Faith Healers and Maisy's

Rainbow Dream at The Bullingdon. Gigs

then take place at The Bullingdon, Port

Mahon, The Jericho Tavern and Gladiators

Club with the final show featuring Neon

Teepee and Helen Pearson at the Port on

Thursday 30th. Osprey himself headlines The

O2 Academy on Friday 24th with support

from Starbelly, Mojo Demon and Charms

Against the Evil Eye. All OCF shows are in

this month's gig guide.

**SUNDAY SESSIONS** returns this month

after a three-year hiatus. The family-

friendly Sunday afternoon live music

session, run by musician Dave Noble,

will be celebrating its tenth anniversary

on the **12th November at Florence Park**

**Community Centre** when vibraphone

virtuoso Roger Beaujolais and folk singer

and fiddle player Jackie Oates will be the

guests. The original session series ran from

2013 til 2020 when Covid brought them to

a halt.

**WITNEY PEDAL PARTY** returns on the

**5th November**. The day runs from midday

through til 5pm at **Fat Lil's** and features

products from the likes of Chase Bliss,

TherapyFX, Holy Island Audio and Life is

Unfair.

**BBC INTRODUCING IN**

**OXFORDSHIRE & BERKSHIRE**

continues to showcase grassroots music

from across both counties every Thursday,

from 8-10pm on 95.2fm and DAB.

The show, presented by Dave Gilyeat,

is repeated on Saturday evenings and

is available to listen to online on BBC

Sounds.

**BANDSCANNER** offers a gig guide app for

phones, laptops and PCs that lets gig-goers

instantly access videos by artists playing in

Oxfordshire. Find it at [bandscanner.net](http://bandscanner.net).

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## HARCOURT ARMS

FRI 3RD

**OXFORD REBETIKO NIGHT**

SAT 7TH

**HIPSHAKIN'**

SAT 11TH

**SAVANNAH GARDNER**

FRI 17TH

**THE JOLLY GROGSTERS**

SAT 18TH

**THE MAMBO PANTHERS**

THURS 23RD

**STEPH PIRRIE JAZZ**

FRI 24TH

**THE KNIGHTS OF MENTIS**

SAT 25TH

**THE FACTORY LIGHTS**

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# SILENT WEAPON



“IT’S GREAT TO BE OUT THERE ON my own, doing something different from the crowd, which is all I’ve ever wanted. On the other hand, people might think it as being bleak for bleak’s sake. The music I make and all the emotions come from a genuinely dark place, a disturbance in my soul and from the experiences I’ve had. There’s been times I’ve been in pits of nihilism and despair so profound that I didn’t think I had the will to go on. Music has given me that will, and that reason. I’m actually quite content with life these days, and I’ve embraced the spiritual. I’ve ditched my old relativistic attitude towards truth and morality. Time and death aren’t as intimidating as they once were. I see life as polarity; there is no light without darkness, no yin without yang. The only morality is to do no harm, and that’s it. Whilst I dwell in the light of my life, the wonderful people and blessings I’ve received, I process the darkness through my music. It’s a necessity, and a therapy.”

SO SAYS UMAIR CHAUDHRY, THE man behind electronic music death machine Silent Weapon – and many other projects – when *Nightshift* asks him about the title bestowed upon him by this magazine: Oxford’s Baron of Bleak. To know Umair in person is to realise he’s neither bleak nor an actual baron, but instead a quietly affable and extremely talented musician with a knack for channelling his very human thoughts and feelings through music that can scourge the soul and scour the skin of the listener. As he says himself, even in Oxford’s fertile and varied music scene he is an outlier. No-one else in town can punish us with music like Umair. Punishment we revel in.

FROM HIS TIME IN EXPERIMENTAL metal band Xmas Lights back in the Noughties, through myriad solo projects since, Umair has been a musician that challenges both himself and his audience. And with his most recent project, Silent Weapon, he is making some of the best

music of his life. Last year’s ‘Purge’ album was a coruscating journey through what sometimes felt like a musical war zone: harsh electronic drones; punishing beats, crushing sub bass, and vicious, disembodied rasping vocals – nightmarish, dystopian and utterly exhilarating. Or maybe *Terminator: The Musical!* This month Umair releases a follow-up EP under the Silent Weapon moniker, ‘Fear of the Possibility of Chaos’: an apposite time to catch up with him and talk about two decades of making some of the most challenging music to come out of Oxford.

UMAIR’S MUSICAL LIFE BEGAN AT a very early age; he was just eight years old when he began discovering sounds and creating tunes after a chance encounter with a musical instrument. “I discovered my connection with music when I stumbled across a Casio keyboard at my uncle’s house aged eight. I didn’t really know what I was doing, but I started pressing the keys and found this melody which seemed to come out of nowhere. It was like I was expressing my soul through the keys. It was a very sombre, melancholic tune which I remember to this day. Immediately afterwards I asked my parents to buy me a keyboard and started composing melodies and songs. Later on I started making music on my computer, got bigger keyboards and eventually learned the guitar. My family facilitated my journey into music by buying me the instruments, but apart from that they kind of left me to it. As my interest grew, their reaction became the classic ‘music is not a proper job’. Eventually they learned to accept it, due to my stubbornness and decision to follow my heart.”

NIGHTSHIFT FIRST ENCOUNTERED Umair when he was part of the superb Xmas Lights – a band who mixed invention and experimentation with exhilarating ferocity both on record and live and who were ahead of the curve when it came to post-metal. “Xmas Lights started off with a few guys from local bands getting together and jamming, with a view to make experimental hardcore music. It was just a standard band setup at first, but James (Gray-King) the guitarist was on the lookout for a keyboardist to further expand the sound. I was working with him in Blockbusters at the time, we got chatting and discovered our mutual love of music. That’s when he asked me to join the band. It was an exciting and adventurous time, lots of our songs evolved from random jams. We toured the UK a few times, released a handful of EPs and an album. Being in the band really helped me with personal difficulties I was going through, and gave me a sense of focus and catharsis. “I think we were there more or less at the start of the post-metal genre; we didn’t want to play bog-standard metal. Experimenting was important for everyone in the band, so we would mix brutality with ambient passages and it somehow it worked. Our influences and inspiration were many and varied.”

SADLY THE BAND FELL APART AS members moved away and jobs and family lives took over. Since then Umair, as well as working as a studio engineer, has ploughed a mostly solo furrow through various projects, each released on his own Blindsight label, from the eclectic musical hellscape of Full on Empty, through the graceful post-rock of Abandon to the Gregorian industrial dirges of Monday Morning Sun and the scouring, Swans-inspired Gift of Blindness. The chief constant has been a hefty tendency towards musical darkness – Umair’s way of exorcising inner doubts and demons. “Gift of Blindness in particular has been very cathartic, making and performing that music has got me through some very tough times. The same could be said for my other projects to be fair.” Of those various projects, Abandon most felt like a stylistic departure with a sense of grace and even beauty about it. “I discovered the Abandon sound by accident. At the time I was going through a rough patch, my guitar had been stolen and I had a lot of emotional upheaval, disorientation and descent into just general despair. A friend kindly lent me his guitar, and I started playing around with some clean sounds with effects. Melodies and a sound just came to me. Abandon means abandonment of the false self/ego.” Was there a conscious effort on Umair’s part to delineate between each project rather than combine the various styles under one name? “I think it was more a case of me distancing myself from previous work due to dis-concernment, and starting something new afresh. That way I could be psychologically excited about the new work, and park the old, perhaps to pick it up later when I felt that connection again.” With Silent Weapon now Umair’s musical, ahem, weapon of choice, is there any chance of returning to previous ideas and monikers? “I intend on revisiting Gift of Blindness, definitely. Because I do still love slow, heavy and crushing music. Abandon has now kind of morphed into a new project called Walls of Freedom, which I have more in the pipeline for. Full on Empty has morphed into Silent Weapon, and the others I don’t care to revisit at the moment because I think they’ve run their course.” What shifts in tastes or ambitions led to the purely electronic Silent Weapon? “My interest in electronic music began when I was young, I listened to a lot of dance music back then. Something about the hypnotic trance state it can induce was very appealing to me. ‘Music for the Jilted Generation’ by The Prodigy was hugely influential. The sounds were dark, the beats hard and there was a groove. These are some of the defining characteristics of Silent Weapon, along with overbearing sub bass. There’s something about deep bass that is so visceral. I’ve really been inspired by electronic artists I’ve seen in Oxford, including Black Tish, Mothdrop, Tiger Mendoza, Octavia Freud etc. They made me realise that I can be my own force of nature without the disagreements, friction and commitment issues that come with being in a band. It’s been quite empowering. That’s not to say I don’t enjoy being in bands when the ingredients and personalities fit. A certain amount of friction is good for creating something unique, but too much and things start to implode. A meeting of minds has to be present, you might say.”

WHILE UMAIR MIGHT BE SOMETHING of an army of one in Oxford, an artist to whom he has regularly been compared over the years is Justin Broadrick, an admitted major inspiration throughout all of Umair’s musical lives; he too has enjoyed a career of ever shifting styles and monikers, while always living on the darker, heavier end of the musical spectrum. What is it about him Umair admires? “I discovered his work via Godflesh, when I heard a song on a magazine cover CD. There was something so disturbing and intense about the sound. It was totally claustrophobic and crushing, and I related to that. As a kid I used to have a recurring dream of a boulder rolling over me, crowds of people on the sides cheering on. So it all felt so familiar to me. From there I explored his other work, and found I liked all of it. I admire and relate to his complete dedication to art, how much of himself he puts into it. There should be no compromise in art.”

“Just because you can, doesn’t mean you should. That’s the hallmark of wisdom. And we’re anything but wise.”

Uncompromising is very much the order of the day with Silent Weapon. The music was likened to the sound of the AI apocalypse in one *Nightshift* review; is that something Umair was aiming for? “Not intentionally. The emotions I’m trying to express are turbulent, so I can see how it comes across that way.” ‘Purge’ probably has the least human feel of any of Umair’s releases to date; was there a conscious effort to strip away the humanity? “Again not intentionally, I don’t think. It’s all how I’m feeling at the time; the lack of humanity is to do with a reaction to humanity itself. By enduring the onslaught of this technological sound, I’m trying to find shreds of humanity in what feels like a cold, unempathic and senseless world. That’s what I get also from bands like Skinny Puppy who use a similar approach to art.

WHILE UMAIR HAS SPENT MOST OF his time since the break-up of Xmas Lights ploughing a solo musical furrow, he has recently found himself teaming up with former Adam & the Ants and Bow Wow Wow drummer David Barbarossa on a forthcoming project – and on forthcoming Silent Weapon tracks. How, we wonder does someone like him get involved with Umair’s music? “I was introduced to Dave by a mutual friend of ours, Steve Norris, who is a talented guitarist and film-maker. I was looking for a drummer to drum on a couple of tracks, Steve recommended him so I got in touch. In exchange for doing some drumming for me, he asked me to add vocals to a couple of his own songs in Telekinetic Dog. So I tried it out with an open mind, experimenting with spoken word and singing. To my surprise Dave loved the results, which I wasn’t expecting at all, especially from someone who’d already made it in the industry. I’ve now become the third member in Telekinetic Dog, which is a complete departure for me stylistically. People have referenced Joy Division, Nick Cave, Lou Reed and Bowie. We hope to have some

recordings ready soon, and have been playing shows in London. In terms of Silent Weapon, I completed a new album this year featuring both Dave and Steve. This will be out in due course once I’ve found a suitable label. In the meantime, I am releasing a new EP this month called ‘The Fear of the Possibility of Chaos’. It expands on my previous work by introducing melody and ambience, with a hint of 2000s-era hard drum&bass like Technical Itch, Dylan, Audio, Usual Suspects etc. It also features a cover of the band Voivod.” Subsequent to the release of ‘Purge’, Umair also released a dub version of the album; what is it about dub that makes it sit so well with hardcore/extreme music? How inspired was he inspired by Killing Joke’s dub side? “I just think it’s an interesting contrast that works well. Killing Joke have always been an inspiration with everything I do, but in terms of dub it was actually people like King Tubby, Augustus Pablo and Mad Professor that got me into it. These are people that I feel were the true pioneers, paving the way for an entire genre. I do love Killing Joke’s early foray into dub, and all the dub remixes they released in the 80s. I was obsessed with them as a teen, and I’m still obsessed with them now.”

RETURNING TO THAT TITLE OF Oxford’s Baron of Bleak, we wonder if Umair feels Oxford currently lacks a strong extreme music scene. Over the years the city has produced the likes of Nought, Human Torches, Sextodecimo, Undersmile and Drove. These days there is little to pick from besides Umair himself and maybe the industrial duo Black Tish and some of dronemeister Lee Riley’s experiments. “I absolutely agree with this. We used to have bands like Undersmile whom I loved, but there is little in terms of extreme music these days from Oxford. I would mention The Hope Burden, who are great and I absolutely love them as well. Music in general has become quite banal; many artists really don’t have much to say and don’t want to push the boundaries. The sense of danger and provocation has gone. I see it as reflective of our society’s general decent into hedonism, conformity and vanity. We don’t really see revolutions anymore. I’d like to see more people taking a risk, stand out and be different. Don’t be afraid to break the rules or cause a reaction because you may not get that deal, that review or that gig. People pleasing is the enemy of true art. Counter it with fearlessness, ferocity and staying true to who you are.” And finally, given the nature of his music generally and Silent Weapon in particular, does Umair have an idea of how he feels the world might end? One immense apocalyptic moment, brighter than a thousand suns, or slow, miserable slide into decay? “I think if we don’t learn to live in harmony with nature we will destroy ourselves, or nature will destroy us. Perhaps it will happen due to our technological foolery, and maybe this has happened before; who knows? We’ve pillaged the earth, created nuclear weapons, and now AI that we could lose control of. The last world war wasn’t that long ago. Just because you can, doesn’t mean you should. That’s the hallmark of wisdom. And we’re anything but wise.”

Hear Silent Weapon at [silentweapon.bandcamp.com](http://silentweapon.bandcamp.com).



# RELEASED

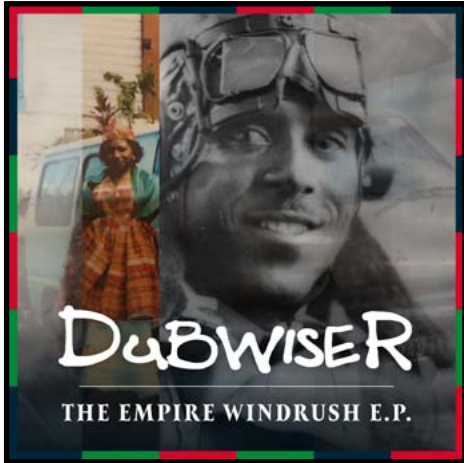
## DUBWISER

### ‘The Empire Windrush’ (Self-released)

It’s only about 20 minutes since Dubwiser’s last EP, yet here they are again, slipping out a four-tracker to coincide with Black History Month. The tracks mostly use personal histories to highlight the ups and downs of racial integration (or lack of it) in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Britain, proving that a human story will nearly always make a point better than a political harangue.

The title track focuses on a single woman sailing to the UK on HMT Empire Windrush, but your ears will focus on the fantastic horns borrowed from Birmingham band KIOKO, especially the stretching-taffy trombone. The vocal melody is unexpectedly old-fashioned and romantic – the opening notes sound as though they’re going to go into ‘It Started With A Kiss’ – and ‘Amazing’ is similarly easy to hum along to, celebrating one of those unsung female heroes every family can point to.

‘Johnny’ is just as close to home, about the father of two of the band members, who hailed from Sierra Leone and flew in the RAF in World War II. It’s a funky reggae shimmy, and



if the vocal sometimes grasps for the big notes, the emotion is palpable.

‘Take Down Colston’ advocates, as the name suggests, for the removal of the statue of the Bristol slaver...which is a great sentiment, though you do wonder whether Dubwiser know this already happened! The lyrics might not be subtle, but the track may take the musical crown, with some gritty left-hand clav lines worthy of The Wailers’ great Earl “Wya” Lindo. If we get another Dubwiser EP next month, you won’t hear us complaining.

**David Murphy**

## MILA TODD

### ‘Mutate’ / ‘Tipping Point’

(Self-released)

It seems the track titled ‘Mutate’ has (*ahem*) mutated. Originally it surfaced in February 2021 during Covid, as a Just Emma collaboration (featuring Mila’s pitch perfect vocals and lyrics) along with her friend Emma Coombs, drummer with Death Of A Maiden.

Back then it took on an ethereal, wafting, Maggie Reilly / Beth Gibbons feel, tilting lightly at the chaos of lockdown, and all the profits of its sale going to BLMUK. Now, two and a half years later, it is back, under Mila’s own name, with a complete reboot of attack and only a few of the earlier lyrics remaining in context. This time the potent line “Hello dear, you’re not from round here” is wrapped round a Smiths-y ‘How Soon is Now’ growling vibrato sound bed and joined by a tumbling gumboots-in-a-washing machine drumming overload. With the proceeds from this splendid version going to Care4Calais (legal aid for migrants) it also reveals the cut of its jib in the newly added phrases that give a clarion call for more understanding in society, a subject that Mila with her Scottish-Mauritian roots has, we suspect, encountered first hand. Coupled with the equally well produced instrumental ‘Tipping Point’, whose industrial-clack of rail sleepers beat encapsulates the train ride to hell this bin-

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## RICHARD WALTERS

### ‘Murmurate’

(Nettwerk)

Richard Walters’ latest album takes listeners on a captivating musical journey through a spectrum of emotions and sonic landscapes. With songs like ‘After Midnight’, you might expect a collection of tracks imbued with a late-night ambience, and Walters delivers precisely that, and so much more.

The album commences with the ethereal ‘All Over’, setting the mood with its dreamy, atmospheric soundscape. Walters’ vocals effortlessly guide us through the delicate melodies and evoke a sense of introspection. ‘Anchor’ follows, infusing a sense of stability and melancholy into the mix, showcasing his versatility as both a singer and songwriter.

‘Atlantic Lullaby’ is a true standout, immersing the listener in a serene, almost hypnotic aura via some flamenco guitar, whereas ‘Avenues’ adds a touch of dual tracking and echoes Radiohead. ‘Locked Up Never Fade’ takes a different turn, showcasing female vocals over a soaring soundscape. By contrast, ‘Long Way Down’ is one of the poppier songs, bringing to mind Jack Johnson and Jason Mraz.

‘Lost In Your Light’ is an emotional masterpiece, with Walters baring his soul through his singing, duetting beautifully on this paean to love. ‘Move On’ continues this emotional journey, offering solace through its tender lyrics and soothing melodies.

‘Open Everything’ and ‘Philip Seymour Hoffman’ showcase the depth of Walters’ songwriting and the power of his words; ‘Salt’ brings a sense of weight and reflection, while ‘Skye’ provides a fitting closure to the album, leaving the listener with a sense of melancholy and some unease.

Richard Walters has, once again, crafted an album that transcends the ordinary. Each track takes you on a different emotional journey, creating an album that is not just a collection of songs but a profound, introspective experience.

**Damon Boughen**



## TOM WEBBER

### ‘The Rak Tracks’

(Self-released)

Singing about personal tragedy can go either way; however heartfelt the words, there’s a risk of mawkishness. Not so with the increasingly confident sounding Tom Webber on ‘Living For Us Both’, his elegy for his brother who died at the age of nine and when Tom himself was just five years old. It’s an unimaginably sad subject matter but with lines like “Losing you has made me glad to be alive”, Webber brings a degree of positivity to play that warps itself in the warmth of his rough-hewn, tenderly soulful voice, while “I could see the Jedi in your eyes” is a beautiful line, and the song crests to a rich, horn-led crescendo.

It’s the stand-out song from this new four-song EP, which also includes a delicate, respectful but individual take on The Korgis’ 1980 hit ‘Everybody’s Got To Learn Somehow’, which benefits hugely from some lovely, pure vocals



## RESTLESS OCEANS

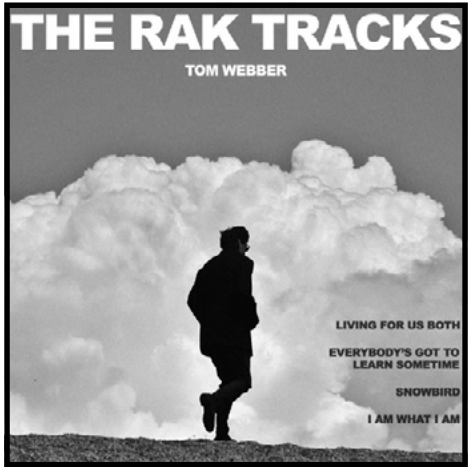
### ‘Time & Light’

(Self-released)

Oxford has been spoilt rotten over the last few years with regards to quality indie-folk acts – The August List, The Epstein, and The People Versus are to name just a few, so it’s rather welcome to encounter another in Restless Oceans and their new EP.

Things kick off with ‘Precious Time’, an acoustic-guitar driven number complemented by pitch-perfect violin and harmonies. Clearly a marker that these guys know how to play, it’s professionally executed and well recorded, and a promise of some rather lovely things to come. ‘Last Day on Earth’ is set in a minor key with a lyric that asks an interesting question of the listener; it’s a far more sombre offering, but is a contrast to the slightly more pop-based opener. ‘Endless’ is beautiful: a song of loss and sadness but with an optimistic slant, too. It’s in these moments the band really resonate with you and make you want to add them to a playlist for autumnal Sunday mornings – it would sit well in the company of First Aid Kit or Frank Turner and as you listen a few times, you start to feel that this band are a very exciting prospect for our music scene.

‘Lights Out’ wraps a very cohesive set of songs that echoes the stronger, more candid moments



from Maya Lane.

Elsewhere on the EP we get the intimate but uplifting ‘Snowbird’ with its Laurel Canyon vibe, and the earthy, self-reflective ‘I Am What I Am’, but it’s ‘Living For Us Both’ that sticks long in the memory.

**Dale Kattack**

of artist like Nizlopi or Stephen Fretwell and reminds us of Oxford’s fantastic folk-duo The Lost Art. It’s the violin and harmonies that transcend this track from something that could be a bit obvious to something really quite lovely. It’s touching stuff and there is clearly blood, sweat, and tears on these tracks – something to always be commended.

**Caitlin Helm**

## JUNIPER NIGHTS

### ‘In This House’

(Self-released)

Taking a far more intimate and melancholy approach than their usual material, alternative rock quartet Juniper Nights return with a new single that’s similarly relatable in its lyrical content yet excitingly daring with its execution. Underpinned by an ominous, almost wraithlike instrumentation, ‘In This House’ grabs our attention with a ghostly tenderness that’s constructed by the delicate synths which hang in the balance, its fleetingly personal piano chords, and finally James Gallagher’s breathless panting permeating the song from afar. The effect is a track that’s equally haunting as it is beautiful. Adopting a more minimalist style, the band explore a new pathway on ‘In This House’, a pathway which they have clearly taken in their stride. Written as a vocal and piano piece five years ago by lead singer James, the track is inspired by the horror TV show *The Haunting of Hill House*. Using the show’s emotional and narrative themes as a lens through which to understand the trauma of adulthood, the track explores how even when we try our best to forge out a happier future for ourselves, the haunting presence of past failures still weighs heavy, and restricts our ability to grow. With the bleak lyrics, ethereal instrumentation and haunting contextual backdrop seamlessly blending together into something relatable yet distinctive, Juniper Nights push the boat out on their new single and celebrate life for all its supernatural possibilities.

**Sam Mumford**

## THE DEADBEAT

### APOSTLES

### ‘The Deadbeat Apostles’

(Self-released)

The Deadbeat Apostles have long been proof that you can make old-fashioned music and still sound contemporary; that you can layer on several layers of cheese and still sound authentic, and that the only thing better than having a great singer in your band is having two.

‘The Deadbeat Apostle’ is the band’s debut album proper after a series of singles over the last few years; the album is for the most part those singles gathered together, re-recorded and remastered and thus serves as the perfect introduction to the band for those who’ve yet to experience the band as much as an essential compendium for converts.

‘The Cuffs Are Off’, written during lockdown, shows The Deadbeats are as up for the fight as they are the party, its funky blues and Mike Ginger’s full-blooded vocals, given a wonderful streak of silver by Michelle Mayes’ backing, taking aim at the powers that be, though it’s Michelle’s ‘Leave It To Men’ that really ramps up the militancy, a buzzing, punk-infused garage-blues grenade that packs a serious punk punch with its call-and-response vocals and Dead Kennedys-meets-Jim Jones vibe.

The raucous boogie of ‘Viva la Evolution’ is similarly driven at full throttle, and if ‘The Deadbeat Shuffle’ treads too close to (whisper it) Simply Red territory for our liking, it’s ‘In Spite Of It All’ that is the quintet’s *pièce de résistance* – an epic slab of sexy soul music and the best example of Mike and Michelle’s natural vocal chemistry.

Of the three brand new tracks featured, ‘Wheel of Fortune’ is slightly overwrought, right down to its epically cheesy guitar solo, but ‘All That Glitters’ sounds like a classic Motown love anthem, not far off The Four Tops, with Mike showing just how powerful he can sound even while reining it in while ‘I’ll Remember You’ is a proper belter of a soul power ballad. The whole album is steeped in classic 60s and 70s r’n’b, soul and blues-rock but is possessed of a very modern vim and vigour, and this album provides a succinct and essential introduction to one of the most fun bands in Oxford right now.

**Ian Chesterton**





# GIG GUIDE

**WEDNESDAY 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**FUTURE UTOPIA:** **The Bullingdon** – Production star Fraser T Smith brings his own project to town – *see main preview*

**THURSDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**MID AIR + THE FOAM HEADS + FIRE GAZER + THE FAITH HEALERS + MAISY’S RAINBOW DREAM:** **The Bullingdon** – First gig of this year’s Oxford City Festival, showcasing local music, including new indie crew Mid Air and rising post-punk outfit The Foam Heads.  
**CATWEAZLE: Common Ground** – Catweazle, which recently celebrated its 29<sup>th</sup> birthday, returns at its new home, first Thursday of each month – open night for singers, musicians, poets, storytellers, performance artists and more.

*Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup>*  
**FUTURE UTOPIA:**  
**The Bullingdon**  
If you judge a musician by the company they keep then Fraser T Smith is the A-est of A-listers. The man from Buckinghamshire’s list of collaborators and producer credits reads like an A-Z of contemporary British music, particularly in grime, a genre which he as much as anyone has helped bring into the mainstream. He produced defining albums by the likes of Stormzy (‘Gang Signs & Prayer’) and Kano (‘Made in the Manor’), earning himself BRIT and Ivor Novello awards along the way – the latter including for ‘Children of the Internet’ with rapper Dave. Smith’s start in musical life didn’t really suggest such greatness to come. He played guitar in pub bands and a prog band for years before a chance meeting led him to become Craig David’s guitarist for five years, while producing Adele and Sam Smith. Under his Future Utopia guise he creates fluid, soulful electronic music that draws in myriad other genres, depending on who he is working with on a particular track – from Kojey Radical to poet Simon Armitage, while Idris Elba, Bastille, Kae Tempest and Arlo Parks are among the other top stars he’s had contributing to his music. Live many of those big name appear by sample but to see such an influential figure in this intimate setting is a real treat.



## November

**THE FIRST THURSDAY MUSIC CLUB:**  
**Thame Snooker Club** – Recent *Nightshift* cover star Dolly Mavies headlines this month’s FTMC show, joined by Nova Kicks and The Ant Kelly Collective.  
**DALBY’S OPEN MIC:** **The Fox Inn, Steventon** – Weekly open mic night with host Tom Dalby.  
**OPEN MIC NIGHT:** **Delaney’s, Wantage**

**FRIDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**THE BOO RADLEYS + CUD:** **O2 Academy** – Double dose of reformed indie stars in town with The Boo Radleys touring their second album since reconvening. ‘Eight’, as well as reliving 90s hits like ‘Wake Up Boo!’ and the epic ‘Lazarus’, while Carl Puttman’s Cud bring cult hit ‘Rich & Strange’ alongside their extensive 80s/90s catalogue.  
**OXFORD REBETIKO NIGHT:** **The Harcourt Arms** – Urban Greek music.  
**FIVER + SINEWS:** **The Port Mahon** – Post-hardcore fun from Sinews at tonight’s Oxford City Festival show.  
**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with QUARTERMELON + FOUR MINUTE WARNING + MILA TOOD + HELEN PEARSON:** **Gladiator Club** – Klub Kakofanney’s monthly shindig hosts Witney’s uptight and funky indie crew Quartermelon and more.  
**THE STYLISTICS:** **The New Theatre** – Fifty years and counting for the Philly soul legends, still going strong long after their huge 1970s commercial heyday, original members Airrion Love and Herb Murrell reprising timeless r’n’b hits like ‘Stop, Look, Listen’, ‘You Are Everything’, ‘You Make Me Feel Brand New’ and ‘I’m Stone In Love With You’.  
**MR B THE GENTLEMAN RHYMER:**  
**The Jericho Tavern** – Straight outta Surrey, bespectacled, besuited and elegantly moustachioed chap-rapper Mr B, gives hip hop a run through with the Queen’s English, coming in at that point where De la Soul meets Noel Coward and Flanders and Swann. Or maybe NWA if they’d grown up in Hove and been more interested in cricket and fine tea.  
**BLUE BAYOU + THE BOBO + RICHARD LEWIS:** **Modern Art Oxford** – Indie and electro-pop from the local acts.  
**BLUES NIGHT:** **Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Charity blues night in aid of the British Heart Foundation.  
**BUSY FOOLS:** **Delaney’s, Wantage** – Acoustic duo.

**SATURDAY 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**KANADIA + EMMA HUNTER + DOLLY MAVIES + GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS:** **The Jericho Tavern** – The gig that we’re calling Scottstock since

it’s in celebration of Oxford music’s biggest American fan – Scott Lyman – who is making the pilgrimage over here to check out the scene and the sights. He’s picked his four favourite Oxford acts to play for him tonight, with big stadium-sized indie rock sounds from Kanadia; gothic flamenco drama from Emma Hunter; airy pop splendour from Dolly Mavies and monolithic shoegaze and post-rock noise from GITP. Welcome to town Scott, enjoy your stay!  
**RABIDFEST:** **The Bullingdon** – First day of the annual rock and metal festival, with a headline set from Blaze Bayley – *see main preview*  
**DUALERS:** **O2 Academy** – Ska and reggae from Croydon’s enduring outfit, formed back in 1999 by brothers Tiber and Si Cranston, themselves sons of renowned 60s ska DJ Bill Cranston. After Top 40 hits in 2004 with ‘Truly Madly Deeply and ‘Kiss On the Lips’, they continue to tour, despite the departure of Si back in 2010. They’re out on tour to promote most recent album ‘Voices From the Sun’.  
**THE SMYTHS:** **O2 Academy** – Tribute night.  
**HIPSHAKIN’:** **The Harcourt Arms** – 50s and 60s rhythm’n’blues, rock’n’roll, jump jive, jazz, boogaloo and early soul from the Hipshakin’ DJs.  
**TEEN SPIRIT vs WE ARE STILL YOUNG:** **The Bullingdon** – Indie and grunge club night.  
**BUMB + SLEEPERS + SUSPIRE + THE BOBO:** **Cape of Good Hope**  
**MANIA:** **The New Theatre** – ABBA tribute.  
**10 YEARS OF KWASSA KWASAA:** **Tap Social, Botley** – Grupo Lokito play their Congolese Latin fusion funk while tropical cratediggers Kwassa Kwassa celebrate their tenth anniversary.  
**SONS OF THE SEVENTIES:** **Fat Lil’s, Witney** – 70s hits from the band ahead of their Slade tour support.  
**LETZ ZEP:** **The Northcourt, Abingdon**  
**THE PETE FRYER BAND:** **Boundary House, Abingdon** – Rock and blues classics from the veteran local singer and guitarist and chums.

**SUNDAY 5<sup>th</sup>**  
**RABIDFEST:** **The Bullingdon** – Bound in Fear headline the second day of the rock festival – *see main preview*  
**HANNAH WHITE:** **Truck Store (4pm)** – Instore set from London’s deeply evocative singer-songwriter, whose ‘Car Crash’ won her Best Song at the UK Americana Awards, and set to release her new album ‘Sweet Revolution’.  
**VISTAS:** **O2 Academy** – The Edinburgh indie rockers return to the Shire to promote new album ‘Is This All We Are’ following their showing at Truck Festival last year.  
**OPEN MIC:** **The Harcourt Arms** – Weekly open night.  
**THE SUNDAY SOCIAL:** **The Port Mahon (3pm)** – Free afternoon of live pop, blues, Americana and folk as part of Oxford City Festival.  
**KLUK KAKOFANNEY SUNDAY SESSION:** **The Tree, Iffley (4pm)** – An afternoon/early evening of free live music hosted by Klub

Kakofanney, with sets from Journeymen, Holy Fools and Edwin & the Keepers.  
**FOLK SESSION:** **The Half Moon** – Weekly Irish folk music night.  
**OPEN MIC:** **James Street Tavern (3pm)** – Weekly open session.  
**LISA MARSHALL:** **The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)**

### MONDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

### TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup>

**UNSCHOOLING:** **The Jericho Tavern** – Angular, frenetic post-punk from Rouen’s rising stars, mixing up uptight funk with inventive time signatures and math-rock for a restless whole that stands alongside the likes of Crack Cloud and Omni.  
**THE OLD 97s:** **The Bullingdon** – Rollicking

*Friday 4<sup>th</sup> / Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>*  
**RABIDFEST:**  
**The Bullingdon**  
With Oxford’s rock and metal scene still struggling to fully emerge post-Covid, and deprived of its spiritual home with the closure of The Wheatshaf, the annual Rabidfest once again provides a welcome oasis of heaviosity for local fans, with 20 acts across two days at The Bully. Friday’s headliner is legendary British rock frontman **BLAZE BAYLEY**, the Wolfsbane and one-time Iron Maiden singer providing a genuine star name on the weekend’s bill. He’s joined by Manchester’s old school hard rockers **ABSOLVA**, currently out on their ‘Stand Your Ground’ tour; eclectic, theatrical rockers **WARD XVI**, mixing polka and klezmer into their elaborate, symphonic sound; industrial deathcore crew **MORTISHEAD**; Hull’s thrash merchants **SWORN AMONGST**; melodic prog-metallers **LESTWEFORGET**; tech-metallers **REVELLER**, dark-hued thrash/death outfit **SECOND HOUR**, and more.

Sunday’s line up is topped by Farnham’s Sludge/deathcore brutalists **BOUND IN FEAR**. Among those joining them across the day are tech-death and melodic metalcore crew **MONASTRIES**; blackened hardcore thrashers **TRIBE OF GHOSTS**; sludge/doom/groove metallers **GUTLOCKER**, and dark, symphonic deathcore troupe **DRACONIAN REIGN**. **CAGE FIGHT**; **FROM THE ASHES**; **DEPOLARISE**; **FETUS DESTRUCTION**, and **MAELSTROM** complete a superbly heavy line-up at what is now a very welcome fixture on the local calendar and the perfect chance to celebrate Oxford’s enduring heavy scene.



bluesy alt.country from the veteran Dallas outfit at tonight’s Empty Room show, the band in the UK to tour their twelfth studio album ‘12’.  
**NO BEGINNING/NO END:** **Old Fire Station** – Free improv session.  
**SPIN JAZZ CLUB:** **Tap Social, Botley** – The Spin’s in-house band Hejira kicks off its UK tour with a celebration of Joni Mitchell’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### WEDNESDAY 8<sup>th</sup>

**KOSHEEN:** **The Bullingdon** – The reformed Noughties electro crew bring their revival to town, mixing up euphoric electronic, trip hop and dance-friendly rocking and reliving Top 10 albums ‘Resist’ and ‘Kokopelli’.

### THURSDAY 9<sup>th</sup>

**ERJA LYYTINEN:** **The Bullingdon** – Return to town for the Finnish blues star – *see main preview*  
**BAS JAN + PICTISH TRAIL + ATOMIC FLAME:** **Modern Art Oxford** – A return to town for Serafina Steer’s electro-folk-pop and fidgety post-punk experimentalists – *see main preview*  
**LIMEHOUSE LIZZY:** **O2 Academy** – Tribute night.  
**SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS:** **The Half Moon** – Open mic night, tonight celebrating its 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday.  
**ELECTRIC ENEMY:** **Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Riffmongous alt.rocking from award-winning multi-instrumentalist Jim Lawton, drawing inspiration from Muse, QOTSA and Black Sabbath and on tour to promote new single ‘The Fear’.  
**GRANNY’S ATTIC + KATIE GRACE HARRIS:** **The Unicorn, Abingdon** – Lively traditional and original English folk tunes and songs.  
**DALBY’S OPEN MIC:** **The Fox Inn, Steventon**

### FRIDAY 10<sup>th</sup>

**WILLIE J HEALEY + DIVORCE:** **O2 Academy** – Homecoming show for Willie J – now resident in Bristol – and touring his third album, ‘Bunny’, continuing to spread good vibes his blend of rootsy slacker rocking, funk and jazzy pop, where Marc Bolan and Neil Young meet Prince and Sly Stone.  
**DEADLETTER:** **The Jericho Tavern** – Swaggering indie rocking from the ‘Snitching Hour’ crew at tonight’ sold-out show, the band back in town after playing at Truck Festival in the summer and previously supporting Placebo on tour.  
**FLEETWOOD BAC:** **O2 Academy** – Greatest hits tribute.  
**HURRICANE #1:** **The Bullingdon** – Alex Lowe’s Britpop-era rockers continue on the reformation trail – no longer with Andy Bell – reliving 90s hits like ‘Step Into My World’, ‘Rising Sign’ and ‘Only the Strongest Will Survive’ as well as songs from latest album ‘Backstage Waiting To Go On’.  
**GOLD BABY + SKI LIFT + ROM COMS + ELECTRIC SHEPHERD:** **The Library** – Dreamy grunge-pop from London’s Gold Baby, mixing up the influences of Fiona Apple and Pavement at tonight’s Divine Schism show; support from power pop crew Ski Lift and indie scuzzsters Rom Coms.



*Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>*  
**BAS JAN / PICTISH TRAIL: Modern Art Oxford**

A very welcome return to town for Serafina Steer’s electro-folk-pop and fidgety post-punk experimentalists after their matinee show here last year; singer, harpist, bassist and keyboard player Steer has previously played and recorded with acts as diverse as Jarvis Cocker; Bat For Lashes; John Foxx; Chromehood; Hannah Peel; Rozi Plain, and Tunng, but with Charlotte Stock, Emma Smith and Rachel Horwood she has created Bas Jan, marrying experimental and neo-classical styles with electro-pop. She is on tour to promote her fourth album ‘Back To The Swamp’, the follow-up to the sweetly anarchic ‘Baby U Know’, this time round bringing a more cohesive pop edge to proceedings and inspired by the likes of Pet Shop Boys, Kate Bush and Heaven 17 along the way, while retaining that off-kilter feel that’s previously seen welcome references to The Raincoats. Bas Jan are joined for tonight’s Divine Schism show by Edinburgh’s indie-folk legend Johnny Lynch, playing a solo Pictish Trail set as he tours last year’s ‘Island Family’ album – a record inspired by the landscape and characters of his Isle of Eigg home; its wild, feelgood mix of psychedelia, indie, folk and electronic-pop suits the stories he tells, and he remains a singular talent.

**KILLER KOWALSKI + THE MEDICINE:** **The Port Mahon** – Scabrous post-punk and noise-pop from KK at tonight’s Oxford City Festival show.  
**DROP IN THE OCEAN:** **Tap Social, Botley** – Reggae, dub and ska fusion from the South West quintet.

**FLORENCE PARK SUNDAY SESSIONS**  
Our Sunday afternoon gathering for families and friends, featuring great live music, activities, food & bar  
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(LOCAL LEGEND OF ENGLISH FOLK)  
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Florence Park Community Centre,  
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£6 adults, under 12s £4  
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Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>

ERJA LYYTINEN:  
The Bullingdon

Finnish blues guitarist Erja Lyytinen was a regular visitor to town back in the Noughties, usually hosted by The Famous Monday Blues and The Haven Club, before she became one of the foremost stars on the European blues scene, including winner of the 2017 European Blues Awards Best Guitarist – no small feat in what’s traditionally been such a male-dominated genre. Having started playing at the age of 15, Lyytinen signed to Germany’s stalwart blues label Ruf Records and subsequently made her name on the 2006 Blues Caravan tour, which took her to the States for the first time as well as exposing her to a wider European audience. Early on she was produced by David and Kinny Kimbrough – sons of blues legend Junior – but it was her album of Elmore James songs, ‘The Sky is Crying’, that proved to be her big breakthrough. Renowned for her slide style, her blending of traditional and modern blues with elements of jazz, soul and straight-up rock has seen her playing with Carlos Santana, Walter Trout, Southside Johnny and John Mayall, but she’s always been keen to avoid being too tied down to traditional blues, inviting the likes of Apocalyptic’s Paavo Lötjönen and Nightwish’s Marco Hietala to work on her albums previously. Tonight’s return to town – her first visit since 2019 – sees her promoting most recent album, the live ‘Diamonds on the Road’.

**BLUE FRIDAY:** The Midget, Abingdon – Artisan Blue host a free evening of live blues.  
**KISS THE TEACHER:** Fat Lil’s, Witney – ABBA tribute.

SATURDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

**LONELY THE BRAVE:** Truck Store – Intimate acoustic instore set from Cambridge’s anthemic rockers, promoting their fifth album, ‘What We Do To Feel’.  
**SIMPLE ft. LCY & MIXTRESS:** The Bullingdon – House and techno club night with stripped-back percussive electronic from Bristol’s Ley, the alias of bass-selector Lucy Helyer.  
**SAVANNAH GARDNER:** The Harcourt Arms – Americana and country from the singer-songwriter.

**THE MONOCHROME SET + PEERLESS PIRATES:** The Jericho Tavern – A return to town for post-punk survivors The Monochrome Set, whose early embracing of lounge and surf pop, as well as an idiosyncratic approach to rhythms and melody and an ironic, oblique lyricism set them apart from the leftfield rock of the late-70s. They’ve split up and reformed twice in their lifetime, founder Bid and long-term guitarist Andy Warren still helming the band as they tour their latest album, ‘Allhallowtide’, which characteristically brings Latin pop, bossa nova, Indian raga and chanson to its melting pot. Great support from longstanding faves Peerless Pirates, themselves inspired by The Monochrome Set as well as The Smiths, Spaghetti western soundtracks, The Ukrainians and a whole lotta seafaring fun.  
**THE 900:** O2 Academy – The UK’s only Tony Hawk’s Pro-Skater covers band, playing tracks from ‘THPS1’ to ‘American Wasteland’.  
**ELIZA CARTHY & JON BODEN:** Oxford Playhouse – Seasonal folk songs from two modern day legends of the UK folk scene.  
**FRANK ARCHER + THE BOBO:** Tap Social, Botley  
**RAMMLIED The Northcourt, Abingdon** – Rammstein tribute.  
**THE PETE FRYER BAND:** The Beehive, Carterton  
**ALL OUT 80s:** Delaney’s, Wantage

SUNDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**SUNDAY SESSION:** Florence Park Community Centre (3-6pm) – After a three-year hiatus, the Sunday Session returns to celebrate its tenth anniversary, hosting a family-friendly double dose of live music, with sets from vibraphone virtuoso Roger Beaujolais performing with his jazz trio, and folk singer and fiddle player Jackie Oates.  
**EMBRACE:** O2 Academy – Brothers Danny and Richard McNamara keep the Britpop flame alive as they tour new album ‘How To Be A Person Like Other People’, the latest in a string of Top 10s, with three of those Number 1, including 1998 debut ‘The Good Will Out’.  
**CHARTREUSE:** Truck Store (1pm) – Instore show from the Black Country quartet, launching their album ‘Morning Rituals’.  
**BEN FOLDS:** The New Theatre – The Ben Folds Five star tours his latest solo album ‘What Matters Most’, his first in eight years.  
**LIGHTHOUSE JAZZ BAND:** The White House (5pm) – Lively jazz standards.  
**OPEN MIC:** The Harcourt Arms  
**THE SUNDAY SOCIAL:** The Port Mahon (3pm)  
**FOLK SESSION:** The Half Moon  
**OPEN MIC:** James Street Tavern (3pm)  
**ANDY ROBBINS:** The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)

MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**PALE BLUE EYES:** The Bullingdon – Sparkling motorik pop from the Devon starlets – see main preview  
**THE HUNNA:** O2 Academy – Hertfordshire’s grunge-inspired b.... oh, do we have to?  
**ARTISAN BLUE:** New Theatre Piano Bar

TUESDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

**JOCELYN GOULD:** Ifley Church Hall – Canadian guitarist and vocalist Jocelyn Gould comes to town, currently being hailed as a leader in the next generation of mainstream jazz musicians, drawing inspiration from the likes of Wes Montgomery, Grant Green, Joe Pass and Kenny Burrell.  
**OXFORD CITY FESTIVAL SHOWCASE:** The Jericho Tavern

THURSDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

**THE MARY WALLOPERS:** O2 Academy – Sex, devilry and the drink with Ireland’s young gunslingers – see main preview  
**IN-FLIGHT MOVIE + LONDON GRAFFITI**  
**+ PURPLE GRACE + NOTHING DREAMS:**

Monday 13<sup>th</sup>

PALE BLUE EYES:  
The Bullingdon

Pale Blue Eyes’ debut album ‘Souvenirs’ was a contender for album of the year in 2022, while the shows *Nightshift* caught – supporting Public Service Broadcasting at The New Theatre, and opening this summer’s Kite Festival on the Heavenly stage – merely confirmed our love for the band. While the south Devon-formed outfit’s name might suggest they wear their influences too firmly on their chest, The Velvet Underground are a very small part of their sound, which mixes the gentle motorik propulsion of Neu! with OMD’s spangled pop nous and the ornate elegance of Galaxie 500; in fact singer Matthew Board bears a striking vocal similarity to Dean Wareham at times with his wracked falsetto. Their songs are linear, warmly seductive and slightly keening, tending to build to a hypnotic krautrock plateau, especially in the live arena, as they mix shoegaze, electro-pop and a bit of indie jangle into their palette, but it’s their easy, airy melodic prowess that makes them such a joy – the meeting point between The Beach Boys and Django Django as one reviewer not inaccurately suggested. Already they have a second album out, ‘This House’, which builds on that homespun debut and headline tours and higher festival billings are increasingly theirs for the taking.



CROSSTOWN  
CONCERTS

WILLIE J HEALEY

BUNNY TOUR 2023

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS DIVORCE

FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER

O2 ACADEMY OXFORD

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH ATC

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

VISTAS

IS THIS ALL WE ARE? TOUR

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS overpass

SUNDAY 05 NOVEMBER

O2 ACADEMY2 OXFORD

UNSCHOOLING

plus special guests: KYOTO KYOTO

TUESDAY 07 NOVEMBER

JERICO TAVERN OXFORD

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH VEDETTES

SOLD OUT

DEADLETTER

10.11.23

OXFORD JERICO TAVERN

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH ATC LIVE

Sunday Karma

05 DECEMBER IN THE

OXFORD

O2 ACADEMY

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

DREADZONE

FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER

OXFORD THE BULLINGDON

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH DMF MUSIC

THEA GILMORE

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

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by arrangement with DMF Music

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*Thursday 16<sup>th</sup>*

## THE MARY WALLOPERS: O2 Academy

A few words of warning might be in order before we start this preview: Tories and ardent monarchists might want to give tonight’s gig a miss, lest they be triggered into some kind of snowflake fainting fit. Everyone else: charge your glasses and get ready for a hoedown. The Dundalk band – built around the trio of brothers Charles and Andrew Hendy and Sean McKenna, but swelled to a seven-piece for live shows – made their reputation with a series of live-streamed gigs from home during Covid lockdown but their natural hunting ground is on the live stage where their reinterpretations of traditional tunes really come to life. Like The Dubliners, The Pgues and Jinx Lennon before them, The Mary Wallopers inject a punk spit and spirit into Irish folk music. Songs like ‘The Rich Man & The Poor Man’ and ‘Bold O’Donahue’ pull no punches in their anti-establishment subject matter, while the harrowing ‘John O’Halloran’ would – and should – give Suella Braverman sleepless nights in its depiction of immigration. They’re equally political on the likes of ‘Building Up & Tearing England Down’ about the Irish workers who built the roads and canals of England, but they never forget to keep the party swinging with classics like ‘All For Me Grog’. As we say: charge your glasses, then get ready to charge the barricades.

**The Bullingdon** – Post-punk-influenced synthwave action from rising local stars In-Flight Movies, inspired by The Killers, New Order, Gary Numan and 65daysofstatic, alongside fidgety indie crew London Graffiti and post-grunge rocking from Nothing Dreams. **THE TUBS + GARDEN CENTRE: The Port Mahon** – Fuzzy, hook-laden indie jangle with a folk edge from Joana Gruesome offshoot The Tubs, alongside Max Levy’s skewed, off-kilter pop vision, Garden Centre. **ARISEN + MONKEYFISTS + ADAM COONEY: Loose Cannon Tap Room, Abingdon** – Making Music in Abingdon showcase. **DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon**

## FRIDAY 17<sup>th</sup>

**TOM McGUIRE & THE BRASSHOLES: The Bullingdon** – Brass-heavy funk from McGuire and his band. We won’t mention they remind us a bit of Jamiroquai.

**BOSSAPHONIK presents UBUNYE: Cowley Workers Social Club** – The world jazz dance club night hosts Ubunye, where African Zulu vocal harmonies meet vibrant nu-jazz 11-piece ensemble. Plus Kwassa Kwassa guest DJs. **THE JOLLY GROGSTERS: The Harcourt Arms** – Shanties and sea songs from the local vocal troupe.

**GONG + OZRIC TENTACLES: O2 Academy** – The current incarnation of the enduring psychedelic prog ensemble return to town with newer members continuing to explore the Flying Teapot world after the deaths of founders Daavid Allen and Gilli Smyth. They’re joined by Ed Wynne’s instrumental psych-prog-jazz-techno survivors Ozric Tentacles.

**BELL LUNGS + MILKWEED: Modern Art Oxford** – Divine Schism host a live show to help preview the new Monica Sjoø exhibition at MAO with Glasgow’s wonderfully inventive singer and multi-instrumentalist Ceylan Hay in her Bell Lungs guise, conjuring an airy, haunted mix of psychedelia and Scottish folk music from vocals, loops, fx pedals and more. Wyrd-folk from Milkweed, recent support to Alastair Roberts in town.

**VOLTA: The Jericho Tavern** **COUNT SKYLARKIN’: The Market Tap** – Reggae, dancehall and soul from the local turntable maestro.

**CALUM GINGER + KATIE GRACE HARRIS: The Corn Exchange, Faringdon** **SEVEN WONDERS: The Northcourt, Abingdon** – Fleetwood Mac tribute.

**OCK STREET BAND: Loose Cannon Tap Room, Abingdon** – Folk and country originals and covers in aid of Abingdon Food Bank. **IRON ROOSTER: Delaney’s, Wantage** – Foo Fighters tribute.

## SATURDAY 18<sup>th</sup>

**THE MAMBO PANTHERS: The Harcourt Arms** – Oxford’s Latin beats outfit play a mix of cumbia, Cuban son, salsa, funk and swing. **BASIC ft. Y U QT: The Bullingdon** **HANDS UP WHO WANTS TO DIE + THE EUROSUITE + TOP SHORTAGE: The Library** – Abrasive noise-rock in the vein of The Birthday Party and McLusky outta Ireland from HUWWTd at tonight’s Divine Schism show. **BOB MARLEY REVIVAL: O2 Academy** – Tribute night.

**CRUCAST OXFORD: O2 Academy** – Drum&bass, bassline and UK garage club night from indie label Crucast on tour, with south London’s Skepsis and Nottingham’s Darksy among those on the decks.

**KING HAMMOND + THE INFLATABLES: Cowley Workers Social Club** – Classic ska and Two Tone from former Bad Manners and Selecter man King Hammond, who’s also worked with Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry, Laurel Aitken and Prince Buster. Extra dose of classic ska from local stalwarts The Inflatables in support. **EMMA HUNTER: The Market Tap** – Gothic flamenco, loops and surf from the local singer and guitarist. **THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Cricketers Arms**

**STATION + OSMOSIS + SUPERLOOSE: The King’s Head & Bell** – Live music from The Skittle Alley. **DIRTY EARTH BAND: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Rock and pop covers from the 60s onwards. **KING PLEASURE & THE BISCUIT BOYS: The Cornerstone, Didcot** – The veteran kings of swing return to the Shire.

## SUNDAY 19<sup>th</sup>

**OPEN MIC: The Harcourt Arms** **THE SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Port Mahon (3pm)** **FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon** **THE PETE FRYER BAND: The Tree, Iffley (3.45pm)** **OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)** **SOPHIE HENDERSON: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)**

## MONDAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**SUNNY SWEENEY: The Bullingdon** – Powerful, lived-in country confessionals from ACM-nominated Texan singer-songwriter Sunny Sweeney at tonight’s Empty Room show. Sweeney, who is currently part of the American Currents: State of the Music exhibition at the Country Music Hall of Fame alongside Luke Combs, Charley Crockett and Miranda Lambert among others, spent 23 weeks in the Top 10 of the Americana charts with her latest album ‘Married Alone’, which she’s over in the UK to promote.

## TUESDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

## WEDNESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>

**BRAVE RIVAL: The Bullingdon** – Rocking blues and soul, mixing up the influences of Heart, Fleetwood Mac, Rory Gallagher and Led Zep, from the UK outfit out on tour with their debut ‘Life Machine’.

**KEITHER FAIRBAIRN’S CUBANO SOUL: Tap Social, Botley** – Funky, groove-led Latin jazz with percussionist Fairbairn and saxophonist Brandon Allen.

## THURSDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>

**TOM A SMITH: The Bullingdon** – Oxford debut for Sunderland’s teenage prodigy, Smith – still only 18 – having been playing live since the age of eight, clocking up sets at Glastonbury and Kendal Calling before being selected to support Elton John in Hyde Park. He’s also supported Sam Fender, The Courteeners and Miles Kane among others and looks set to properly hit the big time in the coming months. **THE HANNAH ALDRIDGE BAND: The Jericho Tavern** – Alabama country-folk singer Hannah Aldridge (daughter of Muscle Shoals legend Walt Aldridge, who wrote and produced for Lou Reed and Conway Twitty), returns to the UK to promote new album ‘Dream of America’, mixing up dark, sultry balladry with honky tonk and roots rocking. **CERYS HAFANA + ELSPETH ANNE + STEPHEN ELLIOTT: Common Ground** – A very welcome Oxford debut for Welsh singer, composer and triple harp player Cerys Hafana, touring her exquisite ‘Edyf’ album, filled with interpretations of songs from the Welsh National Library, Hafana bringing a contemporary

sharpness and sense of experimentation to traditional tunes. **ALL WILL BE WIRED: The Library** – All Will Be Well’s bi-monthly electronic music night hosts sets from Mila Todd’s brilliantly atmospheric and inventive sound explorations, Moogiemann’s inventively quirk synth-pop adventures and Sussex’s electronic dance crew Amongst the Pigeons. **STEPH PIRRIE: The Harcourt Arms** – Live jazz from local singer and trumpeter Pirrie and her band. **DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon**

## FRIDAY 24<sup>th</sup>

**CASSELS + OTHER HALF + SPINNER FALL: Common Ground** – A return to their spiritual home for Cassels as brothers Jim and Loz Beck release new song ‘About Not Writing’, a follow-up to their superb ‘A Gut Feeling’ album from last year. Support from volatile, sardonic post-punk and hardcore crew Other Half and Dischord-style hardcore from Spinner Fall. **LONDON CALLING: The Bullingdon** – Tribute to The Clash. **KNIGHTS OF MENTIS: The Harcourt Arms** – Folk, blues and Americana from the expansive local crew. **OSPREY & CO + STARBELLY + MOJO DEMON + CHARMS AGAINST THE EVIL EYE: O2 Academy** – Oxford City Festival organiser Osprey headline’s tonight’s show with his trademark blend of funk and blues; he’s joined by glam-goth rockers Starbelly, heavy-duty blues rockers Mojo Demon and psychedelic crew CATEE. **SUSPIRE + BLUE BAYOU + SLEEPRS: The Jericho Tavern** – Local indie and rock showcase. **BOTLEY CRUE: Tap Social, Botley** – Indie, new wave and Britpop classics at tonight’s Tap Social seventh birthday party. **BON GIOVI: Fat Lil’s, Witney**

## SATURDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**RICHARD WALTERS: The Jericho Tavern** – Another Oxford ex-pat back in town tonight in the form of long-time local hero Richard Walters – now resident in London – and well into his third decade as performer and songwriter, possessed of a fragile, cracked choirboy falsetto that can carry the entire weight of the world on its slender shoulders. Richard has recently announced he is pulling back from solo shows so tonight might be the last chance to see him in action for a long time. **GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with DAKORRA + LOST IN LONG PLAY + SUGARBULLY: The Port Mahon** – This month’s GTI mixed bag features a great headline set from *Nightshift* introducing act Dakorra with a dark and heavy mix of electro-rock and trip hop, mixing up the influences of Curve, Garbage and Portishead. They’re joined by dubby electronic jam band Lost in Long Play, and eloquently theatrical rap from former Borderville frontman Joe Swarbrick. **THE ANT KELLY COLLECTIVE: The Harcourt Arms** – The romantic troubadour plays songs from The Shapes, The Factory Lights and his solo catalogue.

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

**DON’T STOP QUEEN NOW: O2 Academy** – No, please stop. **RONI SIZE x LTJ BUKEM: O2 Academy** – Twin Titans of 90s dance unite once again for a night of drum&bass, with progressive, jazz-inclined pioneer Bukem going head-to-head with Mercury-winning D&B godhead Roni Size. **THE BIG BLUES NIGHT OUT: Gladiators Club** – Oxford City Festival showcasing local blues talent with sets from The Oxford Blues Corporation, No Horses, Tony Batey, Bankside Blues and Artisan Blues. **COUNT SKYLARKIN’S REGGAE REDEMPTION: Tap Social, Botley** **BARRICANE: The Market Tap** – Midnight indie-folk, trip hop and close harmony singing from the local outfit. **LIVE KILLERS: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Queen tribute.

## SUNDAY 26<sup>th</sup>

**PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS: O2 Academy** – Legendary Motorhead axeman Phil Campbell and his sons play a full set of ‘head classics. Time to get dirty and heavy. **TOODLES & THE HECTIC PITY PARTY + SPANK HAIR + FELICETTE + FLAMINGO: The Library** – Divine Schism hosts Bristol’s folk-punk trio Toodles & the Hectic Pity, inspired by Mountain Goats and Jeffrey Lewis. Support from local emo crew Spank Hair and more. **SUNDAY SOCIAL: The Bullingdon** – Free live music in the front bar with Beard of Destiny, Franklin’s Tower and more. **KOKROACHEZ + 7 AT THE LATEST + OPTICA + THE IVY CHAINS: The Bullingdon** – Punk-spirited rocking from Witney youngsters The Kokroachez at tonight’s Oxford City Festival showcase. **DOT’S FUNKY ODYSSEY: The Jericho Tavern** – Funk, soul and disco classics. **THE MIGHTY REDOX: The Tree, Iffley (3.45pm)** – Funky blues, ska, folk, psychedelia and more from the veteran local partystarters. **OPEN MIC: The Harcourt Arms** **FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon** **OPEN MIC: James Street Tavern (3pm)** **DAN PRYDE: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)**

## MONDAY 27<sup>th</sup>

**HOLIDAY GHOSTS + MAX BLANSJAAR + TONGUE: The Jericho Tavern** – Cheerfully childlike but poetic slacker-pop and indie punk in the vein of Jonathan Richman, Ray Davies and Pavement from Brighton’s Holiday Ghosts back in town for tonight’s Divine Schism show, with support from post-grunge fuzz-pop star Max Blansjaar. **JOURNEYMAN: The Half Moon**

## TUESDAY 28<sup>th</sup>

**THE CHAMELEONS: The Bullingdon** – Return of the roughnecks – *see main preview*

## WEDNESDAY 29<sup>th</sup>

**THE SILVER FIELD + URSA MAJOR MOVING GROUP + HANNAH LOU LARSEN: Common Ground** – Strange modular synth soundscapes and songs from Coral Rose

Kindred-Boothby at tonight’s Divine Schism show. **WARD THOMAS: St. John the Evangelist** – The Hampshire-via-Nashville country twins return to town, touring fifth album ‘Music In The Madness’.

## THURSDAY 30<sup>th</sup>

**NEON TEEPEE + HELEN PEARSON: The Port Mahon** – Rounding off Oxford City Festival with live music and closing party. **INDICA BLUES + SECOND HOUR + CHERRY SCREAM + SHAVEN PRIMATES: The Bullingdon** **L1NK3N P4RK: O2 Academy** – Tribute. **SPARKY’S FLYING CIRCUS: The Half Moon** **DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon**

*Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup>*

## THE CHAMELEONS: The Bullingdon

In their time The Chameleons were probably the most underrated band ever to come out of Manchester, and that’s saying something. Formed back in 1981 around the singing and songwriting talent of Mark Burgess and the slyly epic guitar playing of Reg Smithies, they were contemporaries of Echo & the Bunnymen and Gang of Four in style and outlook, but never made the breakthrough into the mainstream: too heartfelt for post-punk, too poppy for the goth crowd and far too agitated and militant to follow U2 and Simple Minds to stadium glory. Debut album ‘Script of the Bridge’ stands up as a classic of early-80s post-punk – a meeting point of goth and chiming pop – but they split after the relatively disappointing ‘Strange Times’ and the death of their manager. Subsequently they were hailed as an influence by Noel Gallagher and The Edge. In fact The Chameleons’ sound has influenced much of modern indie’s darker side, and they remain a cult concern, regularly aired to great enthusiasm on 6Music, particularly in the later hours. Burgess reformed the band in 2000, and again in 2009 as ChameleonsVox, with himself as the sole original member. Highly individual drummer John Lever sadly died in 2017, but subsequently Burgess and Smithies have reunited and four decades after their first flowering The Chameleons remain one of the most glorious bands to ever exist.







## THE IRREPRESSIBLES / PECQ

### St Barnabas Church

“This is very different for us,” says Hannah Jacobs, one half of local electronic duo Pecq, and she’s not wrong. For starters the pair aren’t particularly electronic tonight, taking advantage of St Barnabas’ incredible acoustics to play a mostly organic set, Hannah herself sat behind a piano, while partner Nikò O’Brien adds percussion and the most subtle of synths. But it suits them – Hannah shows exactly why she’s spent much of this year playing keys on tour for Arlo Parks, Pecq’s languid, spacious songs stretching up into the high, ornate

ceiling of the church, the starlit synth pulses and bleeps of ‘The Analyst’ giving it an otherworldly feel and providing the set highlight, although it’s matched by a high-wired take on ‘Wichita Lineman’. With no actual stage in the church The Irrepressibles find themselves spaced around the spaces usually occupied by vicars, choristers and organist, less a band more a mini orchestra. Together they herald Jamie Irrepressible to the front from where he weaves his almost hymnal spell. Jamie has a simply stunning voice;

at once it is powerful yet plaintive, breathy yet fulsome, and his range is extraordinary, often almost operatic, but at his best when focussed inward and exploring the darkest of emotions. The Irrepressibles’ latest EP, ‘Self Love & Acceptance’ comes in the wake of a period of mental ill health, from which Jamie has hopefully now emerged happier, and deals with coming to terms with himself on songs like ‘The Transformation of Acceptance’ and ‘Healing The Inner Child’ – solemn piano-led analysis and confession that manage to be both warm and quietly desolate. Tonight’s elaborate set begins

quietly, reaches a peak of full spectrum orchestral grandeur – all rousing organ and massed strings – before ending introspectively and Jamie comes out of his shell most in this expansive middle section, notably on the glorious, soaring ‘Nuclear Skies’, a masterpiece of drama and tenderness that is so striking you can see it physically affecting the musicians as they play. The show ends with an elegant chorus of “freedom to love, freedom to be” – a neat summation of Jamie Irrepressible’s remarkable life and art. More than just a gig, it’s a genuine privilege to witness tonight’s spectacle. **Dale Kattack**

## TORPOR / MODERN TECHNOLOGY / PREY / HOLY WOUNDS

### The Port Mahon

There could be no more dramatic start to what turns out to be a contender for Gig of the Year tonight. Holy Wounds give a whole new meaning to the term drone warfare, the duo, led by former Undersmile guitarist and singer Taz Corona, a demonic brew of Hellish barks, metal bashing, intercepted radio signals from the netherworld and Gregorian howls – Church of Satan ecclesiastical horrorcore that is almost suffocating in its intensity. Everything is looped and reverbed to absolute fuckery and when it all dissipates into the ether at the end, you can feel the collective intake of breath from those in the room. Maleficent. Wycombe’s Prey have the unfortunate task of following that but they gamely continue to pulverise a willing audience with a frenetic form of punk that teeters between speedcore and full-on grind. Songs rarely exist beyond the minute mark but like musical anti-matter, explode and cease to be with admirable ferocity. Double bonus points for the guitarist’s Big

Black t-shirt. Malignant. Modern Technology’s tightly-wound industrial hardcore has its roots in the 1980s and 90s – we’re reminded of lost noise greats Oil Seed Rape more than once – but updated via John’s unrelenting militancy. They sound like war, which might be a bit close to the knuckle the way the world currently stands, but is no less thrilling for all that: pulverising beats, crushing riffs and reverbed vocals make for a titanic racket in anyone’s book. Malevolent. But Bristol’s Torpor are on another level altogether: a dense, destructive pyroclastic flow of all-consuming sludgecore that dips into passages of pensive near-calm, which offer tantalising glimpses of relief before thundering back into genuinely vicious barrages of musical barbarism. Seriously, *Nightshift*’s critical faculties are lying curled up on the floor crying for their mummy by the end of this stupendously apocalyptic performance. The Balrog storm rolls onwards, over the audience until it collapses like a neutron star and it feels like all the air has been sucked out of the room and then we’re out into the night filled with undiluted exhilaration. Magnificent. **Dale Kattack**

## THE EPSTEIN

### The Handlebar

The intimate Handlebar is packed with friends, family and well wishers for The Epstein’s main man Olly Wills’ farewell to Oxford ahead his move to France. Guitarist Jon Berry has arrived from Scandinavia just to help celebrate the Americana and folk-rock outfit’s three albums and numerous gigs. The Epstein are not only long standing local faves, but having toured the UK, the Netherlands and Germany, are also members of the select club of Oxford bands who almost made it big. One reason is Olly’s voice. While it’s a little deeper it remains one of the best, strongest and most distinctive to come out of the local scene. The songs nearly always have a strong melodic hook to entice you and several are enhanced by up to four-part harmonies heightening their emotional kick. One of our favourites, the disturbing and propulsive ‘Daily News’, comes early on, leading us to abandon our reviewer hat and revert to being a fan. They’re a band who move easily between styles. The Appalachian traditional song ‘Shady Grove’ sees them at their most folky, and the rousing ‘Calling Out Your Name’, with the prophetic line “Let’s leave this town”, sees them at their most anthemic. An acoustic moment

is a frequent feature of their gigs so it’s entirely in keeping when Olly goes into the middle of the rapt crowd for an acoustic ‘Red Rocks’, which is not without irony as its theme is having time alone. They start the second half of the show with a message about the need to make music, ‘That Voice’ followed by a splendidly heavy, ‘It Will Pass’, Olly’s voice soaring magnificently. His feelings on the death of his grandmother are laid bare in the highly personal ‘Funeral’, written with Robin Bennett who is here tonight. Gloriously full bodied mariachi trumpet riffs on ‘Just the Wind’ are provided by multi-instrumentalist Joe Bennett and guest ex-member Julian Richardson, and the psych rock influenced epic ‘Lay Me Down’ could hardly be more full on. In complete contrast the curtain is brought down by an acoustic ‘Leave Your Light On’ for which Olly and The Epstein again place themselves in the centre of the room surrounded by everyone present, all Epstein fans and all joining with the band in singing the chorus. It’s a magical finale to a special and highly emotional night that we fervently hope is not “au revoir” but “a bientôt”. **Colin May**

## KRISTIN HERSH

### Florence Park Community Centre

It’s 4.30 on Saturday afternoon; this could be a time to chill, but Kristin Hersh starts the first of her two intimate Divine Schism shows with two numbers: ‘Eyeshine’ and ‘Sundrops’, which have passages of post punk attack that shake you out of any mindless idling. Over three decades Hersh has created a solo career and become an author and photographer along the way; that’s distinct from what she has with Throwing Muses and 50 Foot Wave. She’s said “when a song walks into the room I know if it’s a Throwing Muses or 50 Foot Wave or Kristin Hersh song.” The show isn’t just Hersh’s distinctive voice and acoustic guitar. She’s joined by “Cello Pete” Harvey who brings more tension to the violent moments and more nuance to delicate passages. He’s more a musical partner than accompanist, playing several solos, and when he channels Henry Purcell, contemporary classical and folk during ‘Ms Ha Ha’ it’s mesmerising and there’s not an effects pedal in sight. The pair play sixteen songs in just over an hour, ranging across all Hersh’s solo oeuvre. About a third are from Hersh’s recent ‘Clear Pond Road’ album but three are off her highly personal 1994 debut ‘Hips and Makers’ with the achingly

beautiful ‘Your Ghost’, about being haunted by a past lover, inevitably a standout in an afternoon of standouts. Her frequently dark songs circle around present or past fractured, even toxic relationships. She uses mood, metaphor and imagery rather than narrative which make the songs enigmatic but they draw us in through a combination of real world detail; according to Hersh metaphors are all around us and don’t need to be invented, and her voice’s jagged, breathy, delivery that’s equally adept at conveying both reflection and unsettling violence, and at stretching not only words but staccato syllables as in the somewhat folksy ‘Dan-de-lion’. She’s brilliant at songs of frustration, as in ‘Static’ but there’s no frustration on stage. Rather she seems happy and contented, especially with the enriching musical partnership with Cello Pete. She introduces whimsy with ‘Bywater’, actually a Throwing Muses tale of the life, death and burial of a goldfish called Freddie Mercury and finishes with ‘Kay Catherine’, another Muses song, which we think is the happiest of the afternoon. Thank you Divine Schism and Kristen Hersh, it’s been a privilege. **Colin May**

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## COACH PARTY / GIRL SCOUT

### The Bullingdon

Girl Scout are a strange proposition. Three quarters of the band, including front person Emma Jannsson, originally met whilst studying jazz at Stockholm’s Royal College of Music, but aside from a few twiddly guitar solos and some lightly hit drums there are no obvious jazz references. In places they are melodic and similar to Pip Blom, later on rawer and almost riot grrrl like. Elsewhere, Jannsson displays a raw vocal approximating Chrissie Hynde. These are all great reference points but overall it just feels a little unfocussed and almost

like there is too much going on. Most of the material is from the band’s debut EP (humourously advertised when the band encounter technical issues mid set), but some is new, including material “not even demoed”. I feel like I should like them, but they first need to decide what they are. Coach Party on the other hand are a finely tuned beast. Riding high on the release of Chess Club released debut ‘Killjoy’, theirs is an uncanny confidence. Rawer live than on record the Isle of Wight band exclaim how three years ago

it an ambition to play venues like The Bullingdon; three years on and they are headlining on an unusually busy Sunday night and they own the place. Early in the set they introduce the Big Moon-like ‘Be That Girl’ by thanking those who have already bought the album and saying how blown away they are by the response. On ‘All I Wanna Do Is Hate’ guitarist Joe Perry is lick heavy and summons Billy Duffy; meanwhile Jess Eastwood and Steph Norris career around the stage in polished abandon.

Polished is the word, despite a punky feel, this is really pop music, at the most alternative end of the scale it is Generation X, but Transvision Vamp is the closest match I feel overall. This band is simply having fun; overly honest Jess shares that ‘Always Been You’ as a love letter to *Captain America* actor Chris Evans and how, despite his recent marriage to Alba Baptista, she is destined to be with him, that they’re destined to be together... and the proof is they are about to perform their first US dates! Stalker concerns aside Coach Party appear to be turning their dreams into reality one at a time.

*Mark Taylor*

## THE JAPANESE HOUSE / FAKE LAUGH

### O2 Academy

Fake Laugh, AKA Kamran Khan from London, has released a clutch of singles plus an album, which could optimistically be described as dreamy pop, featuring a small backing band. On this tour he plays solo, moving between piano and acoustic guitar, a brave move considering the gentle, understated nature of the songs, though not without a seam of 60s-style catchiness. Sadly most of the young audience reward him by chatting loudly throughout, even towards the front. The material is inoffensive but it’s hard to conjure up a more positive term; ‘She Sleeps’, written only yesterday, is slow, languorous and poignant, coming close to being memorable, but not close enough. It’s always an odd experience being in a crowd of people hyped up with excitement about someone in whom you have little more than a mild interest. And so whoops of delight greet Amber Bain, better known as The Japanese House, and her band. What follows is largely upfront and punchy, the crowd greeting every song like an old friend. It’s undemanding, hook-laden pop following a path passing through Bombay Bicycle Club and The 1975, the latter being labelmates on Dirty Hit and a band she has a long running association with.

They’re midway through a long tour and interestingly most of the US dates are sold out, unlike the UK ones. Surprisingly there’s little attempt to replicate the lush arrangements and deft electronic touches of releases like recent second album ‘In The End It Always Does’, in fact anyone knowing only her two LPs might initially wonder if they’ve walked into the right venue. Like Khan earlier, her voice is good but not extraordinary, and seems to have a fairly limited range. ‘Sad to Breathe’ lacks the album version’s subtlety, courtesy of Matty Healy’s production, here the drums clatter about like cardboard boxes having a fight. The encore comprises piano ballad ‘One For Sorrow, Two For Joni Jones’, the subtle orchestral flourishes of the album version replaced by some breathy sax and almost-there guitar, followed by a spirited ‘Sunshine Baby’. But a nagging feeling persists that it’s all a bit bland and lacking real feeling; you can almost see how the tempo, key and chord changes are engineered to raise then lower the adrenalin, and manipulate our emotions in a pretty crude and obvious manner. But plenty of people leave looking very happy and ultimately that’s what matters.

*Art Lagun*

## BABY QUEEN

### The Bullingdon

I would love to claim that I still understand what a quarter life crisis might feel like; sadly (or perhaps luckily) for me that ship long sailed. It would be easy then to assume that Baby Queen’s forthcoming release might have little to offer to someone teetering on the brink of 40, but thankfully that couldn’t be further from the truth. After all, who can’t relate to the bitterness of seeing everyone else go viral on Tik-Tok, or missing out on a dream girl who happens to be dating someone of the opposite gender? Whilst thematically, as someone drawn to lyrics first, there are times when it’s harder to relate; Latham is adept at is building solid hooks which leave you captivated. Though tonight is a stripped-back bedroom session, which means the set lends itself to the sadder songs, what this in turn enables is the space to see that Latham’s vocal and musical ability is filled with intricacies which sometimes get lost on the manufactured numbers. Whether it’s the huskier ‘Die Alone’ or the piano heavy ‘Obvious’ which charts Latham’s departure from her South African

home, tonight’s set feels like the witnessing of an artist who’s likely to dominate our airwaves for the foreseeable future. Following in the footsteps of Self Esteem, Lily Allen and Kate Nash, Baby Queen is another of those artists who can translate the complexities of growing up female in a patriarchal world with sprinklings of wry humour and melodic riffs layered throughout. For me it’s ‘Grow Up’ which acts as the standout song of the set; starting with a monotonous strum overlayed by intricate piano harmonies, it grows to an emotional theatrical number that wouldn’t be out of place in an episode of *Glee*. Whilst I may not understand what it feels like to even own a Tik-Tok account, I am won over by Latham’s ability to create unadulterated pop which spans the generation divide. With this in mind, I’ll be first in line at HMV for her forthcoming album ‘Quarter Life Crisis’, even if that’s only because I now class myself as too old to fully comprehend how downloads work.

*Lisa Ward*

## LANDE HEKT / WIIINCE

### Common Ground

Both acts tonight take some delight in telling us how to pronounce their names, though in Wiiince’s case even they don’t seem entirely certain. Thankfully there’s nothing difficult to understand about either band’s music, the pair sharing a love for 80s indie pop when things seemed so much more simple. Wiiince (pronounced as you’d expect, with an elongated i, as if you’re going down a slide) adhere to the pure indie ethos of can-do (and even if you can’t do, then do it anyway), and are thus more than a little ramshackle. They’re also fun and highly likeable and in little need of any polish with distinct echoes of Sarah Records’ late-80s output, both in its jangly nature and in prioritising melody over musical accomplishment. They admit themselves that an ability to play in time if of little concern, and importantly no one here is complaining. Lande Hekt (pronounced Landay Hekt, the name refers to both the band and singer/guitarist Lande herself), are similarly blessed with an ear for melody that trumps any shortcomings – not that there are

many on show, and in a time of war and seemingly a catastrophe on every horizon, their simple fuzzy jangle-pop might be worth offering on prescription. Their debt to classic indie extends beyond their sound down to the hairgrips in Lande’s hair. Songs are of the sweetly melancholic girl-meets-girl kind, Lande possessed of a delicate tenderness about her voice that more than once reminds us of Alvways’ Molly Rankin or even indie queen Amelia Fletcher at times. She apologises that so many of the songs are so downbeat as she announces “the only happy song in the set,” which is about her cat, although languorously dreamy new single ‘Pottery Class’ steals the crown of song of the show, and if the set does tend towards mid-paced, it’s all played with a carefree spirit that seems designed to shrug off any criticism. Hekt does mention the situation in Palestine in between a couple of songs which is a brief jolt back to the horrors of reality, but for forty minutes tonight, Lande Hekt make the world a softer, sweeter place to live in.

*Dale Kattack*

## STORNOWAY

### Oxford Town Hall

One of the many wonderful things about Stornoway is how they make something huge out of something really quite intimate; the fact their songs seem built to be played in cosy snug bars and yet can fill the grandest of halls. And locally at least they don’t come much grander than Oxford Town Hall, with its ornate high ceiling and feeling of wide open space. It’s not long into tonight’s set that ‘The Coldharbour Road’ is soaring into that ceiling, a glorious, windswept bird of a song that personifies the band’s grandeur and connection with nature. Stornoway are back and tonight’s gig is the perfect return. It might lack some of the emotional *frisson* of their farewell show at The New Theatre six years ago but there’s a palpable feeling of celebration in the room. Such a feeling is accentuated by what feels like a greatest hits set to the faithful (even if, as Brian Briggs notes before they play it, their cover of ‘The Only Way Is Up’ is technically their biggest hit). From an early ‘The Bigger Picture’, through a solo ‘November Song’ and ‘Here Comes the Blackout’, to a stunning, emotional ‘The End of the Movie’ as part of the encore, it’s sometimes easy to forget just how many nailed-on classics Stornoway have in their bag.

We get an unamplified interlude where Brian, along with the preternaturally gifted Jon Ouin and Oli Steadman huddle together for ‘Get Low’ and ‘Josephine’, but backed by a full band, they expand to fill every corner of the hall, reaching an emotionally charged peak with ‘Fuel Up’, not just one of the most thoughtful and philosophical songs ever written but also one of the most beautiful. It’s the song that had the entire New Theatre tearing up that last time and tonight there’s definitely a lump in *Nightshift*’s throat. We also get picks from new album, ‘Dig The Mountain’: the loping, brassy title track; the freewheeling ‘Bag In The Wind’; a lovely cover of Björk’s ‘It’s Not Up To You’ where the band are joined by Chinese singer and tonight’s support act Yijia Tu, and ‘Excelsior’, superficially a euphoric piece but deep down one of the saddest songs Stornoway have ever written. And of course they close with ‘Zorbing’, a suitably rousing singalong with the and joined by a mini choir of mates onstage; it’s a predictable but perfect ending to what has been an emotional but triumphant night. Stornoway are back, and doesn’t that just fill your heart with joy.

*Dale Kattack*





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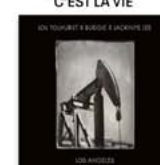
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ROBERT MACFARLANE  
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DAVID HOLMES FEAT.  
RAVEN VIOLET  
BLIND ON A GALLOPING HORSE



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X JACKKNIFE LEE  
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WHAT’S MY LINE?

A monthly look at jobs in local music. This month it’s MARK WILDEN from and he’s AN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAWYER.

How long have you worked in this job? “About four years.” What is one thing you have to do that the average person might not know? “Unpaid admin in running a business. Many barristers (including me) are self-employed, so things like marketing, attending meetings and reading job applications are done for free.” What’s been the single biggest highlight of your career so far? “Defending someone against a claim for infringing copyright in internet porn. The pornographer claimed over £25k because he said my client had uploaded one of his films to a Russian sharing site. He claimed infringement of the film as a ‘dramatic work’, which means the dramatic content of the film has to be original. I was looking forward to the expert evidence proving the ‘dramatic originality’ in one guy wanking for half an hour, but the case settled. For a short while I was the go-to guy for internet porn copyright cases.” And the lowlight? “The number of times people have come to me because they say their melody / four-word lyric was copied by a megastar in a massive Number 1 smash hit. Invariably the similarity is tenuous at best, they can’t prove the megastar even heard their song, and the smash hit was released 20+ years ago.” How much and how did Covid affect your job? “I was doing the final stage of training. Lawyers mostly learn by sitting with more experienced people and asking stupid questions. All the more



experienced people stayed at home so the training was hard work. On the up side, a lot of the courts went online and many have stayed that way for short hearings.” Who’s your favourite ever Oxford musical artist? “Probably Fell City Girl, the band who made me most consistently happy both live and on record. And I owe a lot to The Egg – without their inspiration I’d never have started The Evenings.” What’s the single most important piece advice you’d give to someone wanting to do your job? “The hard part isn’t necessarily doing the work, but finding the work. Outside interests and experience of other careers are genuinely helpful for that. Lots of clients find me and choose me because of my industry experience. So, for mercenary professional reasons, it really is best to

be your genuine self.” Who’s the most awkward person you’ve ever had to deal with in your job? “I had a case with two gig promoters who fell out over a tour that made a loss in Covid. My opponent, claiming £50k+, was so sure he was right that he wouldn’t even try to negotiate. The problem for him was that the contract didn’t say what he thought it said, and it took a judge to tell him so. Very slowly. Litigation is usually unpleasant, but it’s never necessary to be a dick about it.” When was the last time you heard genius? “Genius to me means that I can’t see where the ideas have come from, and is often close to madness. When I want that I go to Twizz Twangle or Asher Dust. Have they ever collaborated? I’d love to hear that.” Have you ever compromised your integrity in the course of your work? “No – whatever people think about lawyers, there are big professional consequences for that kind of thing and many lawyers take it seriously. The world of intellectual property law is small, and life gets very difficult very quickly if you lose your reputation.” Would you swap your job for any other and if so, what? “I’ve been tempted to go back to my old job as a recording producer – that was more fun. But this is way more satisfying. I love standing up for people against bullies, and this is the best way for a brainy weakling like me.” Are you rich? “Not yet. Fingers crossed.” Do you consider your job glamorous? “It’s all relative. When I’m making winning arguments in a wig and gown in the High Court, yes. When I’m losing to someone half my age on an obscure point of procedure in a run-down county court in the back end of nowhere, no.” What’s your favourite thing about Oxford’s music scene? “The love. So many people do so much for free just because they want to see it happen. That’s why I try to give back wherever I can.”

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Next month: **BHUNA DRAG**

**MORRISSEY: ‘When I asked you to MAKE ME A CURRY, I had simply NO idea...’**



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

DAKORRA

Who are they? Oxford/Reading band Dakorra started during lockdown when singer Kate Kerridge decided she wanted to explore a different sound to her band Ocean Ruins. “I twisted the arms of Ian (De Quadros, Tiger Mendoza) and Aden Pearce to join forces and create a mix of electronic beats with rock guitars. We three collaborated remotely to create a four track EP called ‘Elevate Me’, with the first song ‘Fading’ released in January 2022.” Bruno Muerte’s Stefano Maio joined Dakorra from their first gig at Are You Listening? festival in May2022 in Reading, “which seemed fitting for our gothy gang. It was especially memorable as not only was it the first post lockdown gig for many people so there was a great buzz, but also it was the first time we had all played in the same room together.” What do they sound like? Gothic industrial rock with trip hop undercurrents; propulsive electronic beats and Numan-esque synths underpin churning industrial rock guitars and Kate’s epic gothic siren voice which variously soars and smoulders in deliciously moody fashion. In Kate’s own words: “sad songs forever.” What inspires them? “I’m basically living in a 90s sound bubble so I take inspiration from a load of bands from that time. My lyrics are mostly inspired by emotions, rarely happy ones it would seem, but sad songs are a lot easier to write!” Their career highlight so far is: “BBC Introducing Berkshire playing our first single ‘Fading’ five weeks in a row. I was incredibly nervous to release the track as it’s so different from Ocean Ruins but we were really grateful to get such a positive reaction.” And the lowlight: “Not being able to gig yet this year yet due to illness and then busting my ankle, but I guess we’ve had time instead to write some new tracks, so silver linings!”



Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is: “Ghosts In The Photographs are awesome: really powerful compositions and a massive storm live too.” If they could only keep one album in the world, it would be: “‘Screen Violence’ by Chvrches as I know that Ian and I both love that album and they’re definitely an influence on Dakorra’s sound in their dynamic and creative style.” When is their next gig and what can newcomers expect? “25<sup>th</sup> November at The Port Mahon for Gappy Tooth Industries; newcomers can hear our new single ‘Falling’ for the first time live. Expect sad sass and synths.” Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxfordshire music are: “The camaraderie and support between local bands, promoters and venues is amazing and makes Oxford such a great scene to be involved in. The negative part is the loss of several live music venues which are such an important part of the community.” You might love them if you love: Curve; Chvrches; Garbage; Portishead; Yonaka.

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

**20 YEARS AGO**  
*Nightshift* marked its 100<sup>th</sup> issue not only with a series of local gigs but a run-down of the 100 high and low points of the mag’s lifetime. Among the former were the opening of **the Zodiac**; the birth of **Shifty Disco**; **Radiohead**’s incredible South Park show; accidentally stepping on Gillian Anderson’s toes at the South Park aftershow party but getting a smile off her anyway, and getting a kiss off Cerys Matthews when **Catatonia** played at **the Point**. In the latter camp were such joys at the closure of the Point and **the Fuggle & Firkin** by Six Continents; **Fox FM**’s ‘Party In The Park’ (“30,000 quarterwits munching chicken wings, drinking free Dr Pepper and gurning along to a endless succession of soul-selling shitehawks”), and **Kings of Leon**’s UK debut at **the Zodiac** (“pig-ugly hicks playing bad 70s rock from the worst excesses of *The Old Grey Whistle Test*”). Aside from such nostalgic indulgence, there was an interview with the very mighty **Rock Of Travolta**, who had just released their second album, ‘Uluru’. The band, having formed in Oxford, now found themselves scattered geographically, something that would precipitate a major line-up upheaval shortly after. Also released this month were albums by **The Workhouse**, **A Suitcase Case For Treatment** and **Youthmovie Soundtrack Strategies**, while aside from *Nightshift*’s celebration gigs, highlights of the month included **Million Dead** at the Zodiac, featuring a very young **Frank Turner** on vocals.

**10 YEARS AGO**  
Sadly the main news in November 2013’s *Nightshift* was tragic, with the accidental death of **Stuart Meads** from local synth-pop band **Trademark**, Stuart and his partner Gavin both dying after falling through a hoarding around a building site in London. “Ultimately we’re an indie pop band!” declared **ToLiesel** on the front cover of this month’s issue, the quintet tracing their sound back to English folk traditions: “there’s a real pastoral folk tradition that still thrives in Oxfordshire and I think aspects of our music scene feed off that,” said singer Jack Olchawski, who still gigs locally under the name **My Crooked Teeth**. While ToLiesel have since gone the way of so many aspiring young bands, *Nightshift*’s Introducing artist this month was a new young rapper and poet on the scene called **Rawz** who has since graced the cover twice. Many of Oxford’s talented young things were releasing albums and singles this month, including **Young Knives** with their superb ‘Sick Octave’ album; **Vienna Ditto** released their ‘Ugly’ EP, **Stornoway** put out a mini album of outtakes called ‘You Don’t Know Anything; **Glass Animals** released the single ‘Psylla’ and **The August List** released their ‘High Town Crow’ EP. Tech-metallars **Prospekt** also had an album out, ‘The Colourless Sunrise’ heralding the arrival of new rock faves on the scene.

**5 YEARS AGO**  
The curse of South Park struck again with the news in November 2018 that the organisers of **Common People**, Bestival, had gone into administration, meaning the festival wouldn’t be returning after three great years which saw the likes of **Duran Duran**, **Public Enemy**, **Sean Paul** and **The Jacksons** coming to town. Hope continued to spring eternal in the battle to save **The Cellar** with **Philip Selway**, **Gaz Coombes** and **Mark Gardener** all joining the campaign which was currently fundraising to expand the fire exit to meet safety demands. Beyond Oxford’s stars, the likes of **Jeffrey Lewis**, **Kiran Leonard** and **Imogen Heap** also recorded messages of support, while former Oxford rapper **ShaoDow** took the cause to parliament’s select committee on the future of live music. Front cover stars this month were pop-punkstars **Self Help**, whose song ‘Get On With It’ would go on to top *Nightshift*’s end of year chart. “One of Sean’s legs is dedicated to shit tattoos, which he’s christened ‘Shit Leg,” said bassist Lizzie Couves; “he decided to get his Self Help tattoos done on that leg. One is a horse that looks like a cow.” A busy old month on the gig front saw **Courtney Barnett**, **Killing Joke**, **Shame** and **Beak>** among the highlights at **The O2 Academy**, while **The Bullingdon** hosted **Sunflower Bean**, **Ought**, **Hinds** and **Brix & the Extricated**; **Fisherman’s Friend** were at **Oxford Playhouse** and **She Makes War** were at **The Jericho Tavern**.



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## TOP TRACK MASQUERADER

If the daily news tells us anything it's that the world isn't fair, and so it is with the Tracks reviews. This is Oxfordshire goddamit, out-of-county interlopers shouldn't be allowed in here never mind grab the spoils of war, but them's the breaks and so it is that Masquerader, who hail from Reading way, nick this month's title. Hey, we share a BBC Introducing show these days, we're almost family, right? Like much of the world right now, Masquerader are ferocious, or, more accurately, hysterical and frenetic. But equally they can be – like any good killer – considered and complex and they have a tendency to keep their more aggressive side just enough in check as to make it most effective. At 2 minutes 14 seconds, 'i.am.masquerader' is very much a short, sharp shock of math-rock married to spittle-flecked post-hardcore; at times it feels like their tank tracks will crush you into the dust, at others they might simply tickle you to death (albeit with a feather duster embedded with nails and broken glass). Ferocity and precision play out a fun balancing act, both win and so does the listener. If only the good guys always won out in the real world.

## THE LUNAR KEYS

Last time round we stuck The Lunar Keys in the Toilet Track which, given the song in question was in aid of charity, showed either just how bad it was or just how big a bunch of bastards *Nightshift* are. After a series of fundraising songs, this latest, '88 Train', isn't for charity so far as we can see and yet they've escaped the Toilet by some distance which shows that either they've improved a fair bit since last time or *Nightshift* are even bigger bastards than previously thought. A third option is that the rest of the Tracks pile is absolutely appalling, but let's not go there. No, this is a big, cheesy, chest-thumping slab of rock bombast that pumps its fist heroically without the merest hint of subtlety but does at least come with something approaching a big old melody that the undiscerning masses could easily sing along to in a massive field of a summer afternoon. It

sounds like it might have swaggered out of a Sunset Boulevard bar sometime in the early 90s, but there's also more than a hint of boy band poppiness about it. It also has an obligatory guitar solo just in case you worried those heroic levels of bombast were dipping at all. A big chunk of rock cheese best enjoyed with some crackers and enough wine to sink Russia's Black Sea fleet.

## CEDARS OF LEBANON

We've been sent this by Brendan Morgan who has some serious form in local music, most recently with experimental electronic project Moth Drop, so hopes are sky high. And if those sky high hopes aren't entirely satisfied, they're not dashed against the walls of despair either. The chief problem with Cedars of Lebanon is they don't seem entirely certain what they want to be. Lead track here 'Pretty People' is a bit funky and jangly but also might have designs on being The Doors, but it all ends up, initially at least, sounding a bit ponderous. That said, there are strong indications it could be a decent, even intense, jam if they beefed everything up a bit and didn't waste that head of steam they build up halfway through before letting it all dissipate. Similarly 'Crow Bone Boat' which, mix wise, is a right old mess with some thundering drums basically drowning out everything else in sight, not least the tremulous vocals, and sounding strangely incongruous. Yet again though, there's more than a skeleton of a decent song lurking around in all that mess. We'd like to see and hear Cedars of Lebanon live to more properly gauge what they're capable of. Recording wise they need more discipline, a better recording set-up and some more muscle but it's more than vague hope that makes us think there could be a good band set to emerge.

## HAYDEN RAMM

Hayden Ramm is another returnee to these pages. Last time he elevated himself above the strum'n'moan brigade with judicious use of piano and possessed of a rather good voice that reminded us a bit of Brian Molko. This time round he's upped his game even more, ditching the acoustic guitar and piano in favour of an electric for some solo post-grunge noisemaking of a subtle kind that on opening track 'Thin Paper Heart' reminds us of The Lemonheads – ragged yet tender in its way. He's at his best though with the more pensive 'Suffer With Me', which is darker and more angsty and given extra heft by some serious flange pedal. If 'American Dream' seems lighter it probably isn't. We don't think Hayden does light and fluffy really; he returns to his acoustic guitar

here but it's his casually melodic voice that gives the strong its spine. 'A Modern Prometheus' rounds of a strong set of home recorded songs that suggests Hayden should probably get out of his bedroom and into a few local venues in the near future.

## ANDY ROBBINS

Another solo act, another returnee and like The Lunar Keys, another artist who's endured the bitter taste of the Toilet previously. Andy's enjoyed some rather more positive reviews in the interim and this new song, 'Long Gone', suggests he won't be returning to the dark place any time too soon. It sounds like he has hope in his heart with a simple, jaunty piano melody leading the line. Said piano line doesn't always mix too cleanly with his throaty vocal style which is better suited to a bluesier style but it's sweet and simple enough. Perhaps too simple in that it makes your average nursery rhyme sound like one of Radiohead's more convoluted opuses, while also suffering from not being particularly memorable. You can easily imagine a bar full of slightly tipsy punters getting onside with this and singing the chorus back at him but with no discernible hook to hang it all on it's hard to imagine them humming it all the way home.

## NINETEENTH HOUR

Nineteenth Hour seem to have taken their previous review to heart as they mention a Lego set approximation of an indie anthem, which is something we heartlessly chuckled at them last time round. They've muscled up a bit since that previous offering with the guitarist at least sounding a bit like he's in search of an epic metal track to join in with. They haven't strayed too far from their chosen path though and 'Modern Casanova' – about the minefield of modern day courting; an actual modern day Casanova would be Me Too'd long before last orders – is a sturdy indie-rock workout, a post-Arctic Monkeys/Oasis chug'n'churn that maybe needs to develop a bit more of its own character to stand out from a crowd of similarly (un)inspired bands. The singer doesn't sound too happy (doesn't look too happy in the band's online photo neither) and gets increasingly overwrought as the song builds to its climax, but like the girl in the song, whether we'll remember it all when we sober up is uncertain. If we're being kind then we'll say this is a step up from last time, and that's a positive, right? Also, double extra bonus points for managing to rhyme "rude" with "misconstrued". Love a bit of poetry, us.

## 100FT SKELETONS

A new name here but Jack Hanwell, the chap behind 100ft Skeletons has form with his bands Rats Eat Rats and Sleepers.

*Send tracks, downloads or streaming links for review to [editor@nightshiftmag.co.uk](mailto: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.*

Eschewing the rock of those bands this is his solo electronic project – synth-wave as he describes it – and for the most part it's a pleasing departure. Across six instrumental tracks 'Moving Fast' is the highlight – wowsy, fleet of foot, almost housey at times techno-pop that comes with a nice retro vibe about it. Elsewhere 'Pure Vanilla' bubbles and bounces, while 'Perfect Timing. Let's Go Skating' has a Ryuichi Sakamoto feel to it with its almost icicle-like synths. It sounds like music that back in the day might have come as a soundtrack to a fractal video when such things felt fantastically futuristic. On the downside some of the stuff here feels a bit self-indulgent, almost like muzak, and even at three or four minutes long can outstay their welcome, needing to progress from their initial idea to become something fuller rather than ambient fluff. 'Here, Now', for example, fails to achieve lift-off after a promising start. Six tracks of purely instrumental electronic music needs more variety to hold your interest than is always apparent, but at his best 100ft Skeletons shows he has enough sense of fun and texture to create something more fully captivating.

## TOILET TRACK

## HONEY TRIP

Ah, we see what you've done there Honey Trip. Like, y'know, Honey Trap but, like, trippy. Man. Shame you couldn't follow through on the name and actually be, y'know, like, trippy. Man. But, talking of following through, 'Follow Through;' is the title of Honey Trip's track here. "Wherever you go / I'll follow through," croons the singer who sounds like Joe Pasquale impersonating a sleepy hamster over the most innocuously discreet electro-jazz-pop soundtrack ever committed to tape (and we use the word committed in its criminal sense). You hear that? He's gonna fart and shit himself wherever the object of his desire goes. Which doesn't sound the ideal way of winning over said paramour. Then again, there are probably some niche dating sites out in Internet land where such habits are *de rigeur*; we just don't wish to know about them, never mind hear about them in a bland electro-jazz-pop style. You'd hope that given the (deliberately misunderstood, by us) subject (faecal) matter of the song, the music would at least be hideously bleak, nihilistic and unsuitable for polite company, but it's the kind of music you could take round to meet your dear old maiden aunt without giving her a fright. At least until it's leaked all over her best cushions. Which begs the question: which is the biggest stinking pile of ordure here – the one in the singer's nappy or the one we were just forced to listened to.

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## OXFORD GIG LISTINGS

OCT FRI 20  
**THE BULLINGDON**  
**CUT CAPERS**  
DANCE CENTRIC BRASS FUNK

NOV SAT 04 **LOW TICKETS**  
**O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY**  
**THE DUALERS**  
UPBEAT REGGAE & SKA  
+ ZAIA, DJ TONY NANTON

DEC WED 06 **SOLD OUT**  
**THE JERICHO TAVERN**  
**BEANS ON TOAST**  
ACCLAIMED SINGER SONGWRITER  
+ BASSIE GRACIE, TENSHEDES

OCT FRI 20 **SOLD OUT**  
**THE JERICHO TAVERN**  
**RUSTY SHACKLE**  
SIX-PIECE FOLK-ROCK BAND FROM SOUTH WALES  
+ RESTLESS OCEANS

NOV SAT 11  
**O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2**  
**THE 900**  
TONY HAWKS PRO SKATER COVER BAND  
+ NVMERAL

DEC FRI 08 **LOW TICKETS**  
**O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2**  
**OF MICE & MEN**  
POWERFUL HARD ROCK AGGRESSION.  
+ CASKETS, DEFECTS

OCT SAT 21  
**O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2**  
**BLACK PARADE**  
00'S EMO ANTHEMS

NOV MON 13  
**THE BULLINGDON**  
**PALE BLUE EYES**  
POP HOOKS AND PSYCH-ROCK SOPHISTICATION  
+ CIEL

DEC SUN 10  
**THE BULLINGDON**  
**OPUS KINK**  
HORN-FUELLED FILTH-FUNK  
+ SELF HELP, HAINTS

OCT TUE 24  
**THE BULLINGDON**  
**TIGERCUB**  
RIFF CENTRED ROCK  
+ JAMES AND THE COLD GUN

NOV FRI 17  
**THE BULLINGDON**  
**TOM MCGUIRE &  
THE BRASSHOLES**  
FUNK SOUL POWERHOUSE FROM GLASGOW

FEB FRI 02  
**THE BULLINGDON**  
**AS EVERYTHING  
UNFOLDS**  
HOOK LADEN METALCORE

OCT FRI 27  
**O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2**  
**DUB PISTOLS**  
REGGAE-BREAKS-JUNGLE MASHUP  
+ ZEN LEWIS, JERRY SOBER

NOV SAT 25  
**O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2**  
**THE ELECTRIC  
SWING CIRCUS**  
AN ELECTRO-SWING SPECTACLE

FEB SAT 10  
**MULTIPLE VENUES**  
**BEAM ME UP FESTIVAL**  
NEW MUSIC FROM ANOTHER WORLD  
+ DEADLETTER, THE RILLS, DOLORES FOREVER  
SNAYX AND MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED

OCT SAT 28  
**O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2**  
**ANDY BELL'S GLOK**  
ELECTRONIC WONDERSCAPES FROM RIDE'S ANDY BELL  
+ APHRA TAYLOR, TIGER MENDOZA

NOV SUN 26  
**O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2**  
**PHIL CAMPBELL &  
THE BASTARD SONS**  
HEAVY ROCK FROM MOTÖRHEAD'S LONGTIME GUITARIST

FEB TUE 13  
**THE BULLINGDON**  
**N'FALY KOUYATÉ**  
FROM AFRO CELT SOUND SYSTEM

NOV WED 01  
**THE BULLINGDON**  
**FUTURE UTOPIA**  
DECORATED UK PRODUCER SOLO TOUR  
+ SASSY, FOUR MINUTE WARNING

NOV THU 30  
**O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2**  
**L1NKN P4RK**  
LINKIN PARK TRIBUTE ACT  
+ ARIMEA

MAR WED 13  
**O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY**  
**THE LONGEST JOHNS**  
MASTERFUL SHANTIES AND SINGALONG.