

# NIGHTSHIFT

## Oxford's Music Magazine

Free every  
month  
Issue 328  
April  
2024



*"Music should  
move your mind,  
body and soul.  
If it does all of  
those things, it's  
complete"*



# BarrelHaus

Bringing the Blues with  
Oxford's riff beasts

Also in this issue:

Introducing **DOGMILK**

At work with **TERRI BONHAM-SAMUELS**  
**TRUCK, WILDERNESS** and **WOOD** festival news

plus

All your Oxford music news, previews, reviews  
and gigs for April

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# THE BULLINGDON

APRIL 2024

Saturday 30th March  
*Kinetic*  
**DJ Rap**  
Dope Ammo, Benny Page  
John Bravo, Shabba D  
Fearless, Sye, Inna, Sandman  
Doors: 11PM

Monday 1st April  
**Dream State**  
Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 3rd April  
**True Strays**  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 4th April  
*DIY Now and Next Tour 2024*  
**Big Special**  
Grandma's House  
The Pill  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 5th April  
*Sun City*  
**DJ Luck & MC Neat**  
Effi Brooks  
Sound Affect  
Kaisui  
Doors: 11PM

Thursday 11th April  
**Tom Lawrinson:**  
*Hubba Hubba*  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 12th April  
**Carl Hutchinson:**  
*Today Years Old*  
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 13th April  
*Operation: Bring the Noise*  
**Jackum & Efan**  
Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 17th April  
**Nocny Kochanek**  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 18th April  
**Murder on the Dancefloor**  
Doors: 11PM

Friday 19th April  
**Fin Taylor:**  
*Ask Your Mother*  
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 20th April  
*Musical Medicine x Pop Up*  
**Dan Shake**  
Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 24th April  
**Pet Needs**  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 25th April  
**MC Hammersmith:**  
*Straight Outta Brompton*  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 25th April  
**Swifties**  
*(A Night of Taylor Swift in Oxford)*  
Doors: 11PM

Friday 26th April  
**Brain of J**  
*Pearl Jam Tribute*  
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 27th April  
*Terraforms*  
**Randall & Blackley**  
Swyndla  
Kiai  
Sandman  
Doors: 11PM

Tuesday 30th April  
**October Drift**  
Doors: 7PM

Tuesday 30th April  
*Simple Mayday*  
**Dr. Banana & Sully**  
Doors: 11PM

Thursday 2nd May  
**Corky Laing**  
*Plays Mountain*  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 3rd May  
**Regrets**  
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 4th May  
**Reggaeton Party**  
Doors: 11PM

Wednesday 8th May  
**Delights**  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 10th May  
**Theatre of Hate**  
*The Go Go Cult*  
Doors: 7PM

Sunday 12th May  
**Peja Slums Attack**  
Doors: 7PM

Monday 13th May  
**English Teacher**  
Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 15th May  
**Fat Dog**  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 17th May  
**Dolly Mavies**  
Joely June  
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 25th May  
*Jungle Cakes*  
**Ed Solo & DJ Hybrid**  
Katalyst, Kivi, Dain, Bitter Pill,  
Traffic MC, Deegz, Sandman MC  
Doors: 11PM

Sunday 26th May  
**The Inflatables**  
AJ Jones  
Constant Jammin  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 31st May  
**Bitter HC**  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 31st May  
*All My Thoughts*  
**Seb Wildblood**  
Doors: 11PM

Monday 3rd June  
**Gel**  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 6th June  
**Rob Tognoni & Krissy Matthews**  
Doors: 7PM

Sunday 9th & Tuesday 11th June  
**Luke Kidgell:**  
*Happy Hour*  
Doors: 7PM (Sun) & 6.30PM (Tues)

Wednesday 12th June  
**Swim Deep**  
Doors: 7PM

Friday 14th June  
**Steve Martland Hits the Club**  
Doors: 7PM

Thursday 27th June  
**Malcolm Bruce + Maya Sage**  
Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 3rd July  
**The Sadies**  
Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 10th July  
**Alastair Greene Band**  
Doors: 7PM

Saturday 27th July  
*Terraforms*  
**Brockie**  
DJ Solitude  
DJ Comp Winner  
Doors: 11PM

## GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

# NEWS

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



**SOPHIE ELLIS-BEXTOR** heads the second wave of acts announced for this summer's **Truck Festival**. The 'Murder on the Dancefloor' star joins headliners **Wet Leg, Jamie T, The Streets** and **Idles** at **Hill Farm** in Steventon over the weekend of the **25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> July**. Other new artists confirmed include The Amazons; Heartworms; The K's; Overpass; Vlure; Personal Trainer; The Clockworks; Sofy; Balancing Act, and Chilli Jesson, while Switch host the late night dance takeover with Sub Focus, Goddard, Born on Road and more to be announced. Meanwhile, *Nightshift* will once again be among the Truck partners picking artists to perform from entries to the Truck Band App. Over 80% of weekend tickets have now been sold for Truck. Get yours at [Truckfestival.com](http://Truckfestival.com).

**STUDIO7** opens this month, providing Witney with a new live music venue. The new venue, café bar and nightclub is an extension of Green Room Studios on **Avenue 3** off **Station Lane** in the town. The new venue will be hosting an open day on **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April** when musicians and fans will be able to get a look at the new facilities, followed by a four-day mini-festival from **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>-Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April**, featuring local bands and DJs. Green Room Studios was originally a green screen studio for owners Gavin Hyatt and Richard Kibbey's video production business before it was transformed into a recording and rehearsal space for local musicians. Talking about the new venue, Gavin said: "we feel very proud of what we have built, especially when, nationally, grass roots music venues and studios are closing down every week and the whole industry appears to be shrinking. We have been in contact with local venues and collaborated with them to make sure we are all offering different types of acts at different times and really making the whole town a festival and each venue an individual stage of that festival. Ultimately, this benefits musicians and music lovers and elevates the music industry. The future is very exciting!"

**THE CIDERHOUSE REBELLION** are among the latest acts to be announced for this year's **WOOD Festival**. The band (pictured) will headline the Friday night of the eco-friendly festival which runs over the weekend of the **17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> May** at **Braziers Park**, performing their Cider With Molly project with Irish singer Molly Donnelly. They join fellow headliners **Stornoway (Saturday)** and **Willy Mason (Sunday)**, as well as a host of other newly announced artists, including Canadian acts Jerry Leger & the Situation, and Jake Vaadeland & The Sturgeon River Boys; Norwich's Brown Horse; Michigan's Frontier Ruckus; Lizzy Hardingham; Annie Dressner; Kate Ellis, and Masal. A few remaining tickets are on sale now at [woodfestival.com](http://woodfestival.com).

**THE KOKROACHEZ** will headline this year's **Glofest**. The teenage alt-rockers top the bill at the evening event in **Florence Park** on **Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> June**. Earlier in the day **Barricane** will join headliners **The Mighty Redox** for the free, family-friendly **Flofest** in the park, kicking off at 11am and running through til 4.30pm with the ticketed **Glofest** running through the evening. Earlybird tickets for **Glofest** are on sale now, priced £10 from [Flofest.uk](http://Flofest.uk) until the 30<sup>th</sup> April and £12 thereafter. Meanwhile **Lokkhi Terra** will headline **Bossaponik's** 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in Florence Park the day before (**Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June**). The Bengali folk, Afro-Cuban grooves and jazz-funk fusion outfit will join Alogte Oho & The Sounds of Joy, The Turbans and Mazaika Duo as the long running world jazz dance club celebrates its birthday. The event



**MICHAEL KIWANUKA, FAITHLESS, BICEP PRESENT CHROMA AND JESSIE WARE** headline this year's **Wilderness Festival**. Wilderness returns to **Cornbury Country Park** from the **1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> August** with its traditional mix of live music, DJs, comedy, talks, cinema, arts and food. Other acts announced include: Teskey Brothers; Barry Can't Swim; De La Soul; Alison Goldfrapp; Craig Charles; Ibibio Sound Machine; Cosmo Pyke; Bongeziwe Mabandia; Tom Rasmussen; Dutty Moonshine Big Band, and The Van Morrison Alumni Band. Additionally there will be late night sounds from Ewan McVicar b2b Special Requests; Barry Can't Swim; Eats Everything; Sarah Story, and Saint Ludo, while Bill Bailey brings his mix of comedy and music to the weekend. Full line-up details and tickets at [wildernessfestival.com](http://wildernessfestival.com).

runs from 4.30-11.45pm. Earlybird tickets are on sale now, priced £21, from [Wegotickets.com](http://Wegotickets.com).

**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.

**ODDBALLS RALLY** returns this summer, providing a weekend of live music and more in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust. The event runs from the **1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> August** at **Abingdon Rugby Club**, kicking off on the Thursday with a silent disco. Friday sees a headline set from Prodigy tribute **Jilted Generation** as well as sets from mod and soul covers band **Heavy Sol**; soul-blues crew **The Deadbeat Apostles**, and reggae/ska outfit **Riff Raff**, while Saturday sees all-female punk outfit **Sex Pissed Dolls** headlining alongside surf-punks **Kings of Hong Kong**, bluegrass group **The McCurdy Brothers**, **Two-Tone All-Skats** and rockabilly trio **Teenage Zombies**. Check out the Oddballs Facebook event page for more details.

**MELTING POT** continues to showcase new and classic Oxford music every fortnight on Get Radio. Local acts can submit their music to the show, presented by Rich and Deadly, by emailing [meltingpot@getradio.co.uk](mailto:meltingpot@getradio.co.uk). **BANDSCANNER** offers a gig guide app for phones, laptops and PCs that let's gig-goers instantly access videos by artists playing in Oxfordshire. Find it at [bandscanner.net](http://bandscanner.net).

**WITNEY PEDAL PARTY** returns on the **12<sup>th</sup> May**. The day runs from midday through til 5pm at **Fat Lil's** and is followed in the evening by an ambient gig at Fat Lil's featuring Nine Is The Level, Site Nosite and A Year's Rain.



# THE BULLINGDON

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# BarrelHaus



**“I THINK WE’VE PLAYED lots of places that would be considered shitholes, but I love those places. The dirtier and grottier, the better. Do you want to play in a mall? Do you want to play in the doctor’s waiting room? No, I want to play somewhere that’s dark and dingy and grotty.”**

**MARC CHALLANS, SINGER,** guitarist, drummer and producer with BarrelHaus is chatting to *Nightshift* about places his band have played. A barrel house is defined as a cheap and disreputable bar and given BarrelHaus’ raw, dirty style of heavy blues rock, we wonder if they’d played such a suitable setting. “We can tear up a pub, but we can also hold our own just fine on the stage in the O2,” adds Ian Mitchell, singer, guitarist and the other half of the two-headed rock beast that is BarrelHaus. “I quite like the idea of playing music that makes you feel like you can give people a good time no matter where it is.”

**BARRELHAUS WOULDN’T** deny that their natural home is in dark and dingy bar venues and nor should they: they should be proud that their music has that lowdown vibe, rooted in 60s blues rock and the heavy, heavy sounds that emerged from it, from Black Sabbath and Hendrix to Royal Blood and Clutch, via Queens of the Stone Age and Soundgarden. In BarrelHaus’ world

the riff is king. There are riffs aplenty on the duo’s new album, ‘Azimuth’, released on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May and preceded this month by a new single, ‘All Aboard’. Azimuth’ is the follow-up to BarrelHaus’ debut album ‘Dirty Hymns & Antonyms’, released a year ago. Marc and Ian are veterans of various local bands, including former *Nightshift* cover stars Little Red, as well as Master of Nothing, while Ian has his own solo project Page of Swords, though neither of them has played in such a straight-up rock band before. BarrelHaus formed as a way of keeping busy during various Covid lockdowns. After the pandemic caused Master of None to no longer exist, Marc was working on solo material and Ian was building guitar pedals and brushing up on his ability to play lead. Ian started sending Marc a few recordings of heavy riffs he had been working on and the two decided to start working as a duo, with the only brief being “to create dirty, rocky, blues-based music.” ‘Dirty Hymns and Antonyms’ was a result of 18 months’ work in various studios and featured five songs written by each of the band members. ‘Azimuth’ promises to build on that solid start with bigger riffs and more stylistic variety. The new material *Nightshift* has heard certainly mark BarrelHaus out as one of the best rock bands in town, and

with the genre still finding its feet post-pandemic and after the loss of its spiritual home at The Wheatsheaf, their arrival on the scene is most welcome.

**NIGHTSHIFT CATCHES UP** with Marc and Ian ahead of the release of ‘All Aboard’ and asks first, what inspired them to go so fully down the rock route compared to their previous bands, particularly the delicately gothic folk of Little Red. Marc: “There were a couple of things really, because I’d recorded an album, and to do that I’d had to figure out how to play the guitar properly, and how to use pedals, essentially. And I got really into it. So did Ian, separately I think, and then we said well, we’re both noodling about so why don’t we get together and see what happens.” The original intention with Barrelhaus was to create dirty, rocky, blues-based music. Do you think ‘Dirty Hymns and Antonyms’ fulfilled that aim and has that intention continued into ‘Azimuth’? Marc: “I’d say so. It’s still blues-based, isn’t it? I think it’s expanded a little bit, but ultimately, it’s modal and blues-based and riffy, so I think yes, to both.” Ian: “Absolutely. I mean, it doesn’t sound like John Lee Hooker, but it’s got that root, you know. I think when you say blues, some people think we’re going to start, I don’t know, singing about how our woman left us

and stuff like that.” Marc: “I guess our interpretation of it is that we’re using a certain note palette, if that makes sense.” Ian: “Yeah, exactly; it’s not lyrically influenced by the blues, it’s more musically, right?” Marc: “I don’t know about that; I think Ian’s stuff is very bluesy. I mean, a lot of the blues, lyrically, was about having the devil on your shoulder. I don’t think that’s a million miles away from what he does. I’m more about telling stories or pondering ideas. I think Ian’s more bluesy than I am.”

**COMFORTABLE IN THEIR** new blues rock skin and with a raft of positive reviews for their first album under their belt, BarrelHaus have powered on into a second album in just under a year. With a bit more experience how different was the writing and recording process for the new album compared to the first?

Marc: “If it’s all constantly heavy, then it can be a bit mono. I like the thing of having lighter moments, cleaner moments, because it makes the heaviness stand out a lot more.” Marc: “It’s easier than it was the first time, because every time you do it, you learn and it gets quicker and easier and I think it sounds better. It’s not a question of bringing completely finished material. I think I tend to bring completed stuff more than Ian does, but that’s because I’ve got the gear and I’ve got the facilities to flesh things out in a way that Ian doesn’t. So if the situation was reversed, it would be him doing that and not me. It just so happens I’ve got the kit and space.” Ian: “I guess I’m coming at it from a sort of writing riffs angle as well, for once, rather than with other stuff I’ve worked on, which has been lyrically-led. For me, it’s just like, right, can I write some riffs that work together, and then we sort of Frankenstein them, really.”

How do *you* think the new record compares musically and lyrically to ‘Dirty Hymns...’? Ian: “I think in places it’s heavier than the first one. I think in places it’s faster; it’s moodier too. I think ‘Azimuth’ is more cohesive, though. I mean, I really like the first record, but this time, lyrically, we’re using similar imagery, just by chance, and musically it feels like a more cohesive beast.” Marc: “I think it’s a continuation really, musically and lyrically. It’s not that we’re not progressing, we are; it’s just that that’s not a really severe shift in tone and content and instrumentation. ‘Azimuth’ is better

and it’s a bit slicker” One of *Nightshift*’s favourite tracks on ‘Dirty Hymns’ was its closing number ‘The Pushback’, an absolute beast of a song where Hendrix and Sabbath clashed gloriously with Queens of the Stone Age. Can listeners expect something similar from ‘Azimuth’, and how heavy can BarrelHaus go?

Ian: “Of the new songs, I think ‘Down With His Ship’ is a real monster.” Marc: “I think ‘G.A.D.’” Ian: “Fuck yeah!” Marc: “Ian’s songs tend to be heavier than mine. Mine are a bit more poppy. ‘Jaws’, however, that gets pretty heavy.” Ian: “Yeah, ‘Jaws’ does, and it’s because of the down-tuned guitars as well. It’s got a real beefy sound. But how heavy do we think we’re going to get? I mean, I don’t think we’re going to get much heavier than where we are now. I’m listening to more and more heavier stuff, but I’m not going to insist that we become an industrial metal band. But hey, there might be moments of that here and there, for sure.”

Marc: “If it’s all constantly heavy, then it can be a bit mono. I like the thing of having lighter moments, cleaner moments, because it makes the heaviness stand out a lot more.” Marc: “Actually, I think they’re angrier on the new album. I think they contain a bigger degree of anger. Like, ‘Down with his Ship’. I mean, a lot of them, they’re quite angry songs because the medium is louder and more aggressive.” Ian: “Yeah, the new ones definitely are angry. ‘Diet Cheese’ has got a bit of humour in it, but true, just as my new ones are mainly commentaries on the state of society.” Little Red, Master of None and Page of Swords all look towards the darkness in the world. Are BarrelHaus a more optimistic proposition, or does the darkness still drive you?

**GOING BACK TO THE DUO’S** previous band Little Red, and Ian’s Page of Swords project, they felt like lyric-led projects, but Barrelhaus feels more music driven. Would that be right?

Marc: “Yeah, I think that’s my fault.” Ian: “But also I think I’m a better musician now, so the music I write is more riff-based and perhaps coming from more of a musical angle now.” Marc: “I think it’s a question of headspace, isn’t it. When you’re writing for Page of Swords, your headspace is going to be lyric-driven, which is how you’ve done it for a really long time. And when we’re doing this, that’s a different headspace. You’re thinking of hooks and riffs and that kind of thing. And I guess because that’s the way that we put stuff together the lyrics are coming after the music as opposed to before.” Ian: “Yeah, it’s really refreshing though. It’s a really nice way of working ‘cause, you know, the lyric has always come first. I’ve always had a mood or a lyrical idea in mind, whereas with BarrelHaus I’m just focusing on the riff.” Marc: “I always think that the music is primary and the lyrics are secondary. That’s always been my thing. But that that doesn’t mean the lyrics are throwaway or meaningless. The lyrical content is really strong and it’s really important. You’ve got

to sing something that’s true to you, whatever that may be. I guess in my brain they’re equally important, but the music is the thing that makes you move physically.” Ian: “And this is music that we want to make people move to.” Marc: “Music should move your mind, body and soul. If it does all of those things, it’s complete. And that, for me, is always the aim of writing anything. It’s to make you think, make you move and to move you.” Are there things you write about with BarrelHaus that you didn’t write with Little Red or Page of Swords? Ian: “I guess indirectly, somehow, BarrelHaus is a bit more hopeful, like the lyrics for my ones are far more hopeful than for Page of

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***“You’ve got multi-millionaires in the cabinet, and they’re so divorced from the reality of most people’s lives that the effect that these people are having is debilitating for society and it’s maddening.”***

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Swords or Little Red. They’re also a lot less story-based. There are lyrical smatterings of humour and hope with BarrelHaus.”

Marc: “It’s very difficult now for people in power to hide any of these things. So you could have a kind of veneer of acceptability, but now the moment you do anything, it’s on the internet so everybody knows exactly what’s going on. So it feels like something’s changed and it hasn’t. It’s just that the reporting of that thing, the information available, has changed. And so that gives the impression that that it’s some kind of recent crisis or flashpoint, and it really isn’t because these people have traditionally always been like this, it’s just it was difficult to know exactly what they were doing, and now it isn’t. It may be the effect has changed a little bit as well. But, you know, everything moves in cycles and with any luck they’ll be gone soon and we’ll have something that is approaching sanity and humanity in power.” What can rock music do to change or fight a world gone so wrong? Marc: “Music makes sense without needing to be explained. You just immediately feel an affinity with it, and once you start feeling an affinity with something creative, then you can have real change in that individual. I’ve got huge belief in the power of creativity, either applying it or receiving it, with education too. So if you are open to either of those things I think it makes it very, very difficult to behave in a kind of soulless and isolated way, like you don’t give a toss about the people around you. I think both of those things make you more of a human being, and it makes doing horrible things more difficult to do. Music

**NEW SINGLE ‘ALL ABOARD’** certainly isn’t optimistic by anyone’s standards, it’s full of anger, dealing as it does with the greed of the already mega rich and how the rest of us are told to be grateful for what we have (sample lyric: “*Better thank God that you got a cup to be half empty and a pot to piss in*”). Where and when do BarrelHaus think society went so horrifically wrong?” Marc: “This government in particular has been pretty cancerous for society as a whole. Your

government is supposed to be of the people, for the people, by the people. But if your government is full of one percenters, then by definition they’re not of the people. Your government should look after their people and they don’t. And they don’t understand why it is that people might have a problem with that, because they’ve never lived it. You’ve got multi-millionaires in the cabinet, and they’re so divorced from the reality of most people’s lives that the effect that these people are having is debilitating for our society and it’s maddening.” Ian: “Now I’ve just sort of realised that we’ve used similar sources of inspiration; I think ‘Down With His Ship’ and ‘Diet Cheese’ are similar to ‘All Aboard’ in that regard.”

Marc: “It’s very difficult now for people in power to hide any of these things. So you could have a kind of veneer of acceptability, but now the moment you do anything, it’s on the internet so everybody knows exactly what’s going on. So it feels like something’s changed and it hasn’t. It’s just that the reporting of that thing, the information available, has changed. And so that gives the impression that that it’s some kind of recent crisis or flashpoint, and it really isn’t because these people have traditionally always been like this, it’s just it was difficult to know exactly what they were doing, and now it isn’t. It may be the effect has changed a little bit as well. But, you know, everything moves in cycles and with any luck they’ll be gone soon and we’ll have something that is approaching sanity and humanity in power.” What can rock music do to change or fight a world gone so wrong? Marc: “Music makes sense without needing to be explained. You just immediately feel an affinity with it, and once you start feeling an affinity with something creative, then you can have real change in that individual. I’ve got huge belief in the power of creativity, either applying it or receiving it, with education too. So if you are open to either of those things I think it makes it very, very difficult to behave in a kind of soulless and isolated way, like you don’t give a toss about the people around you. I think both of those things make you more of a human being, and it makes doing horrible things more difficult to do. Music

does have transformative power; I’m not saying it’s going to bring down governments, but the potential is there.”

**BARRELHAUS ARE STEEPED** in classic, blues-inspired heavy rock. Over half a century on from Black Sabbath, has rock music done all it can do? And if so, are modern rock bands simply rehashing old ideas or are their bands still pushing things forward? Ian: “I would say rock music hasn’t done all it can do, and there are modern bands doing different things and pushing the genre forwards. It’s definitely not exhausted or tired or dead, there’s still loads of really great stuff, like Band of Skulls, Royal Blood...”

Marc: “Idles. Idles are great.” Ian: “Absolutely, Idles are amazing and obviously there’s loads of bands from The States we also love.” Marc: “Thinking like that isn’t really on my radar. We just play music that we like and hope other people like it. And if they don’t, they don’t. I think you should just do what you want to do and you might get lucky. The most important thing is that you enjoy what you’re doing.

“I was thinking about this, the second part of the question. That’s a question that’s only ever really applied to rock music, which is odd because you don’t look at someone who’s written a police procedural or a crime thriller and say, you know, are you pushing the genre forward? Maybe it’s because I’m not well read enough, but I never hear those questions about other creative things, yet you always hear it about rock music, as if we’re duty bound to constantly break barriers. I don’t think it’s something you should really spend any time thinking about.”

Can BarrelHaus save blues rock from those who seem to favour technique over feeling? Marc: “I would always choose feel over technique. Technique is important, but if you’re technical for the sake of being technical, it stands out instantly and sounds kind of awful.” Ian: “Yeah, I mean, luckily for us, we’ve got both, so...” And finally, before we let them go, what, in BarrelHaus’ book is the greatest riff in rock? Ian: ‘Into The Void’ by Sabbath. Easy.” Fair to say BarrelHaus have a few of their own to add to the canon. Feel the weight and prepare to get down and dirty.

***‘All Aboard is released on the 5<sup>th</sup> April; ‘Azimuth’ is out on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Hear them at barrelhausmusic.bandcamp.com***



# RELEASED

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## RIDE

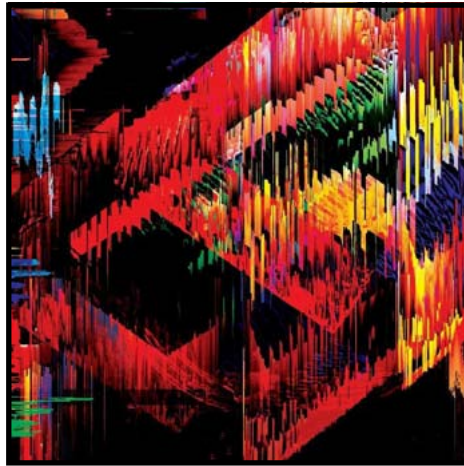
### ‘Interplay’

(Wichita)

A perennial phenomenon among many music fans is “preferring their early work”; early experiences with a band are thought the best, crossing over with happy, carefree memories. To many Ride’s earliest work, typified by 1990’s ‘Nowhere’, is the most fondly remembered. The band have dealt with many comparisons to their early work, and pressure to maintain the magic at the core of those early songs, while delivering new, inventive, but similarly affecting work.

‘Interplay’, Ride’s seventh album in a 35-year career (albeit it a near-decade break), opens with ‘Peace Sign’, immediately signalling this is latter-period Ride. It has a smooth, driving sound, low-mixed vocal harmonies, and washes of synth among beautiful melodic guitar shapes. It calls to mind 80s acts like Talk Talk or Simple Minds; later tracks ‘Monaco’ and ‘Sunrise Chaser’ continue similarly.

There are many styles and influences at play: ‘Last Frontier’ recalls New Order with a circular bassline and wistful melancholy, and the album’s centre point ‘Stay Free’ / ‘Last Night I Went Somewhere To Dream’ echoes Slowdive, reinforcing the album’s themes,



circling around clouded confusion and anger at the state of the world. A reminder, perhaps, that change starts with each of us?

‘Light In A Quiet Room’, an exploratory shoegaze anthem, is the most traditionally Ride-esque piece here, with a long, stratospherically abstract outro. ‘I Came To See The Wreck’ is similarly searching – one of several six-minute pieces on the album – with added portent and frustration. ‘Midnight Rider’ and ‘Portland Rocks’ lead to the album’s final section, first with a driving bassline, mixed with miasmic complex soundscapes, and second as a positive, uplifting slice of festival-at-dusk anthemic



## PECO

### ‘Red Moon, Rare Night’

(Upcycled Sounds)

Recorded remotely due to the duo’s ongoing touring commitments (with Arlo Parks and Poridj), Pecq’s new EP once again finds them entering a twilight world of skittering electronic beats, subtle but bold synth textures, inventive original samples (ants attacking tiny microphones, anyone?), and Hannah Jacobs’ breathless dream pop vocals.

‘In The Dark’ is the most restless of the five tracks here and yet comes coated in a lullaby-like balm that makes its synthetic wows and flashes feel strangely soothing, existing in a similarly woozy pop world to Grimes and

## THE AUTUMN SAINTS

### ‘Just Might Be Thunder’

(Self released)

The Autumn Saints’ latest release is a captivating blend of homage and innovation. An EP of covers, it pays tribute to iconic tracks by Bob Dylan; The War On Drugs; The Band; The National; Freddie King, and Johnny Cash, all while infusing the band’s own dynamic sound reminiscent of Kings of Leon and the Raconteurs.

While drawing inspiration from some of the most revered names in music, The Autumn Saints manage to carve out their own unique

indie rock. ‘Essaouira’ and ‘Yesterday Is Just A Song’ close proceedings; they’re pleasingly experimental soundscapes, rounding off a bountiful journey of an album.

In the ‘90s Ride – along with other acts caught up in the indie/Britpop scenes – dabbled with pseudo-psychedelia, stretching and testing the boundaries of their core sound (and indeed fanbase). After returning in 2017 with ‘Weather Diaries’, they capitalised on and suffered from the effects of time that had solidified them as Proper Indie Legends. Similarly, ‘Interplay’ doesn’t sound like ‘Nowhere’, much as I love that record: 35 years is a long time, and it would be odd for a band to stay the same for so long.

More so than ‘This Is Not A Safe Place’, which was a little *too* grown-up, ‘Interplay’ reveals Ride’s experience, influence on other bands, and influence from others. They sound slower, less intense than the fizzing noise of ‘Drive Blind’, but who wants blokes in their 50s to be reliving their 20s? Ride have survived and manipulated that initial burst of light; with ‘Interplay’ they consolidate their output to date, with all of its ups and downs, and sound like a band of today. The atmosphere wrapped around the album is impressively, enjoyably right. It’s beautifully sequenced, confidently played, and expertly judged.

*Simon Minter*

identity; each cover feels fresh and invigorating, showcasing the band’s ability to seamlessly blend genres and create something entirely their own.

Sometimes covers can be half-baked, but many of those here remind me of Red Hot Chili Peppers’ take on Stevie Wonder’s ‘Higher Ground’: very different in style, but still great songs in their own right.

In ‘Just Might Be Thunder’ The Autumn Saints have crafted a record that pays homage to their musical influences while simultaneously showcasing their own formidable talent. With its infectious energy and captivating performances, it’s sure to resonate with both fans of the original artists and newcomers alike.

*Damon Boughen*



## SILENT WEAPON

### ‘Demonology’

(Blindsight)

Underneath the tracklisting of Silent Weapon’s second full studio album is a quote from the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung that says, “to confront a person with his shadow is to show him his own light.” As soon as you hit play on this nine-track offering from Oxford’s industrial Baron of The Bleak, Umair Chaudhry, you are indeed confronted with their own all-encompassing darkness, and so much more.

Album opener ‘Purgatory’ is a cacophony of power: the soundtrack of a war yet to come; the blend of explosive beats and drone-like chants paint a sonic picture that Goya could only have dreamt of in his worst nightmares; it is the sound of the horror film Denis Villeneuve is yet to make. ‘Switch’ showcases Umair’s extraordinary vocal range, reminiscent of the unmistakable vocal cadences of Godflesh’s Justin Broadrick, set to a delicious background of industrial beats and what you can only describe as an alien air-raid siren made via synths.

‘Swallow’ slows the pace down a little and



is a much-needed breather from the intense opening 14 minutes. The beat swells like a trip-hop track of days gone by, only to have the gorgeous chaos of Chaudhry’s exceptional instrumentation skills introduced as the track builds to dizzying results. A perfect example of counterpoint made for the devil.

‘In a spell’ and title track ‘Demonology’ feature Adam and the Ants and Bow Wow Wow’s Dave Barbossa on drums and as a consequence really

generic way, but the music is excellent, with sticky-burr synth tones teetering on the edge of atonal ugliness whilst the drums are crisp, and bright guitar chords slice like a sashimi chef’s knife. A flourish of indie-psychedelic guitar and some snide vocal wah-wah lines have a hint of later Blur, but the track has a stoned wildness that’s more like Mudhoney. Whether your youthful aspirations are flourishing or mere desiccated memories, these tracks will make your life briefly brighter.

*David Murphy*



## SELF HELP

### ‘Spaceman’ / ‘Enrage Engage’

(Self released)

When Self Help’s rhythm section left, we thought it was all over. Lizzie Couves (bass) and Silke Blansjaar (drums) brought such an enticing mixture of laidback swagger and insistent precision you weren’t sure whether the songs were slumping down in a pub booth like a tipsy friend or screaming at you like a square-bashing sergeant major. Perhaps it took a brief period for the band to settle in as a quintet, but this brace of singles are a joy, and as strong as anything they released with the old line-up.

The title track is about the slow asphyxiation of childhood dreams in the vacuum of adult life, but its huge glam guitar and reverby 50s sci-fi effects still make you want to jump up and shake life by the lapels. Sean Cousins’s vocal is impassioned, but with a slightly dazed off-mic sound reminiscent of Prolapse, and the whole song sounds like it was recorded in the greasy kitchen of a dirty diner.

The lyrics to ‘Enrage Engage’ ponder conspiracies and the future of tech in a pretty

## BARRELHAUS

### ‘All Aboard’

(Self released)

‘All Aboard’, picks up what was put down at the end of BarrelHaus’ debut album, ‘Dirty Hymns and Anonyms’. Punchy drums, nifty riffs and thoughtful lyrics, all embraced in their expressive, blues-drenched approach: BarrelHaus have pitched this one just right.

The cyclical riff-style is something the duo have down to a fine art, reminding me of Queens of the Stone Age or Royal Blood, with roots in various blues and call-and-response traditions. It works particularly in their favour here: a two minutes and fifty-second track which muses on the dismal state of the world. Lyrics such as “Better thank God that you’ve got a cup to be half empty” pack a punch while the riff adopts a repetitive, tumbling quality: I’d like to think this is a crafty nod towards the sinking futility of believing that things will get better any time soon. ‘All Aboard’ is broken up with a simple but aggressive guitar solo, which is precisely what it needs. Its run time keeps it short and compact, but that doesn’t mean it’s neat. It’s sprawling; it’s angry, but it maintains enough composure to get our ears pricked for the upcoming second album.

*Madison Collier*

drive the album forward, spurring the listener further into the inferno. The latter introduces an electronic dance vibe to proceedings that helps provide the variety albums of this nature so often need.

‘Sense Of Self’ is an almost euphoric experience; with filmmaker Steve Norris on guitar, Umair’s blend of chiming synths, crushing beats and soaring vocals take the listener on a journey out of the fiery pit and give the listener a glimpse of the heavens. Silent Weapon must make a soundtrack to a movie soon; this track is, almost literally, screaming out for it.

Eleven-minute closer, ‘Return to Source’, is an engine of pulsating and grinding beats with textures of animalistic howls and further moments of industrial metal. It’s not for the faint of heart, but should not, under any circumstances, be skipped on first listen.

With this album, Silent Weapon has created an astonishing set of visceral, primal, and heavy songs that will shake up the status quo of our beloved scene. He might be our Baron of Bleak, but with this album Silent Weapon is making a call to arms, and I for one know which side of the war I want to be on. Long may he reign.

*Caitlin Helm*

## MAX BLANSJAAR

### ‘Anna Madonna’

(Beanie Tapes)

That little thing called the pandemic plays havoc with our sense of time. Some might regard Max Blansjaar as an up-and-coming act, but five and a half years have actually elapsed since his debut EP ‘Spit It Out’ was released, almost the same duration as the whole career of The Velvet Underground. That release echoed the Velvets in its scratchy, diffident and quite wonderful experimentalism and Blansjaar has always had a keen ear for melody; his work would fit quite perfectly into the record collection of a 2000s Brooklyn hipster alongside Animal Collective, Grizzly Bear and Dirty Projectors.

Through the music hall Damon Albarn-inflected singalong of ‘Life’s Too Easy’ in 2019, an appearance on the bill at the much missed Ritual Union festival, the stately balladry of ‘Going Backwards’ and remixing collaborations with local luminaries Candy Says and All Is Worth, the former prodigy – Blansjaar embarked on his musical trek well before he was old enough to even be allowed in to some venues – has excelled at everything he does.

‘Anna Madonna’ is the first cut from a long player, ‘False Comforts’, scheduled for release in June. It is an insanelly catchy track in the vein of Rainbow Reservoir and Fixers and has a very decent chance of making a splash beyond Oxford. Talk of life being a “pricey vacation” and the buffets of the wider political climate are the background to a song which makes a plea for friendship to persist amid all the noise, although the narrator (perhaps the artist himself?) indicates a loss of patience with the title character towards the end. The LP should be a real landmark release this summer.

*Rob Langham*



# GIG GUIDE

## MONDAY 1<sup>st</sup>

**DREAM STATE: The Bullingdon** – Anthem post-hardcore in the vein of Bring Me The Horizon and Evanescence from the south Wales outfit and former *Kerrang!* Best British Breakthrough Act, back in action with a new line-up, including new singer Jessie Powell, joining founding guitarist Aled Evans and the band out on tour to promote new EP ‘Still Dreaming’.

**KID KAPICHI: O2 Academy** – Militant politico-punk from the Hastings snarlers, out on tour to promote new album ‘There Goes The Neighbourhood’, including a team-up with Suggs from Madness.

## Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup>

### ADWAITH:

#### The Jericho Tavern

Carmarthen trio Adwaith have been helping spearhead a resurgence in Welsh language music since their formation back in 2014. To date they are the only act to have won the Welsh Music Prize twice – for their 2018 debut ‘Melyn’, and its 2022 follow-up ‘Bato Mato’. Along the way they’ve played pretty much every festival going, including Glastonbury, Latitude, Green Man and last year’s End of the Road as well as hitting the road with fellow Welsh artist Gwenno, and The Joy Formidable. Formed by friends Holly Singer and Gwenllian Anthony, the pair recruited drummer Heledd Owen, who turned up to their first ever show. And there’s been no looking back since as they’ve grown in both sound and stature since, from their early C86-inspired sound to a bigger, grungier sound that marries sharp melody with superfuzzed guitars and potent lyricism that delves into feminism, identity and Welsh pride and independence (they’re vocally supportive of Welsh independence). Psychedelia and dream pop feed into the songs from ‘Bato Mato’, inspired by the band’s trip on the Trans-Siberian Express, but what’s really striking about Adwaith (the name means Reaction) is how even gigs in England have seen crowds singing along in Welsh to songs that come with universal appeal.



# April

## TUESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup>

**ADWAITH + LORD BUG: The Jericho Tavern** – Oxford debut for the two-times Welsh Music Prize winners – *see main preview*

## WEDNESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup>

**TRUE STRAYS: The Bullingdon** – Rootsy rocking, blues and Americana from the Bristol band, touring their new ‘Matters To You’ EP.

## THURSDAY 4<sup>th</sup>

**RIDE: Truck Store** – Two already sold-out acoustic instore sets from the local legends to promote their new album ‘Interplay’.

**BIG SPECIAL + GRANDMA’S HOUSE + THE PILL: The Bullingdon** – The *DIY Now & Next* showcase tour brings you the stars of tomorrow today – *see main preview*

**FISHERMAN’S FRIENDS: The New Theatre** – Port Isaac’s male voice singing group return to town, keeping old, often ancient, shanties, sailors working songs and songs about the sea alive, bringing them to new generations

**CATWEAZLE: Common Ground** – Oxford’s longest running open night showcases singers, musicians, poets, storytellers and more on the first and third Thursday of the month.

**BANTER + ADAM COONEY: The Unicorn, Abingdon**

## FRIDAY 5<sup>th</sup>

**ED HARCOURT: Truck Store (6pm)** – Intimate instore show for the indie chamber pop songsmith, playing songs from his new album ‘El Magnifico’.

**KLUB KAKOFANNEY with FLIGHTS OF HELIOS + BABY TEETH + HAND OF NONE + TWIZZ TWANGLE: Gladiator Club** – Psychedelic ‘griefcore’ ensemble Flights of Helios top the bill at this month’s Klub Kakofanney shindig, joined by Wycombe’s alt.rock crew Baby Teeth, new band Hand of None, fronted by Laima Bite, and a welcome return to action for idiosyncratic songsmith Twizz Twangle.

**KILLER KOWALSKI + ISAAC NEILSON + MIKE LEMIN + MORTI: The Cape of Good Hope** – It’s All About the Music local showcase with caustic post-punk crew Killer Kowalski and more.

**THE BOOTLEG BEATLES: The New Theatre** – Big stage tribute to the Fab Four from the long-running tribute act.

**OPEN MIC NIGHT: Market Tap**

**SHUT THE DOOR KRU: Tap Social, Botley**

– Garage and jungle with Dizzle, Phraser, Bob E Demons and Panzo.

**5 O’CLOCK SOMEWHERE: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Country, folk and rock’n’roll classics, from The Stones and The Eagles to Elvis and Chuck Berry.

**LIKE THE BEATLES: The Northcourt, Abingdon** – Abingdon’s own tribute act make it a Beatles double bill in Oxfordshire tonight.

## SATURDAY 6<sup>th</sup>

**NORMAN JAY: The Bullingdon** – The legendary DJ brings his good time mix of soul, boogie, house and more to town.

**DOG UNIT: Truck Store** – The London instrumental rock quartet play tracks from their new ‘At Home’ album.

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

**METAL 2 THE MASSES: The Jericho Tavern** – Heavyweight battle of the bands to win a slot at this summer’s Bloodstock, with RPC, Nvmeral, San Demas and Ocean Planet up against each other.

**LIAM VINCENT & THE ODD FOXES: Tap Social, Botley** – Fundraiser for this year’s Oxford Folk Festival with the local folk-rockers.

**BRITPOP BAND: Fat Lil’s, Witney** – Tribute night.

## SUNDAY 7<sup>th</sup>

**OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms** – Weekly open night.

**MARK ATHERTON & FRIENDS + DES BARKUS + SECRET RIVALS: The Tree, Iffley (4-7pm)** – Klub Kakofanney host a free afternoon of live music.

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

**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (2.30pm)** – Weekly open afternoon.

**JAYBEES DUO: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)**

## MONDAY 8<sup>th</sup>

**MILKWEED + JULIA MEIJER + HUGO MANUEL: Common Ground** – Wyrd-folk and strange legends from the band touring their ‘Folklore 1979’ album – *see main preview*

## TUESDAY 9<sup>th</sup>

**THE WANDERING HEARTS: O2 Academy** – Sometimes epic, sometimes intimate and emotive Americana and folk-rock from the British country/folk band whose recent ‘Hesperus’ EP adds elements of Fleetwood Mac and The Cranberries to their rustic sound.

**REMORAE: Tap Social, Botley** – Folk, jazz and electronic music fusion from the

Anglo-French collective, previously known as Folkatron Sessions.

**INTRUSION: Kiss Bar** – Monthly goth, industrial, ebm and darkwave club night.

## WEDNESDAY 10<sup>th</sup>

**THE PETER JONES BAND: Tap Social, Botley** – Spin jazz club welcomes the groove-led sextet, playing classics from Steely Dan to Stevie Wonder and more.

## THURSDAY 11<sup>th</sup>

**BOSTON MANOR + OVERSIZE: O2 Academy** – Epic pop-punk and emo from the Blackpool rockers, out on tour to promote new single ‘Container’.

**HARCOURT OPEN MIC SHOWCASE: The Jericho Tavern** – The Harcourt Arms takes over the Jericho Tavern for the night, hosting a free showcase of the best artists from its renowned Sunday open mic night, including headliners The Spiralites.

**OXFORD ACOUSTIC KLUB: The Cape of Good Hope**

## FRIDAY 12<sup>th</sup>

**TANKUS THE HENGE: O2 Academy** – Livewire New Orleans-style jazz, rock’n’roll, vintage r’n’b, funk, gutter blues and a whole heap of showmanship from the ever-touring London troupe, bringing a bit of carnival light to the live scene.

**SECRET RIVALS + KILLER KOWALSKI + IN-FLIGHT MOVIE: Tap Social, Botley** – Tad Studios host a local showcase gig with punk-tinged indie janglers Secret Rivals, caustic post-punk crew Killer Kowalski and synth-rockers In-Flight Movie.

**HUSH EDGAR ft. ASHER DUST: The Jericho Tavern** – Groove-led jazz and beyond with the new sax, bass and percussion trio alongside local legend Asher Dust.

**OSMOSIS + FIREGAZER + CHARMS AGAINST THE EVIL EYE + THE STATION + HE DIDNT: The Cape of Good Hope** – It’s All About the Music showcase.

**DOUG GRAYVES + THE SEXTONS + SUPERLOOSE: The Red Lion, Abingdon** – Skittle Alley show with 50s and 60s-styled rock’n’roll outfit Doug Grayves.

**ARTISAN BLUES: The Midget, Abingdon** – Free monthly live blues session.

**DALBY’S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon** – Fortnightly open mic night hosted by musician Tom Dalby.

## SATURDAY 13<sup>th</sup>

**GUNS2ROSES: O2 Academy** – Saints preserve us.

**OPERATION BRING THE NOISE ft. JACKUM & EFAN: The Bullingdon**

**THE DIN SOCK ITS: The Harcourt Arms** – 50s and 60s rock’n’roll with Sir Bald Diddle.

**METAL 2 THE MASSES: The Jericho Tavern**

**RICH RAINFORD: THE PROJECT + HARRY QUINN + SARAH DERRICK: The Cape of Good Hope** – Blues and folk-influenced songs in the vein of John Martyn and Stephen Fretwell from Rich Rainford and his band.

**THE PETE FRYER BAND: Cricketers Arms, Temple Cowley** – Rock and blues classics from the veteran local singer and guitarist and chums.

**VOCAL SPOKES + RHOLBEN: Mary Magdalen Church** – Vocal group performing a capella versions of songs from Billie Eilish to Sigrid, Rag’n’Bone Man to Kate Bush. Traditional Welsh language songs from Rholben in support.

**EDWIN & THE KEEPERS + DARKGNOSS + ZARBI: The Kings Head & Bell, Abingdon** – Skittle Alley show with local rockers Edwin & the Keepers; gothic noise rock from Darkgnoss and post-dubstep experimentalism from Zarbi.

**ALEX HART: The Lean To Sessions, Abingdon** – Intimate house party gig for the Devonian folk and country singer.

## SUNDAY 14<sup>th</sup>

**MA BESSIE & HER BAND: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)** – Jazz and blues from the local singer.

**OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms**

**FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (2.30pm)**

## MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup>

**ÍMAR: The Village Hall, Nettlebed** – Lively instrumental Scottish and Irish folk from the Glasgow quintet, formed by members of Talisk, RURA, Manran and Barrule.

## TUESDAY 16<sup>th</sup>

## WEDNESDAY 17<sup>th</sup>

**NOCNY KOCHANEK: The Bullingdon** – Classic heavy metal from the Polish rockers.

**ELECTRONIC OPEN MIC: The Jericho Tavern** – Monthly open night for electronic artists.

## THURSDAY 18<sup>th</sup>

**CATWEAZLE: Common Ground**

**MURDER ON THE DANCEFLOOR: The Bullingdon** – 00s club night.

**RAMBLING MIKE, + ANT KELLY COLLECTIVE + STRUGGLES END: Loose Cannon Tap Room, Abingdon** – Make Music in Abingdon showcase.

**FEAST OF FIDDLES: Benson Parish Hall** – Back for another celebration of fiddle music, Peter Knight and Chris Leslie leading a line that includes Phil Beer and Dave Mattacks.

## FRIDAY 19<sup>th</sup>

**BOSSAPHONIK with NUBIYAN TWIST: Cowley Workers Social Club** – World fusion sounds from the Leeds/London ensemble at tonight’s Bossaphonik – *see main preview*

**THE AUGUST LIST + THE DEADBEAT APOSTLES: The Handle Bar** – Double dose of two of the best live bands in town as towering gothic drone-folk stars The August List join forces with raucous, punk-infused country, soul and r’n’b



## Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>

### BIG SPECIAL / GRANDMA’S HOUSE / THE PILL: The Bullingdon

*Nightshift* caught two of tonight’s *DIY Now & Next* showcase tour acts together opening for John last summer, both holding their own in the face of the gloriously ferocious onslaught of the headliners. Big Special in particular have moved up several gears since then with tour supports to Sleaford Mods and Placebo. With song titles like ‘Shithouse’ and ‘Desperate Breakfast’ the Black Country duo could be just another seedy punk outfit but there’s something special about them, an abrasive soulfulness where the thunderous drums meet the singer’s deceptively mellifluous delivery. It’s something like Rag’n’Bone Man channelling Fucked Up in the style of Yard Act at times. They’re genuinely new and different and if you have only heard their string of singles so far we seriously recommend you see them live tonight for full effect. Grandma’s House, meanwhile, who also played that previous show, deliver dense, dirty post-grunge noise rock in short, sharp slabs, full of bars and brutality and are great noise-fuelled fun, while tonight’s openers The Pill have emerged from the same fertile Isle of Wight scene that’s recently given us Wet Leg and Coach Party. Their spiky, effusive punk comes with a singalong pop edge and as so often the case with these DIY showcase tours it’s a great opportunity to catch future stars in an intimate setting before big venues and festivals claim them.

crew The Deadbeat Apostles.

**GHOSTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS + SINEWS + HE DIDNT: The Jericho Tavern** – Celebrating ten years together, the local instrumental post-rock, shoegaze and

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Monday 8<sup>th</sup>

## MILKWEED / JULIA MEIJER / HUGO MANUEL: Common Ground

Sometimes Milkweed are a six-piece; sometimes they are a trio, and sometimes they play as a duo but whatever form they take they're absolutely fascinating. They describe themselves as slacker-trad but they're closer to the wyrd-folk tradition – fair to say you're more likely to encounter them at Supernormal than Cropredy. They've been to Oxford before, supporting Bell Lungs and most recently Alasdair Roberts, captivating audiences with their strange storytelling but tonight they get the chance to shine as headliners as they play a string of shows to promote their most recent album 'Folklore 1979'. Its sparse, sometimes glitchy songs tell tales of the horse in America and snake deities in Chinese creations myths as well as Arthurian and Danish legend. They cultivate weirdness and mystery but draw the listener into their strange, dreamlike world with songs that are as informative as they are haunting. Great local support tonight from Oxford-based Swedish singer-songwriter Julia Meijer with her songs of travel and reflection, and a very welcome back to musical action for Hugo Manuel, the former Jonquil and Chad Valley frontman playing his first gig in many years.

post-metal titans promise a greatest hits set, including tracks from last year's monumental debut album 'This Is Forever', drawing on the likes of Mogwai, Explosions in the Sky and Ride along the way. Support from post-hardcore crew Sinews and one-man drone army He Didnt.

**SONGWRITERS NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms**

**OXFORD FOLK WEEKEND: Various venues** – Opening day of the revamped folk weekend after the demise of Folk Weekend Oxford. Kicking off proceedings during the day The Market Tap hosts The Ock Street Band, Craig McLearie, Linda Watkins, Dave Oakley, Daughter of the Water, Emperors of the Moon and Barricane, while in the evening The Katie Grace Harris Band play at Common Ground, Owen Spafford and Louis Campbell are at The Old Fire Station and Trials of Cato play The Friends Meeting House.

**L!ES L!ES L!ES: Tap Social, Botley** – Album launch gig for the local electro guitar duo.

**DEAD ANYWAY + THE EXACT OPPOSITE + LIFE UNDERGROUND: Apothecary Tap, Banbury** – Darkly funny and militant poetry and electronica from Gloucestershire's Dead Anyway at tonight's Strummer Room showcase gig, the duo drawing comparisons to Dry Cleaning and Poison Girls. They're joined by The Exact Opposite, the new band formed by Dive Dive frontman Jamie Stuart and Unbelievable Truth's Nigel Powell, and indie rockers Life Underground.

**RANAGRI + NATALIE HOLMES: Harwell Village Hall** – Anglo-Irish folk tunes as part of Oxford Folk Festival.

**THE INFLATABLES: Fat Lil's, Witney** – Ska and Two Tone hits.

**RUNAWAY KILLERS + SIMULATION MUSE: The Northcourt, Abingdon** – Double dose of tribute action.

### SATURDAY 20<sup>th</sup>

**OCTAVIAFREUD & THE WEIRD SISTERS: Modern Art Oxford** – A full stage production show from Octavia Freud for new concept album 'Mancbeth', featuring The Weird Sisters – an ensemble of guest vocalists including Emma Hunter, The Bobo, Mila Todd, The Subtheory's Cate Debu and Pet Twin – together reimagining Shakespeare's great tragedy in the setting of the 90s Manchester rave scene with a suitable electro-dance soundtrack interwoven with spoken word pieces from actor Brian Gorman, reprising his role as Tony Wilson. As well as a live performance from OctaviaFreud and chums there will be DJ sets from Tiger Mendoza and The Subtheory.

**VOLTA: The Harcourt Arms**

**NIRVANA UK: O2 Academy**

**METAL 2 THE MASSES: The Jericho Tavern**

**OXFORD FOLK WEEKEND: Various venues** – Today's day of folk music across town includes a festival headline set from Eliza Carthy at The North Wall, as well as Milady Clare's Musicke at St. Michael at the Northgate, and a full afternoon of free music at Market Tap, including Three Idle Women, The Greg Mayston Band, Roary Skaista, John & Di Cullen, None the Wiser and more, plus an evening performance from The Holy Fools and Mandy Woods.

**MUSICAL MEDICINE X POP UP: The Bullingdon** – The long-running disco and house club night welcomes Dan Shake to the decks.

**MUDSLIDE MORRIS & THE REVELATORS presents JUMPIN' JAKE FLASH: The Cape of Good Hope** – A tribute to The Rolling Stones and The Blues Brothers.

**ZZ TOPPD: Fat Lil's, Witney**

**MOVING PICTURES: The Northcourt, Abingdon** – Tribute to Rush.

### SUNDAY 21<sup>st</sup>

**OXFORD FOLK WEEKEND: Various venues** – Concluding the weekend festival there's An Afternoon with Celtic Heartbeat at The Jericho Tavern as well as free folk music all afternoon at Market Tap, including Three pressed Men, Warp & Weft, Enda McCabe, The Sepia Tone Folk Collective and Stocious.

**OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms**

**FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (2.30pm)**

**SCAMPI: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)**

### MONDAY 22<sup>nd</sup>

### TUESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup>

### WEDNESDAY 24<sup>th</sup>

**PET NEEDS: The Bullingdon** – Colchester's urgent indie-punk quartet tour their third album 'Intermittent Fast Living', returning to town after previously supporting Frank Turner – who also produced their debut, 'Fractured Party Music'.

Friday 19<sup>th</sup>

## BOSSAPHONIK presents NUBIYAN TWIST: Cowley Workers Social Club

As Bossaphonik approaches its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this summer it's worth celebrating its unique place in the Oxford music scene. Few other gig promoters approach its scope of sounds and certainly not its global reach as it continues to bring acts from around the world to town on a monthly basis, hosting myriad genres of dance music and celebrating fusion styles we'd previously never even contemplated. Tonight's show is a case in point as Bossa welcomes Leeds-conceived, London-based collective Nubiyann Twist, who allow West Coast hip hop, brassy funk, neo soul, Latin dance, tropical pop and Ghanaian highlife to mingle and exchange fluid dance grooves without a care for consequences. It's a well-oiled party and everything slips easily into place with the ten-strong band regularly collaborating with guest vocalists and musicians, including the likes of Pat Thomas and Soweto Kinch as well as their own Cherise – a former Jazz FM vocalist of the year. They're a band tailor made for warm summer evenings and festivals and fit Bossaphonik's global groove ethos perfectly. As well as a live act each month there are world jazz dance sounds from resident and guest DJs, tonight with Helsinki's DJ Jokakell on the decks. Go along with an open mind and your best dancing shoes on.



by arrangement with ITB

## OCTOBER DRIFT

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS SNAKE EYES

TUESDAY 30 APRIL  
THE BULLINGDON • OXFORD

PETER SERAFINOWICZ PRESENTS

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20 years, 20 hours, 20 songs, 420 Gold

FRIDAY 11 OCTOBER 2024  
THE BULLINGDON OXFORD

By arrangement with Insanity Live

## Seth Lakeman

Kitty Jay 20th Anniversary Tour  
-Performing the Mercury Prize nominated album and more-

• DATES ADDED IN AUTUMN • DATES ADDED IN AUTUMN •

Wednesday 16 October  
O2 ACADEMY Oxford

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## BESS ATWELL

THE LIGHT SLEEPER TOUR

THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER  
THE BULLINGDON OXFORD

## PAUL WELLER

SPECIAL GUEST: Liam Bailey

THURS SOLDOUT EMBER  
NEW THEATRE OXFORD

BY ARRANGEMENT WITH LUGER

## GOAT

FRIDAY 15 NOVEMBER  
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PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

## LIZ LAWRENCE

SATURDAY 16 NOVEMBER  
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## JAMIE CULLUM

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Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup>

## OCTOBER DRIFT: The Bullingdon

If the Covid pandemic feels a long time ago, its effects can still be felt by many musicians whose career trajectories were knocked fully off kilter by lockdown and the inability to gig. So it was for October Drift who, pre-Covid looked set to become big news on the back of some seriously incendiary shows. Back when *Nightshift* caught their Oxford debut at this venue it was one of those classic gigs you wished the whole world could have witnessed rather than the usual few dozen diehards: an intense, passionate display of post-punk darkness, new wave euphoria, shoegaze turbulence and grunge noise. Frontman Kiran Roy was an intense, animated performer with a rich, sonorous voice that belied his slender frame and with a poetic edge to his emotive lyrics, and together the band sounded like Echo & the Bunnymen and Icicle Works forced through My Bloody Valentine's sonic shredder and coated in Smashing Pumpkins fuzz. Their debut album 'Forever Whatever' came out in October 2020 but they couldn't promote it and their star abruptly stalled in its ascendancy. Last time they came to Oxford, back 2022, the Taunton quartet were somewhat hairier than we remembered them but that mix of gothic portent with new wave melody and fuzzbomb noise remains, and they remain a brilliantly intense live spectacle.

**MECHANICAL ANIMALS: Florence Park Community Centre** – Acoustic session with dark, poetic drama from Death of the Maiden alongside delicate, bittersweet melancholy from Lee Switzer-Woolf and reflective jazz-inflected balladry from Eva Gadd.

## THURSDAY 25<sup>th</sup>

**KRIS BARRAS BAND: Truck Store (1pm)** – Southern-flavoured electric blues-rock from Devon guitarist and former MMA fighter Barras and his band, playing acoustic and

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piano versions of songs from new album, 'Halo Effect'.

**THE ZUTONS: O2 Academy** – Dave McCabe's reformed Liverpool indie rockers return with their first album in 16 years – the Nile Rodgers-produced 'The Big Decider'.  
**SWIFTIES: The Bullingdon** – Taylor Swift club night.

**STEPH PIRRIE: The Harcourt Arms** – Live jazz with the singer and trumpeter and her band.  
**IAIN BELLAMY & ROB LUFT BAND: Tap Social, Botley** – Spin jazz club with Brazilian and contemporary styles from Bellamy and Luft.

**LACUNA COMMON: The Jericho Tavern** – Swaggering punk-tinged indie rock from the Abingdon band.

## FRIDAY 26<sup>th</sup>

**EMMA HUNTER + MID AIR + BARRICANE: The Jericho Tavern** – Get Radio's local music show Melting Pot celebrate their third birthday in style with an essential local showcase gig that features the three acts that made up their end of year Top 3 in 2023, including recent *Nightshift* cover stars Emma Hunter and Barricane, proving that great minds think alike.

**BRAIN OF J: The Bullingdon** – Pearl Jam tribute.

**TERRAFORM: The Bullingdon** – Drum&bass club night with Randall and Blackley.

**GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES with THE KOKROACHEZ + THE JERICHOES + N:SH: Common Ground** – Punk-infused indie rocking from rising local teenage stars The Kokroachez at this month's GTI, relocated to its new home at Common Ground. They're joined by psychedelic indie crew The Jerichos.

**THE JOLLY GROGSTERS: The Harcourt Arms** – Shanties and sea songs with the local vocal troupe.

**SWITCH: O2 Academy**  
**BRICKWORK LIZARDS + THREEPENNY BIT: The Isis Tavern, Iffley Lock** – Double header of The Brickwork Lizards' cinematic Arabic jazz & Threepenny Bit's bombastic big band folk sounds.

**FAJITA FUNK: Tap Social, Botley** – Funk, hip hop, reggae and Latin beats with the local DJ.

**ROLLING CLONES: Fat Lil's, Witney**  
**DALBY'S OPEN MIC: The Fox Inn, Steventon**

## SATURDAY 27<sup>th</sup>

**L!ES L!ES L!ES: The Harcourt Arms** – Electropop and indie from the local newcomers.

**FLAMINGO + LOVEPET HORROR + ALTO ALTO: The Library** – Delicate indie spangle in the vein of Tanya Donnelly from Flamingo, the new band fronted by singer and guitarist Lavinia Siardi and featuring Jonny Payne.

**THE AUTUMN SAINTS + DES BARKUS + BEARD OF DESTINY: The Cape of Good Hope** – Epic Americana in the vein of Sixteen

Horsepower, Son Volt and The War On Drugs from The Autumn Saints at tonight's It's All About the Music showcase.

**THE FREE SINGER: Gladiator Club SLICED TOMATOES: Tap Social, Botley** – Northern soul, disco, Motown, Philly, boogie, r'n'b and reggae with Witney Sould Club and friends.

**AIRTIGHT 80s: Fat Lil's, Witney** – 80s rock covers.

**ED SHEERAN EXPERIENCE: The Northcourt, Abingdon**

## SUNDAY 28<sup>th</sup>

**DEATH OF THE MAIDEN + HORMONES + YELLOW COUNTY: The Bullingdon** – Darkly emotive baroque pop and drama-laden songs from Death of the Maiden back in action as they build up to the release of their second album, the follow-up to their 2019 debut masterpiece 'The Girl With The Secret Fire'. They're joined by over-50s female punk band HorMones, and Mazzy Star-inspired dream-pop crew Yellow County.

**OPEN MIC NIGHT: The Harcourt Arms OWL LIGHT TRIO + XOGORA** – Tap Social, Botley – Contemporary instrumental folk from Owl Light Trio

**PETE FRYER BAND: The Tree, Iffley (3.45pm)**

**FOLK SESSION: The Half Moon**

**OPEN MIC SESSION: James Street Tavern (2.30pm)**

**MOJO WORKING: The Brewery Tap, Abingdon (5pm)**

## MONDAY 29<sup>th</sup>

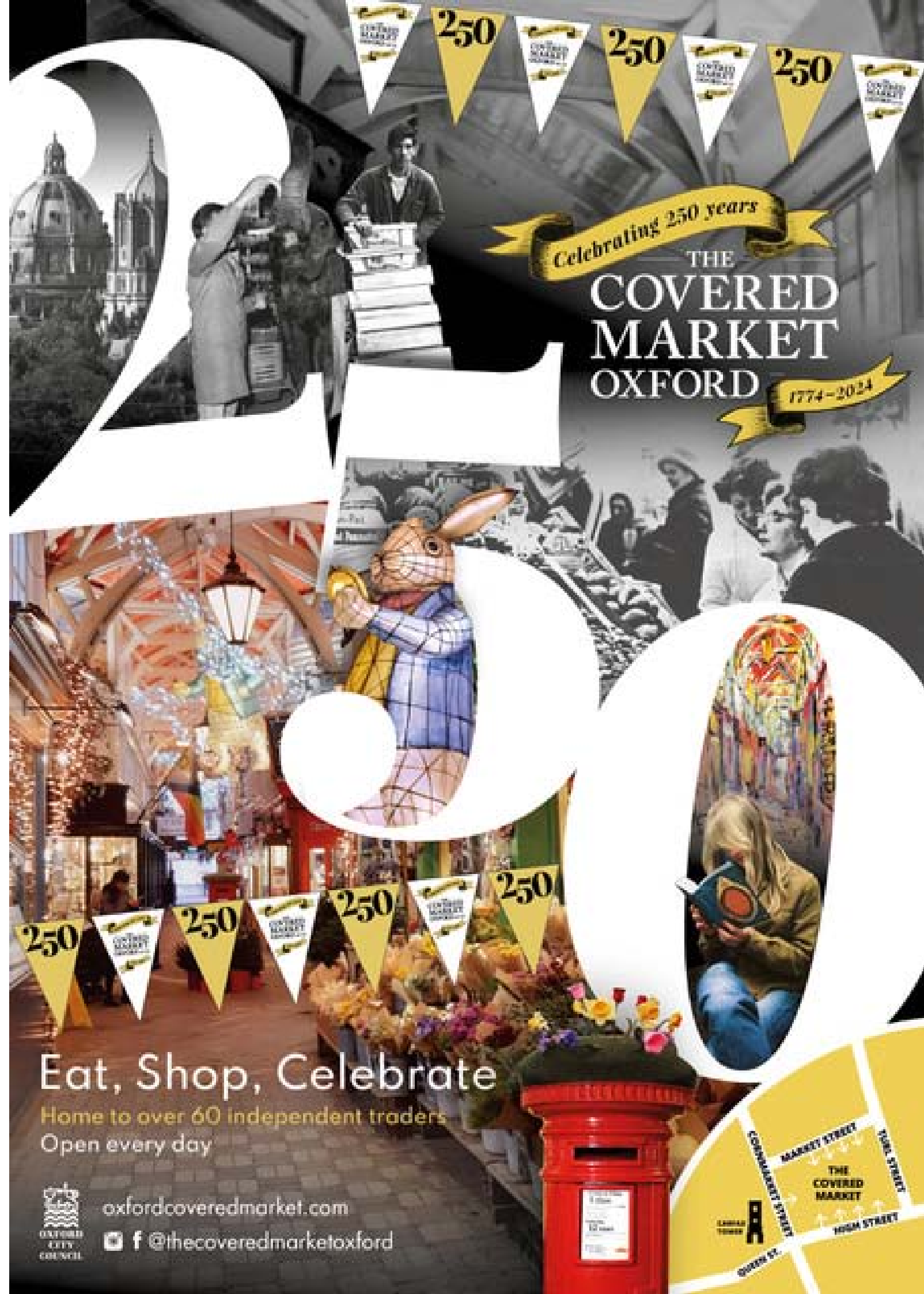
**JAKE BUGG: O2 Academy** – Nottingham's tales-from-the-estate troubadour returns to town, these days displaying a poppier but less interesting sound.

## TUESDAY 30<sup>th</sup>

**OCTOBER DRIFT: The Bullingdon** – Return to town for Taunton's intense post-punk crew – *see main preview*

**SIMPLE MAYDAY PARTY feat DR BANANA & SULLY: The Bullingdon** – Party into May morning with the local techno and house club.

**REGGAE 2 RAVE: Tap Social, Botley** – Count Skylarkin celebrates sound system culture at the all-nighter into May Morning.



*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.*



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## **COSSE / THE WATER CHESTNUTS / SINEWS**

### **The Library**

A packed, airless Library is surely the perfect setting for Sinews' brand of post-hardcore which opens with the sullen, incessant savagery of 'Reanimated', the set becoming a slow-flowing torrent of dirty noise rock spattered with belligerent spumes of serrated guitar and rasping vocal bark, occasionally allowing warmer, mellower passages to breathe and making for a compact, varied and highly effective half an hour.

We've always found water

chestnuts to be a bit bland despite the pleasing crunch they add to Chinese food. Oxford-London quintet The Water Chestnuts certainly aren't bland but they do come with a bit of crunch, particularly from the bass player who at his best brings a hefty slab of Led Zep propulsion to the band's complex tangle of post-hardcore and post-rock textures, although for the most part they seem content to drift and meander along more thoughtful currents. Tonight is only their

second gig apparently, which bodes well for things to come. Parisian quartet Cosse take up where The Water Chestnuts leave off but their relative experience takes them to a higher level – for all the angular turns they take there's a fluidity throughout tonight's set of the kind you'd hope for from a good jazz band, and it's not just the judicious use of saxophone tonight that reminds us of short-lived but influential Chicagoans Sweep the Leg Johnny. If there's any worry

that such a nuanced and intricately textured band might lose something in this packed space it's quickly quashed as they eschew the noisier end of their sound spectrum in favour of a set that almost defines delayed gratification. By increments they become more urgent towards the end but that expected tumult never arrives; instead menace creeps and crawls in between the cracks in the spacious spangle but the thunder remains just beyond the horizon, the pensive mood never resolved, leaving you, as with all good things, wanting more.

**Dale Kattack**

## **SPIERS & BODEN**

### **Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall, Uffington**

Uffington. Could anywhere else quite encapsulate this manger of Englishness? The 3000 year old White Horse – the island's first logo carved next to the sky into the chalk turf – welcomes us from the rim of the vale as we round the fabled mound where St George defeated the dragon, and then on to fetch up at the Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall in the village, itself a monument to the local writer of *Tom Brown's School Days*, the novel that stiffened an empire's upper lip.

There, in front of the rafter packed crowd stands the willowy form of John Boden with his fiddle and stomp boots, bowing towards the stouter oak of John Spiers and his melodeon. Premier English folk archivists and musicians both, as English as fish'n'chips, and back on tour together for the first time since 2014, while celebrating 25 years since they first met in the Elm Tree pub in Oxford.

Their undoubted synergy, and respect for each other, is breathtaking from the get-go, sweeping us all up in a giant hand of gaiety that only pauses

for a short intermission, complete with its none-more-parochial cake raffle. Batches of songs and instrumentals like 'Cuckoo's Nest', 'Saltash', and 'Modal Hornpipe' from their 2021 album 'Fallow Ground' neatly segue with banter and explanations into historic songs by The Copper Family from Rottingdean, and the 13<sup>th</sup> Century 'Hind Horn', which themselves are looped to the affecting chill-out reel of 'Dawn Chorus', and the brash joys of 'Bailey Hill' / 'Wittenham Clumps'.

Spiers & Boden exceed all expectations. In two and a half hours of hard manual labour they wrest every last ounce of power and emotion from their tiny instruments, and with each note the instruments sound like they are happy to be theirs. Jackets come off, sleeves are rolled up, and as the final strains of 'New York Girls' cleaves like a homecoming boat into the wet sand of a beach, it flings up an ovation the likes of which this hall must not often get to hear. What a rush!

Outside the darkness leans in closer as if to hear what the garrulous, leaving crowd had made of it all. From overhead the stars continue to dance and jig in the large puddles in the car park, and high in the deep country night we could imagine the ancient White Horse kicking up its heels along the Ridgeway in delight at the timeless music and levity far below.

**Paul Carrera**

## **FERGUS MCCREADIE TRIO & THE MANCHESTER COLLECTIVE**

### **Oxford Town Hall**

The meeting of these two young award-winning groups is an intriguing prospect. Already both have a high profile in their different genres, reputations for engrossing live performances, and for each having their own distinctive 'voice'.

2022 Mercury Prize-nominated jazz pianist Fergus McCreadie incorporates Scottish folk tunes from which he then spins a different sound world with the two other trusted members of his trio. The Manchester Collective aims "to reshape the future of classical music," partially through "daring collaborations" like this one between jazz improvisers and classically trained musicians, McCreadie's Mercury nomination apparently having drawn him to The Collective's attention. This afternoon The Collective is a string quartet with Donald Grant one of its violinists. He shares with McCreadie a Scottish heritage, roots in Scottish traditional music and being inspired by nature. Also like McCreadie he contributes arrangements and compositions to today. In the show McCreadie and Grant do play together as a duo twice, their piano and fiddle/violin swapping the lead instinctively despite Grant being blindsided by having his back to the pianist.

The concert opens with three tunes played with no break, with McCreadie's trio starting alone playing 'Stoney Gate'.

It's an earworm of a tune with a touch of Scottish folk, though jazz predominates with the trio rapidly upping the decibels. McCreadie characteristically adds myriad trills and dives into the descant, dazzling with quicksilver dexterous finger work. The last of the tunes ends joyfully with all seven musicians in action; the string quartet acts as a quasi rhythm guitar in what now sounds like a boisterous Scottish folk rock band: think Capercaille or Peatbog Faeries without their bagpipes.

The string players display talent and innovation across several pieces, going from 1788, a Hayden string quartet, to 2016, a gorgeous arrangement of an Anna Meredith synthesiser piece 'Honeyed Words'. In a piece based on Tuvan throat singing their skittering strings and strange vocal sounds make it fun, while their poignant playing of the middle of three Kurtág pieces evokes, for me, the pain of Gaza and Ukraine.

For the finale McCreadie specially arranges three of his tunes into a suite which successfully brings together the jazz trio and the string quartet. Sophisticated blues and a sinuous double bass solo feature and towards the conclusion it seems bells are sounding in the midst of the energetic and loud celebratory last phrases. The substantial audience rise to their feet to acclaim what's been a huge success for Music at Oxford.

**Colin May**

## **OMD**

### **The New Theatre**

"In the great tradition of this band, here's another cheerful song about something horrible," says Andy McCluskey introducing 'Kleptocracy', off OMD's latest album, 'Bauhaus Staircase'. And he's right: few bands can sugar coat the horrors of the world in such perfect pop as OMD.

Tonight's sold out show (OMD's tenth at this venue, McCuskey tells us) is a reminder of just how perfect that pop can be and just how politically potent the band can be. From set opener 'Anthropocene', a chilling look at humankind's impact on the world and our inevitable extinction, through the technofear of 'Tesla Girls' and the end of the universe terror of 'History of Modern (Part 1)', to the nuclear horror of set finale 'Enola Gay', pop and politics mix seamlessly. 'Anthropocene', like much of OMD's more recent work, harks back to the band's Kraftwerk-inspired beginnings, all gleaming synth lines and shiny silicon euphoria, where musically at least the future is a place of wonder. 'Bauhaus Staircase' itself radiates both melodic warmth and lyrical menace, while, frankly, political corruption has never sounded quite so wonderful as on 'Kleptocracy'.

OMD draw on history too; as well as the chiming delirium of 'Enola Gay', 'Joan of Arc' and 'Maid of Orleans' explore the legend of the French heroine through a romantic yet tragic lens. Along with 'Souvenir' they make up a mid-set triptych of utter pop splendour, glorious and timeless.

Of course, we also get some of OMD's less innovative songs, those cheesy, throwaway numbers like 'Locomotion' and the overblown 'Sailing on the Seven Seas', which broke them in the States and proved to be their biggest hits. We'd prefer a few more nuggets from their groundbreaking debut album or the massively underrated 'Dazzle Ships' over those predictable staples but sold-out tours demand crowd favourites.

But of course we get the gorgeous 'Messages' to make up for it, and the prescient masterpiece that is 'Electricity', released 45 years ago, long before the climate crisis was a mainstream concern.

Almost half a century on from their formation OMD still sound like the future and we know that however bleak the band sometimes paint it, with OMD still in it that future can still be bright.

**Dale Kattack**

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## THE UMBRELLAS / AUTOCAMPER / FLAMINGO / STRAWBERRY RUNNERS

### Common Ground

If Indiana born, Brooklyn-resident singer-songwriter Strawberry Runners is feeling a little lost at her first ever UK gig she quickly wins over new friends with her limpid, winsome acoustic folk-pop. Real name Emi Night, Strawberry Runners is hushed in her delivery and deeply personal in her lyrics, dealing with one brother's schizophrenia and another's involvement in a cult back home. Her opening song reminds us of Chris Bell's gorgeous 'You & Your Sister' while elsewhere the influence of Suzanne Vega hovers benignly over her music. We hope we made

her feel suitably welcome. And a welcome to the local scene too for Flamingo, a new band fronted by Italian ex pat Lavinia Siardi and featuring Jonny Payne on bass. As delicate at times as Strawberry Runners they're more propulsive, with a steeliness about their indie spangle and an angsty edge to Lavinia's voice occasionally, with more than a hint of Tanya Donnelly's band Belly about them; their closing number, about wanting to be a butterfly, is as lovely as its subject matter suggests. Both Manchester's Autocamper and San Francisco's Umbrellas feel

like they're in their spiritual home tonight. Talulah Gosh played their debut gig literally round the corner and it's no surprise to see that band's guitarist Pete Momtchiloff in the audience tonight. The Umbrellas played the previous night with Swansea Sound, the latest band from Talulah Gosh singer Amelia Fletcher. Both bands' stock in trade is a timeless form of jangly indie pop that wears its anorak, Pastels badge and thick-rimmed specs with pride. Autocamper come bolstered by an organ hum that lends them an almost motorik feel at times but there's an unabashed looseness about them and

they remind us a lot of Comet Gain, at least up to the point where they make a radical stylistic left turn with a raucous cover of Agent Orange. The Umbrellas are a much needed reminder that for all the accusations of twee-ness thrown at bands like Talulah Gosh and their ilk, there was an underlying punkiness to their sound, not to mention their spirit. There's a scuzzy grunginess about the band live and it's only a small leap into some fine Velvet Underground-inspired noise towards the climax of their set. It's easy to forget that it's close on 40 years since Talulah made their debut in this same postcode, so it's heartening to realise that Oxford's first great musical export's influence is alive and very much kicking. *Sue Foreman*

## KLUB KAKOFANNEY with THE KOKROACHEZ / PUPPET MECHANIC / DR STEEVO

### The Gladiator Club

Back over in Oxford for Klub Kakofanney from his native Paris, Dr Steevo presents a set of electro-fuelled psychedelic pop that's equal parts beguiling and frustrating. The beguiling part mainly comes from the gorgeous, bassy synth sounds he bases his songs on, creating an almost sleazy underbelly that reminds us of Soft Cell's darkest moments; the frustration comes from Steevo's tendency to over-emote when a more restrained vocal might serve the songs better. This improves as the set progresses and particularly when he sings in French and the set hits its high point toward the end when he and his musical partner both wield guitars and

take us into something like Jefferson Airplane territory. By contrast Puppet Mechanic's chief weapon is their singer, possessed of a clear, rich baritone, smooth and soulful, that leads the line without him looking like he's even trying. Initially the band's easy, semi-acoustic sound struggles to provide adequate back-up, but they grow into the set, injecting a bit of a jazzy shuffle into proceedings on songs like 'Be Careful What You Wish For', although the highlight is a cover of 'Smalltown Boy', rendered in a far lower register than the original while retaining its delicate soul-pop edge.

It's a cliché, and a patronising one at that, to praise a young band for being tight, but you can tell The Kokroachez, all only just hitting 18, have been playing together for an age. Their confidence and proficiency shine through their busy post-grunge rock which leans fully into classic 80s Brit metal at times with ease and then across into anthemic post-hardcore with admirable fluidity, Ella May's almost languorously epic vocals taking the band into Paramore territory at times. 'Drinking in the Sun' perhaps lacks a sense of purpose but the militant 'Never Enough' finds them at their punkiest and best, while new single 'Heroes & Gods' proves they have the melodic chops to take their solid sound to the next level, and as if to prove their musical mettle they finish on a seamless ABBA medley that shows not just their capabilities but also admirable good taste. *Dale Kattack*

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<b>THE BLACK KEYS</b> OHIO PLAYERS	<b>ST. VINCENT</b> ALL BORN SCREAMING	<b>KHRUANGBIN</b> A LA SALA
<b>PEARL JAM</b> DARK MATTER	<b>JAMES YUMMY</b>	<b>PET SHOP BOYS</b> NONETHELESS
<b>PHOSPHORESCENT</b> REVELATOR	<b>BOB VYLAN</b> HUMBLE AS THE SUN	<b>LUCY ROSE</b> THIS AIN'T THE WAY YOU GO OUT

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THURSDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> MAY 2024

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A NEW VIEW MUSIC BY ARRANGEMENT WITH MIDNIGHT MANGO PRESENTS

*tankus the henge*

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FRIDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024

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# WHAT'S MY LINE?

A monthly look at jobs in local music. This month it's **TERRI BONHAM-SAMUELS** and she's **A RADIO PLUGGER**.

## How long have you worked in this job?

"I have been doing this type of work for over 20 years but Gets Louder began in 2012 and previously I worked as part of Quickfix Recordings."

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

"As well as promoting artists' tracks to my contacts, I spend a lot of my time promoting the radio shows, playlists and blogs themselves on social media. It is really important to show support back to the people and shows playing and reviewing your artists. A lot of people are doing it purely for the love of it and really need the extra promotion to increase their exposure to make supporting new music worth it."

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

"There have been a few highlights but I remember feeling very proud to have managed to get Half Decent played on Chuck D from Public Enemy's radio show."

## And the lowlight?

"The Wheatsheaf closing after many years of promoting at the venue, attending gigs there and contributing to the Save the Sheaf campaign."

## How much did Covid affect your job?

"I was extremely busy in Covid as musicians had more time to focus on their music and I had more time to concentrate on promoting it. There were also lots of new radio shows springing up;



it turned out to be a very productive time. There were lots more opportunities for bands to be interviewed for live online shows and more online gig opportunities too. Following Covid there seems sadly to have been a big decline in radio shows, blogs and magazines."

## Who's your favourite Oxford musical artist?

"I love Meanwhile, Back in Communist Russia; they were such a refreshing addition to the Oxford music scene but I have to say Smilex also as I manage them. Luckily, we are spoilt in Oxford with so many amazing artists. Richard Walters and Julia-Sophie are two other great acts who should be so much bigger than they are."

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

"It is a slow process; it takes time to build a reputation and also to build a band. Whilst aiming for Radio 1 is great it might take a while to achieve, so you need to manage the artist's expectations before the start of the campaign. You

might also get a play for a track on a national show but it does not guarantee the next track will get played, sometimes it is just luck and timing."

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

"There's been way too many over the years!"

## When was the last time you heard genius?

"The Scaramanga Six album 'Chronica'; a double album of pure eccentric genius."

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

"Unfortunately, it is really hard to work with really underground music; the majority of radio shows are just not interested and they can't play anything with swearing. It wouldn't be possible to really do this job without compromising. I did once help promote a Christmas song, however it was in aid of the Music Venue Trust and Shelter so I think I can be forgiven, and the band were good."

## Would you swap your job for any other?

"I would love to be a full-time gig photographer."

## Are you rich?

"Not with money... I have another job too."

## Do you consider your job glamorous?

"It has led me backstage to some glamorous gigs, hanging out with glamorous people but on a daily basis no, I am just stuck at home with my laptop."

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

"I think the best thing is that there are so many people committed to it. We have really experienced people who have remained loyal to the scene for many years, not only musicians but music engineers, promoters, photographers and journalists. *Nightshift* and BBC Introducing Oxford are also vital in helping bring the scene together. The Oxford music scene is really supportive and people are very passionate about it and are working hard to ensure it continues to thrive in all different ways."

# INTRODUCING....

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

# DOGMILK

## Who are they?

Oxford indie trio Dogmilk are: Ellis Currell (vocals/bass), Ed Gallyot (vocals/guitar) and Tom Hitch (drums/blocks); they formed out of the ashes of several bands around Oxford post-Covid. Ed and Ellis have played together since they were teenagers and after "attempting to be a synth-pop duo" in the summer of 2021, realised "there is more to life than trying to be Soft Cell" and recruited Tom. They have gigged extensively both locally and in London and Manchester. Last month they released their debut EP 'Same Again'.

## What do they sound like?

Good question; Dogmilk are nothing if not eclectic, and the new EP reveals their restless nature, mixing up glam-tinged guitar pop, exuberant highlife, retro indie whimsy and sharp-elbowed indie-punk, although live they can be harder and heavier with elements of post-punk and grunge adding heft to their lively melange. In their own words: "Anything you think is about to happen will probably change in the next bar."

## What inspires them?

"BBC4 documentaries; TOTP 1982; The Tape Op podcast; lager and crisps."

## Their career highlight so far is:

"Truck Festival in 2023 was a great show and a real buzz. Hearing someone shout 'DOGMILK!' and slop across the quagmire towards us was a surreal and beautiful moment. Thank you random stranger!"

## And the lowlight:

"Two ULEZ fines for one gig. Don't ask."

## Their favourite other Oxfordshire act is:

"Blue Bayou; they've exploded onto the live scene this year and we can't wait to hear their recorded songs. Tom used to serve Greg pints of cider in The Star without realising his prowess as a frontman and songwriter; they are one of the most fun live bands to watch."

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

"The Beatles: 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band'. An obvious



choice but it's an absolute classic for a reason: the construction of harmony; the combination of pop and classical music; Paul's melodic bass lines tracked as the final piece of the puzzle and the George Martin production across the album is masterfully executed. We couldn't dream of creating that and they only had four tracks to work with."

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

"Keep your eyes peeled for a Dogmilk party in the coming months. Newcomers can expect tightly crafted material, a smattering of wood blocks, and the occasional three-part harmony."

## Their favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:

"Our favourite thing has to be the people that make the scene; it's the camaraderie between bands; meeting different characters; the gig stalwarts who support grassroots music of all forms and the venues – with amazing staff! – which keep the whole ecosystem going in high times and low times. Least favourite would have to be the crushing unsustainable pressure on venues and the disconnection that still exists between town and gown when it comes to music, but perhaps that's more a reflection on the state of the country than it is our specific scene."

## You might love them if you love:

Gang of Four; Supergrass; St. Vincent; Talking Heads; The Strokes and 07'-era Arctic Monkeys.

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## Dr SHOTOVER: Hey, hey, we're the Clunkies

Ah, there you are, Young Jackfruit. Welcome to the East Indies Club bar. Pull up a pew and get one in. Mine's a rum and coke. No, not THAT sort of coke (*hur-hur-hur*). Meanwhile, we have discovered a new supergroup. Laydeez 'n' gennulmen, I give you groovy retro sound sensation – THE SUNAKS! Dishi on lead vocals, with plenty of onstage antics, including 'flannelling' and 'helicoptering'. Bojo on rhythm method guitar, dodgy hair and insincere public apologies. (And yes, he CAN play while lying... down). Headbanging drums by Dommo, late of the SMEGZITEERS. Bass guitar/base tactics by Shappsy (aka the Westminster Chameleon, aka WC). Back-up singers – THE NADINES. Uh-oh, brrrreaking news – former deputy vocalist Sara Lee Anderson has quit the band to join 90s apologists REFORM IN DA HOUSE, with rappers Richard T-Ice and UK Farage! Expect a constantly-repeating loop of self-congratulatory interviews on GB POOS, until they are flushed away at the next election. Cheers! Down the khazi!

Next month: **Jeyes Bloo** [say it in a Kenneth Williams voice, go on]



Bojo to Dishi: 'Um, who are these um new guys, EMERSON, LAKE & STARMER?'

# ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

## 20 YEARS AGO

*Nightshift* once called **Youthmovies** "the most influential band in Oxford," and we weren't wrong. Back in April 2004 they were still called Youthmovie Soundtrack Strategies and were on the cover of the magazine, expounding on the death or otherwise of rock music as they steered it into new and interesting shapes.

The quartet, who would inspire **Foals** on to greater heights, had garnered a Demo of the Month with their debut recording, now they were set to release their 'Let's Get Going... You're Fracturing Me With This Misery' album on **Quickfix Records**, while earning praise from *Kerrang!* and *The Times* as well as fashion mag *The Face* and *The Guardian's* Style supplement. "We only formed to alleviate the drudgery of living in Wycombe," claimed singer and guitarist Andrew Mears, while guitarist Al English claimed, "we don't start with the intention of making things sinister or frightening, but if something's going that way we make the most of it."

As well as the YMSS album, this month saw releases from metallers **Outofinto**; gothic blues sirens **Ivy's Itch** and grungy rockers **Red Star Cycle**, while highlights of the gigging month included shows at the **Zodiac** for **Million Dead**; **Amen**; **The Futureheads** and **Backyard Babies**, while **The Wheatsheaf** played host to **Young Knives**, **Dive Dive** and **The Workhouse**.

## 10 YEARS AGO

*Nightshift* is always ahead of the pack when it comes to spotting bright young talent, and so it was that back in April 2014 we featured the latest in a long line of future global stars on the cover in the form of **Glass Animals**. Back then the quartet had just returned from South By Southwest. "We played eight shows in six days, two of which were an hour apart, so it was quite mental," said frontman **Dave Bayley** of their week in the industry spotlight, adding, "we're a bit overwhelmed right now." Things were starting to pick up at a frightening rate for the band in the wake of debut album 'Zaba'. But before their Spotify plays started to be counted in the tens of millions and they were headlining festivals, they were still able to remember their first ever review – a Demo of the Month in *Nightshift*. "We were really hoping for Demo Dumper," they admitted, "that is still our first port of call in *Nightshift*; people care about that much more than Demo of the Month, don't they?"

Glass Animals were playing a rare hometown show this month, supporting **Metronomy** at the **O2 Academy**. Also playing there were **Sophie Ellis Bextor**; **Deaf Havana**; **Gorgon City** and **Matt Cardle**, while elsewhere in town were **Polar Bear** (St. John the Evangelist); **The Irrepressibles** (The Cellar); **Howling Bells** (Jericho Tavern), and **Pulled Apart by Horses** (The Bullingdon).

Elsewhere this month we featured a new country

singer in our Introducing piece, **Ags Connolly**. "Country of the old school, none of yer polished Nashville rubbish," we said. He's still avoiding that polish.

## 5 YEARS AGO

We fought and we fought again but in the end those with power and money won and so it was in April 2019 that **The Cellar** closed its doors for the last time. The venue, which had hosted live music for 40 years, had raised over £90,000 to pay for a new fire escape while 15,000 signed a petition to save it but its owners, the St Michaels & All Saints "charity" moved the goalposts one time too many and a cornerstone of Oxford's music scene was gone. The "charity"'s remit was to maximise revenue but given the place has remained empty and undeveloped ever since, it seems someone isn't doing their job. Hopefully the roof will cave in one the person responsible. Elsewhere this month **Foals**, who played some of their earliest gigs at The Cellar, released their new album 'Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost (part 1)', while there were also releases for **Death of the Maiden**; **The Deadbeat Apostles**; **Zurich**, and **Despicable Zee**, while this month's gig guide saw **Slow Readers Club**, **Nilufer Yanya**, **Sleaford Mods** and **DMA's** at **The O2 Academy**, while **The Bullingdon** hosted **Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs**, **Jim Jones & The Righteous Mind** and **Rare Americans**, and **Penelope Isles** were at **The Jericho Tavern**.



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# TRACKS

## Yin & Yang Audio

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

## TOP TRACK

### HIGHER MUSIC STATE

“It’s not just a band, it’s a sonic journey where the past converges with the present creating a symphony of diverse influences,” say Higher Music State of themselves. We’ll be the judge of that, matey, just you see. Anyway, slightly pretentious self description aside, and despite the fact the band name suggests a 90s Warp Records signing rather than a slightly folky soft rock band, this is really rather good. Formed around sibling singers Gerard and Andrea Lewis, Higher State Music offer up a song called ‘Principle of Cliff Jumping’ ahead of a full album. Sparsely plucked acoustic guitar, delicate piano and unimposing trumpet provide the bed for somewhat doleful male lead vocals that come with the some lovely female oohs and aaahs, everything coming together in a neatly understated chorus that despite being far too polite to get in your face manages to lodge itself firmly in your head. “Call of the sea to carry them home” sing the voices serenely over the wash and waves of the music and it feels like you’re alone and adrift on a giant feather bed.

### ROOM 13

“We were formed in early 2023 to take gritty & catchy rock n roll to the masses,” Room 13 tell us by way of introduction. Only a year old they might be but they sound like they’ve stumbled boozily out of the late 1970s. They’re in thrall to the era in its yobbish, shout-along street-punk form, notably Sham 69 on their song ‘If The Kids Are United’, which isn’t even a cover of that classic but a grizzly garage rock attempt at an anthem that possibly does itself a huge disservice by nicking its title from ver Sham, but gets its (admirable but naïve) message across in raucously simple fashion and in under 90 seconds. The equally brief ‘1975’ downs its super-strength cider and punches the air as it celebrates the advent of punk in possibly un-punk nostalgic fashion. Oddly, and disappointingly after that opening double salvo, they slow things down to a sludgy crawl for ‘Sweet Black’ which sounds like

they’ve swapped the cider and speed for smack, although it does retain its scuzzy underbelly even while sounding like you’re listening to a Nirvana record at the wrong speed.

### MAISY’S RAINBOW DREAM

We seem to remember the first time we saw Maisy’s Rainbow Dream live we suggested the singer looked like legendary botanist David Bellamy if he’d discovered grunge, which is an image we like to conjure as we listen to their new song ‘Built On Solid Ground’, an apt title for a track with deep foundations of crawling psychedelic grunge guitars, all lysergic sky-searching turbulence with pockets of calm, over which not-David-Bellamy semi sings, semi narrates what sounds like an ominous warning notice. It’s slow-motion high drama and if it feels a little overly serious during the talky bits, it’s a winner for having by far and away the best guitar work of any track in this month’s pile.

### RED FOR GO

“We live to gig” say Red For Go, which seems a little odd given a search of the *Nightshift* archives suggests they’ve yet to trouble the local gig circuit. No matter, we look forward to seeing them in the flesh, albeit with a certain trepidation on the basis of this four track offering. A duo featuring vocals, synth and drums, Red To Go sound like their music is emerging, with a degree of struggle, from a swamp, or at the very least the very depths of obscure early 80s bedroom synth pop land. Best of the songs here is ‘Nite Club’, which is tinny and clunky and topped with some weirdly incongruous operatic vocals but is oddly melodic, while ‘Empty Bottles’ finds moments of propulsive melody while seemingly trying to untangle itself from its own moving parts. ‘Spiders’ by contrast is little more than a muddy muddle. At their best Red For Go remind us a bit of 80s Floridian weirdoes Sewer Zombies at that moment where they discovered synths and left their hardcore sound behind; at other times they sound like the musical incarnation of a casserole left on the stove too long that’s congealed to the bottom of the pan. When we do finally catch them live we’ll be disappointed if they’re actually even human. And we say that by way of a compliment.

### KEO

“Rising from the heart of Oxford’s vibrant music scene, electrifying new artist KEO is set to make waves with his debut single, ‘CRASH LAND’. The track fuses infectious beats with passionate, confessional vocals, showcasing KEO’s ability to tap into this generation’s candy-

sweet style of electropop.” So goes the introduction to Keo’s excitable press release, and who are we to dampen his enthusiasm for himself. ‘Crash Land’ turns out to be a scurrying bedroom-made tale about his experience of working in the music industry in London, which he tells us, chewed him up and spat him out (which should come as a huge surprise to absolutely no one with even the most fleeting experience of it). “London’s calling / Rushing with adrenaline / Street lights roaring / Pills, coke, ketamine” he sings with typical London-style haste although the result feels less like a humungous rock and roll drug binge and more like Keo’s eaten a dozen Cadbury’s Crème Eggs and is having the mother of all sugar rushes. It’s a buoyant and (for all its bitter experience) carefree-sounding slice of lightweight emo-ish electro-pop but it does sound a lot like countless other TikTok-friendly pop. Stay in Oxford and find your own identity Keo – that there London is only for people happy to lose themselves in the crowd.

### DARQWUD

Electronic music of a very different bent here from Darqwud, eschewing anything even vaguely resembling a pop edge in favour of a glitchy, grumbling trip through the shadows of moody drum&bass, all glowering synths and nervy, skittering electronic beats, for all the world sounding like a midnight trek across a swamp populated by the disgruntled spirits of discarded technology that want to infect you and turn you into a grisly man-machine hybrid. Never mind Keo’s pills and coke, this is music for late night spliff sessions with the lights off.

### SCENE IT ALL

On the two previous occasions we’ve reviewed Scene It All (both favourably) we’ve felt obliged to point out how terrible their name is, so we won’t this time, except now we have but they asked for it, and they appear to be really asking for it as a self-confessed emo band with a new song called ‘Why Are You So Sad?’ which comes accompanied by a picture of a sad-looking emo girl. With lyrics like “So quiet lost and lonely / Hopelessness is a fact / I can’t seem to shake my past and / I want you to be there” there’s almost a suspicion they’ve simply asked ChatGPT to write them an emo anthem, but it’s a pleasingly lively chug and seemingly devoid of self pity, sounding more party than pooper. It’s not going to win them any prizes for originality but get them in front of the right audience and it should win them some new fans.

### XENO PRIMATES

“I really love your website – especially for its incredible format and great-looking

articles. I would like to ask for two minutes of your time to draw your attention to our band’s upcoming release.” So says Gleb Menshikov who we reckon hasn’t even looked at *Nightshift*’s website never mind read any of our great-looking articles. In fact we’d bet our last slice of Victoria sponge cake here that’s a generic greeting he sends to everyone in a desperate attempt to garner good reviews. And you know what, we were all up for granting Gleb his wish after the first few seconds of his song ‘Underdog’, with its gnarly electro-metal churn and synth stabs, but as soon as he starts singing that element of menace is gone, much like that slice of Victoria sponge we mentioned. We also mentioned ChatGPT previously and we imagine this is what we’d get if we asked AI to write a song that sounded like a mash-up of Fear Factory, Placebo and Skrillex but without any of the good bits of those artists. “Hey, turn the fucking music on again” sings Gleb by way of an opening line. As if by magic we spot the off button.

### LL GROOVE BAND

“Our band, known for blending Jazz, Funk, Rock, and Hip-Hop, draws inspiration from legends like Red Hot Chili Peppers...” can we just stop you there? Ah, that’s better. Oh, what, you want an actual review rather than a curt dismissal? Do LL Groove Band sound like RHCP? Absolutely not (for better or worse depending on your point of view, and we have to admit we’re not averse to some of that band’s less wankyforn moments). But they do sound like the sort of funky jazz band we imagine the university colleges place near the entrance to their summer balls to welcome black tie and ballgown-clad party goers. Look at us, we’re hip! But also, yeah, tasteful! There is mildly uptight jazz-funk guitar; there is smug, wandering bass, and there is, obviously, a saxophone. And together they play reasonably competent background music of the kind that’s as soothing as a swarm of wasps invading your fancy dinner party, the occasional breakdown only making way for a slightly different funky jazz instrumental meander as our will to live and love for music shrivels in the face of its utter soullessness and we remind ourselves that it’s not the likes of Cannibal Corpse who are the house band in hell but groups like LL Groove Band; in an age where the likes of Ezra Collective and The Comet Is Coming are fusing funk, jazz and hip hop to make for some of the most exciting music around, there seems to be no reason for stuff like this to still exist. For a track that is only just over four and a half minutes in length, it feels like it goes on for far, far longer and when it does finally end you are no wiser, richer or more fulfilled, just a little closer to death, and given *Nightshift* might have sinned a few times over the years, we’ve probably got a lot more music like this to look forward to in the eternity to come.

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.

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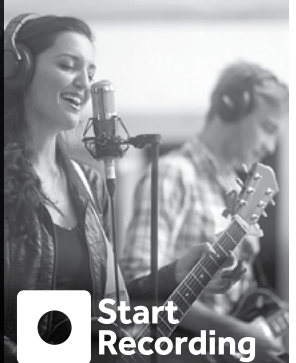
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THE BULLINGDON

**DELIGHTS**

ENERGIZED INDIE BALLADS

SEP FRI 13

THE BULLINGDON

**THE ENTITLED**

**SONS**

NEW OLDSCHOOL ROCK MUSIC

APR WED 24

THE BULLINGDON

**PET NEEDS**

FAST PACED ENERGETIC PUNK ROCK  
+ GENERATION FERAL

MAY FRI 24

THE JERICHO TAVERN

**DIZRAELI**

FUSION OF HIP HOP, GRIME AND FOLK  
+ EMILY MAGPIE

OCT TUE 08

THE JERICHO TAVERN

**TOM MCRAE**

CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED  
SINGER SONGWRITER

MAY THU 02

O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

**THE MEN THEY  
COULDN'T HANG**

BRITISH FOLK PUNK LEGENDS

JUN MON 03

THE BULLINGDON

**GEL**

HARDCORE PUNK FROM NEW JERSEY

NOV TUE 12

O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2

**CRASH TEST  
DUMMIES**

GOD SHUFFLED HIS FEET  
30TH ANNIVERSARY