

NIGHTSHIFT

Free every
month
Issue 331
July
2024

Oxford's Music Magazine

"I don't necessarily think we're seeing old people trashing young people's futures, I think we're seeing powerful people trashing the future"



Max Blansjaar

Politics, Paddington and the power of community in a world of uncertainty with Oxford's pop wizard.

Also in this issue:
Introducing **EB**
At work with **Nigel Brown**
Remembering **Nick Lawrence** and **Paul Watson**

Plus
All your Oxford music news, previews, reviews and gigs for July

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THE BULLINGDON

JULY 2024

Wednesday 3rd July
The Sadies
 Holly Carter
 Doors: 7PM

Thursday 4th July
Miles Hunt
(The Wonder Stuff)
 Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 10th July
Alastair Greene Band
 Doors: 7PM

Friday 19th July
Wilmadeep
Scapagoat
Pajama
 Doors: 7PM

Friday 26th July
Sons of Cream
 Doors: 7PM

Saturday 27th July
Kickin it Country
 Doors: 6PM

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

Friday 2nd August
Ferocious Dog
 Doors: 7PM

Saturday 3rd August
Age Against the Machine
 Doors: 3PM

Saturday 3rd August
A Pre-Carnival Jamboree
White Magic
Young Lynx
DJ Marne
DJ Fearless
 Doors: 11PM

Friday 16th August
Brave Rival
 Doors: 7PM

Saturday 17th August
Level the Vibes
Saxon Sound
 Doors: 11PM

Friday 23rd August
Tristan Butler
Y Timba Británica
Mayito Rivera
 Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 28th August
Sonic Whip
Barrelhaus
Blink of an Eye
Neon Night
 Doors: 7PM

Friday 30th August
Emily Nenni
Teddy and the Rough Riders
 Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 4th September
Martha
 Doors: 7PM

Thursday 5th September
Jeff Innocent:
Smart Casual
 Doors: 7PM

Friday 6th September
INXS B
Jukebox Junkyard
 Doors: 7PM

Thursday 12th September
Red Richardson:
Bugatti Live
 Doors: 7PM

Friday 13th September
Entitled Sons
 Doors: 7PM

Friday 20th September
Melt-Banana
 Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 25th September
Lauran Hibberd
 Doors: 7PM

Thursday 26th September
Reveller
voltwechel
Webb
 Doors: 7PM

Thursday 26th September
The Operation
Hamdi
 Doors: 11PM

Friday 27th September
South Arcade
 Doors: 7PM

Friday 4th October
Dolly Mavies
Harry Pane
 Doors: 7PM

Sunday 6th October
Fin Taylor:
Ask Your Mother
 Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 9th October
Garrett Millerick:
Garrett Millerick Needs More Space
 Doors: 7PM

Thursday 10th October
Tom Ward:
Choose Your Delusion
 Doors: 7PM

Thursday 10th October
The Boogaloo
Opening Party
 Doors: 11PM

Friday 11th October
Goldie Looking Chain
Getdown Services
 Doors: 7PM

Thursday 17th October
Bess Atwell
 Doors: 7PM

Friday 18th October
Henge
 Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 23rd October
The Lovely Eggs
 Doors: 7PM

Sunday 27th October
Tom Robinson Band
TRB 2024
 Doors: 7PM

Wednesday 30th October
John Francis Flynn
 Doors: 7PM

Thursday 31st October
Joywave
 Doors: 7PM

Friday 1st November
James Taylor Quartet
 Doors: 7PM

Saturday 2nd & Sunday 3rd November
Rabidfest
 Doors: 7PM

Thursday 7th November
Travis Jay:
Travisty
 Doors: 7PM

Friday 8th November
Lack of Afro
 Doors: 7PM

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NEWS

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Online: nightshiftmag.co.uk



PATTI SMITH comes to Oxford in September: the rock legend's first gig in town for 14 years. Smith will play at **The New Theatre** on Tuesday the **17th September**, a one-off UK date among a handful of European shows. Remaining tickets for the concert are on sale at atgtickets.com. And, yes, *Nightshift* is very excited.

GLASS ANIMALS will play a sold-out hometown show at the **O2 Academy** this month. The local stars, whose single 'Heat Waves' became the first single by a British band to top the US Billboard chart since the Spice Girls, play the O2 as part of Truck Store's "outstore" series of gigs in conjunction with A New View on Tuesday the **9th July**. The band's fourth album, 'I Love You So F***ing Much', is released on the 19th July.

THE GLADIATOR CLUB is set to close before the end of the year. The social club, situated on the corner of Iffley Road and Percy Street, has been home to **Klub Kakofanny** for the last two years, the monthly live music club night having lost its previous long-term home at The Wheatsheaf during Covid. While precise plans for the closure are uncertain, it appears the venue will close by the end of 2024 with flats planned to take its place. A new social club is set to be built on the ground floor but whether it will come with the requisite soundproofing to allow gigs to happen is unsure. This month's Klub Kakofanny takes place on Friday the 5th with The Balkan Wanderers, Killer Kowalski, Darkgnoss and Richie Stix & The Brain people playing.

FUCKED UP play their first Oxford gig since 2008 in October. The Toronto post-hardcore stars play the **O2 Academy 2** on **Friday 25th October** for Divine Schism. The band's 2010 concept album 'David Comes To Life' is widely regarded as one of the greatest hardcore albums ever released and marked Fucked Up as one of the most inventive bands on the planet. So don't miss out. Tickets are on sale now from 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.

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.

NICK LAWRENCE (1982-2024)

Friends and bandmates have been paying tribute to Nick Lawrence who has died after taking his own life at the end of May; he was 41.

Nick played in numerous bands over the years, including bass in local indie rock band Decovo and since January had been playing guitar with Barricane. Nick was a building services mechanical engineer for Hoare Lea, in Jericho, where he was a mental health first aider and helped to promote mental health awareness among his colleagues.

Paying tribute to Nick, Decovo singer Alfie Lavery said: "Every band has an engine – someone who brings the energy and makes stuff happen – and Nick was the engine of Decovo. He had a relentless drive and passion for music and it was infectious; without him, we would have done a fraction of the songwriting, recording, and gigging that we did. Nick's been in so many bands over the years, he also had a solo project, played acoustic covers and he even used to write songs for his friends on their birthdays in their favourite musical style. Such was his drive to create music."

Decovo guitarist Damien Hollands said of his bandmate: "Nick was an absolute force of nature, being a part of multiple bands and always wanting to do more. It would have been 10 years at the end of June that Decovo had played together, and that length of time was largely due to him. Despite playing bass in the band, he was probably the most talented guitarist among us and his ear for harmonies was incredible. He was a fun loving guy who put on a laddy persona but was actually one of the most caring people I knew. His charisma led to him knowing an almost uncountable number of people, it was hard to walk through Oxford without bumping into someone he knew."

Lewis Clarke, who played with Nick in a number of bands over the years, added: "Nick was incredibly passionate about music. He was a driving force and an inspiration in every band and at every gig I played with him. I know that any musical project I do in the future I'm still going to have the lessons I learned from him to stop making excuses and get on with making and sharing the best music I can. Nick's humour and natural charm on stage was a highlight during any gig." Barricane's Emily Green said: "Nick was an incredibly versatile musician. He quickly realised that we weren't looking for a typical lead guitar in Barricane and that he had to find his unique guitar 'voice'. We worked together at least once or twice a week for these last four months and he utterly nailed it. He was also incredibly fun to be in a band with. He had a very dry, cheeky and often unexpected humour. He was committed and kind and we're going to miss him terribly." *Nightshift* extends its deepest sympathies to Nick's partner Helen, his family and all his many friends.



PAUL WATSON (1969 – 2024)

Former bandmates have been paying tribute to Paul Watson who died on the 7th June; he was 55. Paul was best known as the singer, guitarist and main songwriter in the band The Changelings during the 90s. The band built a substantial following on the Oxford scene and appeared on the front cover of *Curfew* in 1993.

Changelings drummer Jon Hird said: "As both a friend and bandmate in the good old days of the music-filled Cowley Road of the 90s, he was ever-present. And a really great singer, guitarist and frontman to boot."

Ben Ulph, who played guitar in the band for a while added: "Paul was one of the first people I met on the scene when I moved to Oxford, ringing me after I put an ad up in PMT looking for a band to join. He was a big character, with a love of all the trappings of rock and roll, and a passion for music. He introduced me to bands like Cardiacs, King Crimson and Syd Barret-era Pink Floyd, and I'll never forget the pair of us driving down to London to see Cardiacs, and being utterly blown away by Ultrasound at the Zodiac. Paul was a true one-off and a huge part of my life for a few, formative, years which I'll never forget." Al Kenny, who played bass in The Changelings for most of their existence said: "I was first introduced to Paul through Tom Man, who popped round my house on Bullingdon Road, looking for a bass player circa 1991. Tom and Paul had been in a blues-based outfit called Skeelum 6, and were looking to change up their sound. Four years my junior, Paul and I immediately bonded over Cardiacs, Pink Floyd and general silliness. I was blown away by his talent as a songwriter and guitarist – he was an amazing blues player – his onstage charisma, and his drive for success. The group went through a number of line-ups, with Paul's chameleon senses changing the band's sound quite radically, from Neil Young, to grunge to glam rock. We had some fantastic times, we had some rough patches, but it always ended up with laughs and surrealist humour. Although we hadn't seen each other in many years, we kept in touch. He was taken from us far too young. Fly high my friend, I will miss you."



Max Blansjaar



“**ACTUALLY, THIS MORNING** wasn’t great. I made plans with my parents but then I overslept. I wasn’t answering my phone or anything so I woke up to my mum knocking at my window – she thought I’d died. Not ideal, but then you remember you’re actually still alive and it feels a little better. We made it to lunch in time.”

MAX BLANSJAAR IS chatting to *Nightshift* about his song ‘Burning In Our Name’, one of the many highlights of his debut album ‘False Comforts’, released at the end of June. We’re particularly taken with the line “And now my face looks like it’s spent the night with Freddy Krueger / But even he would run a mile from the morning I’ve just had.”

The song, released as a single in April ahead of the album, was “a stream-of-consciousness kind of thing,” explains Max of its composition, adding: “how many times had I turned on the radio and heard about ‘generational challenges’? How does the individual fit into that picture? From the moment we’re born, how many fires have already been started in our name? Politics is personal, and what seem like huge, sprawling issues can affect our lives in small, everyday ways.”

It’s typical of Max’s songwriting: thoughtful, imaginative, expansive; he doesn’t know all the answers but he’s searching for them. ‘Burning In

Our Name’ deals with the personal impact of global events and a generational outlook on how things are heaped on young people who had no part in what’s going on.

“In some ways I think framing global political issues in generational terms is unhelpful and kind of disingenuous,” explains Max; “with the climate, for example, I don’t necessarily think we’re seeing old people trashing young people’s futures, I think we’re seeing powerful people trashing *the* future — and I don’t think young people are a monolithic group, and I don’t think they’re inherently more able to take a long-term perspective than old people are. But I wrote ‘Burning In Our Name’ from that place anyway because it can *feel* generational sometimes, to be young and dealing with it as kind of existential crisis in itself, while also entering this society which is so foundationally fucked up in a lot of ways you’re still trying to figure out. My political views change basically daily. I’m so confused. And it’s nothing to do with age, really, but you just think: damn... it’s like having the morning shift in a café or something and it’s a total mess and you’re like: who closed up last night? Why is there a dog here? Oh, it’s kind of funny how the line about vandalising a Dalí painting was written before the Just Stop Oil protesters started throwing orange paint on all those artworks. It’s cool that it gets interpreted as a reference

to that now, but really I just hate Salvador Dalí.”

‘**FALSE COMFORT**’, released on Oxford label Beanie Tapes, is a crystallisation of everything we’ve come to love about Max’s music over the past few years, but also a progression on his home-made EPs to date, the result of working with producer Katie Von Schleicher in her native Brooklyn. His music is at once cosy and expansive, carefree and questioning, lo-fi and elaborate, inspired by artists like Beck, Jeffrey Lewis, Magnetic Fields, The Velvet Underground and Courtney Barnett: little balls of pure pop sweetness coated in fuzz and with more than enough bite to get your teeth into.

MAX BLANSJAAR HAS BEEN beloved presence on the local music scene since he was just 14, organising his own gigs when his age meant most venues were out of bounds to him. Now 21, it’s a DIY ethic that has served him well in an age where being an independent artist is harder than ever, and one he shares with both Beanie Tapes, who have released most of his material to date, and Divine Schism, who have just booked his forthcoming UK tour to promote the album.

Max was born in Amsterdam but moved to Oxford when he was three years old. Here he began learning piano as a way to cope with

homesickness and to make friends; those early lessons have guided his musical principles ever since. “My early music lessons were always in groups rather than one-to-one, so I got pretty good at playing in ensembles, listening and adapting to people while I was playing. But there was also a more philosophical effect, I think, which is that I experienced music as something you do together — it’s not something I ever really did for or by myself. Even when I’m writing songs on my own, it’s with a mind to play them with or share them with other people. And that comes from these early lessons where I was basically making music to meet people, to survive in this weird new place where I didn’t even really speak the language.”

Max wasn’t alone in his family in being musically talented and driven. Older sister Silke is a renowned multi-instrumentalist, previously drummer with the original line-up of Self Help and more recently for Yungblud.

“My family listens to a lot of music, for sure. My parents have a really wide range of music in their collection and there was pretty much always music playing in the house. I found out about a lot of my early favourite bands from hand-me-down CDs that I got from my parents or my sisters. Darwin Deez, Courtney Barnett, Franz Ferdinand... but also just, like, The Velvet Underground, Paul Simon: classic stuff. Me and Silke have definitely influenced each other a lot in how we make music. Certainly, she’s influenced me. I mean, she basically taught me how to play guitar.”

HAVING STARTED PLAYING gigs around Oxford aged just 14, we wonder what Max’s original impressions of the local scene were and how he was treated as such a young musician.

“I got involved via Silke, who was in a couple of different bands at the time. My impression of the scene has always been that it’s really friendly, on the whole people look out for each other and mostly just care about doing cool art stuff together, which makes gigs feel really genuine and non-corporate. I know some people think it’s cliquey but I don’t necessarily think that’s the case. I mean, it’s all grassroots: people have no money, they have no

time, so they mainly work and play with people they know and trust. I don’t think that’s a bad thing. The main obstacle early on was finding venues that would let me even enter, because I was so young. The Cellar was sixteen-plus, and then it closed as soon as I turned sixteen. The Wheatsheaf was eighteen-plus, and then it closed when I turned eighteen. The first ever show I played was one I put on myself at The Bullingdon, just because there were so few other venues that would have me. I think we forget that the lack of venues in Oxford means certain people just can’t participate in the scene. I think The Bullingdon is one of the only wheelchair-accessible venue in town, and there aren’t many more all-ages venues, either.”

‘**FALSE COMFORTS**’ WAS recorded in Brooklyn with Katie Von Schleicher, a renowned musician in her own right. Why did Max pick her in particular and what did she bring to the recording sessions?

“I was a big fan of Katie’s music ever since her album ‘Consummation’ came out in 2020. What drew me to her as a producer is that she really gets the balance right between shine and dirt. Like, her songs are just the most perfect pop songs: really hooky, really melodic, and the arrangements are super rich and extremely tasteful. But then, there’s always something weird about them; something sounds kind of broken, or overdriven, or there’s just something that raises your eyebrow. And that makes the music really stick. Nate Mendelsohn, who co-produced the album with Katie, has a band called Market which does the same thing. So on the one hand they brought this amazing expertise to the table, they allowed me to sound cleaner and more well-produced than I ever have before, but they also weren’t afraid to – in their own words – *fuck it up* when it was necessary. I was recording a guitar line in ‘Pieces of the Sun’ and suddenly Nate just reversed the signal of everything coming through my headphones. And he’s like: keep playing, figure it out. And that became the long outro to the song.”

‘**FALSE COMFORTS IS** released on Beanie Tapes, who’ve been with Max pretty much since the start; how did he get involved with Ben and Jules, who run the label, and what is it about their ethos he liked?

“I actually met Jules for the first time at an event about *Nightshift* in 2017 at Oxford Brookes University. She told me to send some of my tracks and they offered to release them. What I like about Beanie

Tapes is that they care about things being good. They release music because they love it, and all their releases are well-made, good quality; they have an amazing designer called Léa Morales-Chanard who does all the artwork for them... it’s fairly small-scale, but it’s never amateuristic, it’s serious. And obviously they release music physically as well as digitally, which is correct.”

The singles Max released ahead of the album, particularly ‘Anna Madonna’ and ‘Burning In Our Name’, gained some serious praise,

Paddington’s advice was something like: if we’re kind and polite, the world will be right. I still think that’s good advice.

and he was the most posted artist on Hype Machine at one point – beating Kim Gordon even; was he surprised about the reception the songs had?

“Kim Gordon is so mad about that. I’ve been really surprised, yeah, and I don’t say that as a humble-brag or anything. It’s been really crazy to read about all the different meanings people attach to these songs. I mean, I wrote some of them quite a few years ago, and it feels like even I can’t really access the place they were originally coming from anymore. But one of the things I love most about releasing music is losing control of it, watching it mutate as people interpret it in ways I’d never even considered. That’s been really fun with this album. So many articles are like: *you can clearly hear the influence of...* and then it’s a band I’ve never fucking heard of in my life. I was born in 2003, I don’t listen to your weird old music.”

Nightshift’s review of ‘False Comforts’ last month compared it to the ambition of ‘Pet Sounds’. How difficult is it, even in these days of relatively cheap technology, to fulfil a grand vision on an indie budget?

“I kind of think that fulfilling an artistic vision is mainly about following through. I did a tweet recently that was like: it’s not about the process or the product, it’s about the principle. Nobody liked it, but it’s true. I find the actual process of writing songs to be basically tedious and boring. Most of it is trying to realise and expand on an idea that appeared fleetingly in my head, to spin it out, and how good the song is depends on how good my original idea was and how well I’ve followed through on it. So it’s not really about what technology you have. Fancy gear can definitely help, sometimes it can even inspire you, and it removes some of the limitations you might have in realising your vision. But I don’t think it can make your actual

vision better. The hardest thing about an indie budget, I think, is not being able to take time off work. So instead of getting two weeks to just focus on your album, you have to do little bits here and there, and it becomes really hard. I was very lucky when we recorded ‘False Comforts’ in that we got an uninterrupted recording session of two weeks. The range of technology we had access to really meant anything was possible. The challenge then was reining ourselves in.”

Given a huge budget, what sort of

record would you like to make? Who would win out in the sensible you versus mad, impulsive you fight?

“Sensible me is a pathetic, nerdy little weakling. I would make something huge. I would fly in literally everyone to perform on it. Then I would probably spend a few months with it, decide I hate most of it, and record it all again in two takes with like three microphones and a practice amplifier.”

Beck has been a big influence on you as far as song construction goes with his collage-like approach; what do you see in artists like him and, say, Tune-yards in the way they create songs and how their influence feeds into your music?

“I love those artists because their music feels kind of impulsive. I don’t think it is — I’m sure it’s very considered and thought through. But it has something reckless about it; it makes you feel almost unsafe, because they construct this alien world and you don’t really know what they’re gonna do next. Mainly they influenced my production style. I’m a big fan of building lots of layers and then cutting them out in big chunks so you get these weird textural contrasts. Songs are not real, so I think it’s fun to play with surrealism in that way. Beck is very much the Salvador Dalí of bridge sections; I’ve said this before. Except he’s good.”

AS WELL AS PLAYING music, Max studied music at Oxford University. As part of that course he wrote a dissertation about live music and community. What inspired him to choose that, what things did he learn and how much and in what ways has the live music community in Oxford helped, nurtured or inspired him?

“A lot of the mainstream discourse around grassroots music tends to centre around its economic value.

So people will often say things like: we need to protect grassroots music scenes because they act as a training ground for artists who will later go on to be valuable cultural exports and contribute to the UK economy that way. And I think that’s basically true, but I don’t think it’s a particularly good or complete defence of local music scenes. I mean, a lot of these bands *don’t* go on to be the next Radiohead – and frankly, the next Radiohead will probably meet the attention of a label exec through online channels, not through a show in a pub basement. But there’s still value in this music beyond its potential economic returns, so I wrote this dissertation to try and pin that value down a bit: community, cultural enrichment, these ideas that seem kind of vague and nebulous to a lot of people. So my take is basically that protecting grassroots music venues isn’t just a question of making an economic case for them, but actually shifting the discussion so that the social and cultural cases for them – which are much stronger – are taken seriously.”

AND SO IT IS THAT THE music community that nurtured and inspired Max Blansjaar from the beginning is now set to see him rise. *Nightshift* is reminded of the first interview we ever did with him, back in 2019, where he quoted Paddington’s philosophy on life. At the ripe old age of 21, does Max still possess a childlike glee about life, or is he now world weary?

“Again, I’m just really confused. That’s probably the main thing my music communicates to me, honestly. I’m definitely not as childlike or gleeful as I was in 2019, but I also don’t think the world is going to shit. I kind of think that maintaining a level of confusion is important, though. We sometimes associate naivety with youth and cynicism with maturity, but actually it’s often the other way round – weary cynicism can be a sign of immaturity, and becoming more mature sometimes means breaking down the walls between you and the rest of the world, not building them higher. Which is to say that I’m trying to believe more things and diminish my critical thinking skills. This is a work in progress. Paddington’s advice, if I remember correctly, was something like: *if we’re kind and polite, the world will be right*. I still think that’s good advice. Not necessarily because it’s true, but because it’s helpful to act as if it’s true in most everyday situations.”

‘*False Comforts*’ is out now on *Beanie Tapes*.

RELEASED

GLASS ANIMALS

‘I Love You So F***ing Much’

(Polydor)

When *Nightshift* reviewed Glass Animals’ first recordings back in 2010 and awarded their lysergic tapestry of psychedelia and dark electronica Demo of the Month, neither we nor they likely imagined they’d be counting their streaming figures in the billions a few years later. Or that one of their singles would break records across the Atlantic. But here we are with the band back with their first new record since ‘Heat Waves’ conquered the States. And while Glass Animals have come on some since that first demo – melodically, commercially, production-wise – much of that original weirdness and wooziness remains.

Evolution rather than revolution is at the heart of ‘I Love You So F***ing Much’ (their asterisks, not ours). The band’s love of hip hop married to an off-centre approach to production mean you can both dance and daydream to them, while a fractured funkiness coupled to odd imagery and washes of woozy electronic psychedelia suggests they’ll appeal equally to heads and pop kids. In these they continue to share some musical ground with The Weeknd, D’Angelo and Tame Impala.

Such genre straddling is apparent from the off with opener ‘Show Pony’ mixing almost Flaming Lips-like psych guitar with r’n’b airiness and a soupçon of stadium stomp, and something between plaintive and epic continues into ‘Whatthellishappening’.

Of course at the heart of each song is Dave Bayley’s lovely, light falsetto vocal and he really takes centre stage on the wonderful ‘Creatures in Heaven’, the song’s sense of



romantic euphoria seemingly set for closing festivals. By contrast ‘Wonderful Nothing’ is more downbeat, almost dainty in its delivery; ‘I Can Make You Fall In Love Again’, meanwhile, wears its heart on its sleeve, while sounding like it’s walking on air ‘How I Learned to Love The Bomb’, conversely, feels a little leaden, pedestrian, a rare bit of filler on an otherwise compact and consistent album, but it’s quickly forgotten with ‘White Roses’, possibly the album’s high point and perhaps the most direct “I love you” Bayley offers across these ten love songs. Expect to hear it as the first dance at a wedding in the very near future.

The album closes with ‘Lost In The Ocean’ and Glass Animals once more painting with a broad palette yet creating their art with fine, intricate brush strokes, here even adding a little gospel to the bigger picture. How much higher Glass Animals can go after the frankly staggering success of ‘Heat Waves’ is anyone’s guess, but it’s to be hoped the love exuded on this album comes right back at them. To the moon and back.

Dale Kattack

MOTH DROP

‘Are You As Excited As I Am?’

(Self released)

I’ve always wanted to hear an aural representation of the irresistible force meeting the immovable object and here it is in ‘Are You As Excited As I Am?’, that samples, at the beginning, the droll goth moment in 2019 when Robert Smith of The Cure curmudgeons that same breathless fan-awed question, from Hall of Fame interviewer Carrie Keagan, with “Umm, by the sounds of it, no.”

After that, Brendan Morgan’s boots hit the ground thudding: a four beat, wall-quaking kick drum balances a smattering of electronic train-track handclaps that tie in with lines brought in from the middle-eight of Mary Mary’s ‘Shackles’ (“Bound in every kind of way / So let me go right now”). The whole is swaddled in a re-rising siren that executes a tasty drop at 1

minute 22 seconds, allowing everything into its stride and the zone flooded with enough bowel-curdling synth-bass to have you reach for the adult nappies.

If I have a beef, there’s not enough of it. It’s a single three and half minutes in length and ends at the peak of another drop, leaving me wanting to go all 12” on its ass and let it storm the rave-stage with a balls-out third act. That said, it does segue neatly into the Tinkerbell trickle-beat of b-side ‘The Kid’, which squelches into life like a primordial mudpot with hot blobs of Biz Markie, and ‘Intergalactica’ by The Beastie Boys’ before coasting off like incidental music for the video of a top-down drive round hair-pin roads in the sunshine of the Alps.

The layering on these two tracks is superb, something we’ve come to expect from one of the most consistent of the local psychedelic techno mixmasters. ‘AYAEAlA?’ is some of Moth Drop’s most visceral and propulsive work to date, which I’d say is every reason to be excited.

Paul Carrera

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DUBWISER vs SEBASTIAN REYNOLDS

‘First Place’ / ‘To The Wire’

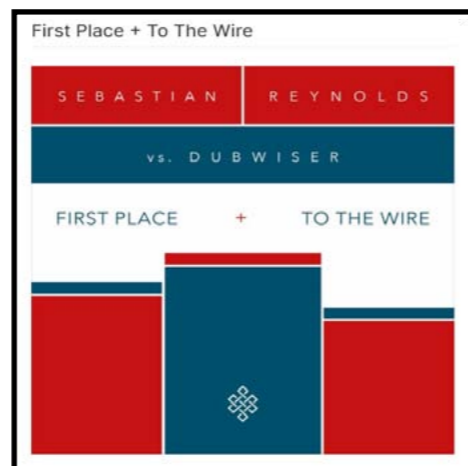
(Pindrop)

Harnessing the excitement for the upcoming Olympic games in Paris, local roots reggae cult heroes Dubwiser have collaborated with producer Sebastian Reynolds to shoot for gold with a brace of new singles. Itching from the word go, Dubwiser boast an infectious positivity that pairs nicely with their new subject matter. The band’s trademark good vibes, energy and zeal for their work shines through from the very core of these two songs.

Bursting with confidence and determination, ‘First Place’ is a champion’s anthem. Setting off like a bloodhound, a sharp ‘BLAM!’ instantly rises from the deepest of diaphragms and rings out with purpose. Layered with a plethora of jungle percussion and kinetic drum beats, the song possesses a potent pace akin to its theme, which is only further intensified by the rallying howls of “Jump!” and “Step!”. Whilst unfortunately a little disjointed towards the latter half, with a number of elements jostling for the limelight, ‘First Place’ is certainly an amalgamation of fun, optimism and vitality: exactly what the Olympics should be.

Equally jovial in tone, ‘To The Wire’ features singer/drummer Spider listing in broad UK/Caribbean patois all of the sports to be found in the crucible of the Olympics. Leaving no event underrepresented, co-singer Jonas proclaims that “Each and every one of us is going to the wire” in a declaration of togetherness and unity. Tearing down the ostracising barriers of competition through reggae-house, Dubwiser and Reynolds, aim to bring all together. In this their enthusiasm is compelling; however, I fear this results in sonic precision being sacrificed at times. It would be great to see their energy paired with a little more finesse in the future to really sharpen their wonderfully inclusive messages.

Sam Mumford



JULIA SOPHIE

‘Forgive Too Slow’

(Ba Da Bing)

Telephone conversations and the wee small hours seem to be recurring motifs in Julia Sophie’s songworld. From her 2022 *Nightshift* Track of the Year, ‘Dial Your Number’, to the haunted-voice-from-the-ether vibe of ‘Video Girl’, she conjures a strange, almost lysergic twilight world where loss and longing hover wraith-like in the background.

Julia’s debut solo album opens with ‘2am’ and closes with ‘Telephone’ and that eerie, ethereal feel to the music, and in particular her voice, remain to the fore throughout, at times recalling the atmospherics of James Blake, at others the spectral spirituality of Bat For Lashes.

That opener is a brief, breathy slice of minimalist electronica and a less-is-more aesthetic is followed religiously from beginning to end; sometimes the music is little more than a distant drone, but so strong is Julia’s vocal performance, you remain immersed; in its gently somnambulating way ‘Forgive Too Slow’ is utterly hypnotic.



REMORAE

‘Flourish in Green’

(Self released)

The sea has been a source of inspiration for poets, painters, and songwriters, since records began, and this is the central focus in this new offering from Remorae (formerly Folkatron Sessions). The band have quietly slipped their new EP under *Nightshift*’s office door and, oh my, are we so very glad they did.

Opener ‘Greyfriars’ features a gorgeous slow swell of traditional folk instrumentation that tells a tale of a time spent on the eastern coast. Accompanied by an almost spoken vocal delivery, there are reminders of early Beth Orton and Spiro. ‘Johnny’s On The Water’ is a surprisingly subtle keyboard affair, blended expertly with strings and percussion. The lyric here is almost a delta-blues piece, but its delivery is anything but. Playful, whimsical, and fun, it reminds us, musically, of occasional moments from Tom McCrae’s ‘Draw Blood’ album and even early Gomez. The third track, ‘Improvisation on Dr Gilbert’s’, is an exploration of the Irish reel of the same name, and is a beautiful affair, featuring a shruti box, fiddle, cello and more. ‘I Drew My Ship’, meanwhile,

This is a collection of love songs, but awash with conflicted emotions, the lyrics and vocals suggesting a hypnagogic state of mind, like on ‘I Was Only’, its beat like the rhythms of a life support machine, or ‘Numb’ with its key line “Can you wake me from this crazy dream”. If the Laurie Anderson-channelling ‘Falling’, with its chitter chatter beats and softly swarming synths, declares “Let’s stay up all night”, ‘Just Us’ slips even closer to the sleeping world before ‘Wishful Thinking’ dares to bring the dawn: buoyant electro-pop, dreamlike but now with hope.

If Julia’s words and voice suggest a world of strange thoughts between sleep and waking, the music feels more like a future factory, the clicks and hums and bleeps an unsleeping, mechanical foil to the quiet grief, uncertainty, fear and hope at each song’s heart. You might perhaps wish for a switch in mood, but it would break the exquisite spell Julia has worked so hard to cast across the album.

‘Forgive Too Slow’ closes with its twin

starts with a stunning a capella introduction, sparsely joined by each band member as the tale of a love lost unfolds. EP closer ‘Greyfriars (Radio Edit)’ continues where the earlier version left off, this time with a crisp electric guitar – all following a familiarly melancholic melody one would associate with Chris Wood.

While this collection of songs is never going to leave you gasping at its originality, it really doesn’t need to. It’s a beautiful collection of work with heart, soul, and talent poured into it with equal measure, and the production is flawless. Not one for a Friday night out, but definitely one for the rainy nights our shores endlessly encounter. Long may Remorae sail in our seas, and let’s hope for a full album in the not-so-distant future.

Caitlin Helm

NEON NIGHTS

‘Neon Night’

(Self released)

Neon Nights’ self titled album is what the kids these days might call a banger. The opening Numbers, ‘A Drop For Your Soul’ and ‘Bringing Me Home’, recall Kings of Leon’s first few albums, or perhaps Razorlight, with big, bold guitar and tight songwriting.

‘Crawl to You’ slows the tempo down a tad, but could be The Fratellies if they knew their way around a guitar solo. ‘The Devils in the Detail’ continues this theme but the band really hit their straps with ‘Getaway’, which has everything you could want: a big chorus, slinky guitar and a fantastic interplay with a talented drummer, but also sounds like a band finding their own niche. ‘Golden’, as its name suggests, is a bit more of sun-kissed affair, bringing in elements of desert rock and The Eagles, followed by ‘Ophelia’, which could be a mid-tempo crowd pleaser, sharing its DNA with Feeder and Ash, as does ‘Stoned’.

The wide, expansive sound returns with ‘The



highlights – the rising tides of bubbling electronics of ‘Better’, and ‘Telephone’, full of nostalgia, melancholy and, ultimately, euphoria, offering hope amid sorrow. It’s an album made from and for the quietest, loneliest hours of the day; it delves into the darkest of emotions with a deft touch and in its own very subtle fashion creates something quite wonderful out of that darkness.

Dale Kattack

Cycle’ (with the best use of “na na na” as a refrain since the *Batman* theme) whilst the slightly punkish ‘The Fire’ could be from My Chemical Romance circa ‘The Black Parade’.

If I had to pick fault with the album is that it could have maybe concluded with the anthemic ‘Thirty Three’; instead we get an additional two tracks, but both ‘Trust the Tide’ and ‘When You Come Around’ are well worth your time still. All in all, a joy from start to end.

Damon Boughen

THE BOBO

‘Too Sad’

(Self released)

A good song, like a good recipe, only needs a few ingredients, but get the right mix and match of flavours and the simplest dish is a banquet. The Bobo – the musical moniker of Oxford-based Polish ex-pat Maria Rozalska – consistently makes some of the prettiest pop music around and yet the moving parts that make up her music are never over-complex. New single ‘Too Sad’ has something of a wistful gazing at the sunset melancholy about it but the way it bubbles and whirrs conveys something lighter, even as she sings “I almost lost my mind”. The electronic tinketry of the music is busy but never fussy and is given space to both breathe and build, which it does spiritedly but without pomp or ceremony, a bubbling, spangled crescendo of sorts emerges, sleepy-eyed yet breezy over which Maria’s mellifluous voice positively dances. It’s a gorgeous song, one that blooms like a meadow flower and flies like a songbird enlivened by the promise of spring.

Purple prose and wide-eyed similes aside, ‘Too Sad’ really is just a feast for the ears – possibly The Bobo’s finest song to date. An uncomplicated treat with the most delicate of flavouring and yet completely satisfying.

Dale Kattack

RELEASED

LUCY LEAVE

'Cycling//Rowing' / 'FKA Tension' / 'Practice Our Guitars'

(Divine Schism)

The pandemic properly put a spanner in the works for Lucy Leave. The trio had just released their second album, 'Everyone Is Doing So Well', in February 2020 when lockdown scuppered any chance to tour the record, while subsequently long Covid has hampered a full comeback, the band preferring to play outdoor shows over the past year or so. In recent months the trio have been writing and recording a third, double, album, due for release in 2025, but ahead of a relocation to Boston, Massachusetts for bassist Jennifer Oliver and guitarist Mike Smith, they've teased a trio of new singles, each of which displays a different face of Lucy Leave's famously oblique, esoteric and always difficult to second guess approach to music.

'Cycling//Rowing' is simultaneously hesitant and motorik, fidgety and something akin to

funky, possessed of both a warped and weird feel and a sense of childlike glee as they exclaimed "Do you remember, feeding the ducks!". Exploring the strange hinterland where nursery rhymes border disjointed, high-wired prog-jazz isn't something your average band ends to indulge in, but then when have Lucy Leave ever been your average band.

Instead they shift the landscape a few degrees for 'FKA Tension', which might be the place where Steely Dan investigate being Fugazi, if such a place has ever or could ever exist. Well, hell, they just discovered it anyway, but not being the kind of people to plant flags, they swiftly up sticks and hike off to somewhere and somewhat more obstinate.

'Practice Our Guitars' – featuring fellow traveller across music's odder terrain Ally Craig



on co-vocals – is possibly the most straightforward of the three singles and clocking in just over two minutes doesn't possess the other two's explorative bent, but even here they manage to keep a square-pegs-in-round-holes approach to melody and rhythm in play.

What myriad, mixed-up bases Lucy leave will manage to cover across a double album remains to be seen in 2025, but for now they leave us as we've always found them: out on their own and steadfastly refusing to play ball.

Dale Kattack



Water In Your Hands & Prepared To Drink', and 'You Wanted To Find Beauty Everywhere', but you wish they'd stray a bit further from the path after a while, or build more fully on their initial idea. At their best, as on 'You Saw Something Glitter In The Summer Evening', it sounds like Steve Reich if he designed children's music boxes, while 'You Knew Something Was Wrong But Not What It Was', has something of Laurie Anderson about it.

It's intriguing stuff but ultimately you feel the concept needs to be elaborated on to have full effect.

Bekti Manish

ZAIA

'As My Friend'

(Self released)

After a few years when their live appearances have been sporadic and the band have slimmed down to a quintet from the nine-piece who graced the cover of *Nightshift* back in 2017, Zaia return with a new EP ready for summer. Appropriate for a reggae band, since reggae and summer were always made for each other.

Like Dreadzone or even Nubiyan Twist at times, Zaia take the dub and roots blueprints and inject a dash of rustic Britishness, particularly Celtic folk, which is most evident in Amy MacKown's smooth, soulful vocals. The five tracks here are of a mood – the dub elements are kept light and airy, a tendency towards almost jazz-rock jamming creeping in on the likes of 'Sugar', maybe even a hint of Pink Floyd in the guitar. As such 'As My Friend' feels like a record for lazy sunny afternoons rather than late night dancing. Personal taste would prefer a heavier dub vibe,

but Zaia's approach to reggae has always been on the lighter side and they'll make for an easy groove-led experience in a park of festival field near you sometime soon.

Dave Whittaker

L!ES L!ES L!ES

'L!es L!es L!es'

(Self released)

L!es L!es L!es make a striking entrance with their self-titled debut album but one that might have been better as an EP. Opening with 'You Destroy Me', they recall Depeche Mode circa 'Just Can't Get Enough', with its twinkling synthesisers and well-weighted vocals. Doubling down on this is 'The Kicker', which has possibly one of the catchiest choruses ever reviewed in this hallowed magazine.

However, 'Nineteen Ninety Five', while a sound song in its own right, and one that would fit comfortably on BBC 6Music, isn't particularly memorable; nor is the later track 'Hurts'. That said, sandwiched between these two forgettable tracks is 'Dumb', which benefits from a degree of playfulness and a bouncy, danceable bass line. 'Lost for the Day' could be Feeder at their slower, introspective best and 'Trender' shares some DNA with LCD Soundsystem, as does 'Crystal Eyes', but sadly the album then peters out with 'The Way It Goes' and 'Bad Actor' – decent enough songs, but not ones that can be instantly recalled.

This album might be unbalanced and a touch flabby, but for a debut, the band show some real flashes of brilliance, particularly in building great, anthemic choruses, so I'm excited to see what comes next.

Damon Boughen

Radiat.in/g

'7 Songs Of Who You Were'

(Self released)

Quasimodo... that name rings a bell. Someone else who rings bells is Louis Barclay in his enigmatically named Radiat.in/g guise. This mini album features seven tracks from a collection of 50 or so bell and bell-like synth pieces he's apparently made over the past decade.

Rather than the doom-laden tones you might expect from, say, Black Sabbath, Louis' bells are more like faerie bells, tinkling rather than tolling, closer to the sound of a glockenspiel at times. The seven pieces here are similar in mood and mode: simple yet intricate and highly rhythmic, with the emphasis on brightness. He tells us one of his great musical heroes is Martin Molin who made the famous marble music machine under the name Wintergatan, and you can feel his influence here. Tracks have enigmatic titles like 'You Held



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New Theatre

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GOLDIE LOOKIN' CHAIN
The Bullingdon

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SETH LAKEMAN
O2 Academy 2 Oxford

17|10|24
BESS ATWELL
The Bullingdon

23|10|24
THE LOVELY EGGS
The Bullingdon

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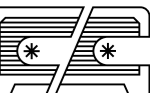
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The Bullingdon

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LIVE

SOFT CELL **Nocturne Live @ Blenheim Palace**

Back when Soft Cell were scandalising British society in the early 80s few probably imagined they'd end up playing at an actual palace as a beloved heritage act. But there is Marc Almond up on stage in the grandiose main courtyard of Blenheim, the taboo-breaking gutterheart turned impish national treasure.

Alongside him is David Ball, now in a wheelchair after fracturing a vertebrae in a fall in 2022; tonight, at their only UK show of the year, they're performing a set that's heavy on those classic 80s moments but finding time for more recent numbers, a reminder of both their timeless pop brilliance and influence, and their enduring relevance.

They open with their debut single, 'Memorabilia', its creeping menace machine pop still potent, cheeky diversions into Madonna's 'Holiday' and 'Into the Groove' a reminder of their love for both great anthemic pop and high camp. 'Frustration', originally aimed at the repressed emotions of the middle aged, middle class, possibly resonates with tonight's audience more than it did first time round, while 'Loving You, Hating Me' brings their northern soul side to the fore.

If Almond can't hit the high notes he once reached, the slack is picked up by a trio of backing singers and a mid-set cup of tea seems to revive his tonsils, while prominent

saxophone warms the overall sound if occasionally drowning Ball's electronics. That's most notable on 'Sex Dwarf', where the ominous synth sounds of the original are pushed down, a rare misstep tonight. 'Seedy Films' and 'Bedsitter' are raw, soulful reminders of the duo's nightcrawler days, while 'Insecure Me' is a reminder that even with age and wear and tear (so much wear and tear!), Almond is possessed of a phenomenal voice. It's one he's frequently used over the decades to cover others' songs to such great effect and one of tonight's outstanding moments is a sultry, haunting take on Giorgio Moroder's 'First Hand Experience of Second Hand Love'. Equal to it is the duo's cover of Melinda Marx's 'What!', which they not only made their own but bettered, and there's even a cheeky cover of X-Ray Spex's 'The

Day The World Turned Day-glo' that, as Almond says, could've been written for Soft Cell.

Hit follows classic album cut follows hit, until we reach the bubbling, frothing, seething 'Chips On My Shoulder', the stark, wonderful 'Tainted Love' – as ever, melded with 'Where Did Our Love Go' – and of course, at the close, 'Say Hello, Wave Goodbye', one of the greatest, saddest songs ever written.

Whether Soft Cell's on-off reunions will continue is anyone's guess; David Ball's health issues and Marc Almond's ongoing solo career (he has a new album out this summer) might provide obstacles but tonight, in this most unlikely setting, diehard gutterhearts and lovers of peerless pure pop alike know their appeal will never fade.

Dale Kattack

bringing a variety across the set while allowing her voice centre stage. She has a sleepy-eyed singing style that, like Noor, brings an almost jazz feel to the music. 'Perception' has a Sade-like vibe about it, while debut single 'Scab' is Lord Bug at her most propulsive, with a dynamic that might be described as determined wandering. Lyrically she explores love and vulnerability ("I'm naked stood before you tonight") and religion, particularly Catholicism ("Save me from this house of love"), but slips in a fun cover of Jessie J's 'Price Tag', as well as a call and response song that rouses the audience to its feet, and anyone who can write the line "It's murder on the cheese board" gets our vote.

High point of the set though is 'Dog's Dinner', a lovely, languorous song of longing that recalls Camera Obscura and comes topped by some great, almost playfully plangent violin. Both acts tonight adhere to the less-is-more maxim in their songwriting and both suggest we have two excellent new singers in town.

Dale Kattack

SALTLINES: THE GIGSPANNER BIG BAND with RAYNOR WINN

Oxford Playhouse

The sound of waves and seagulls ushers Gigspanner and writer Raynor Winn onstage. It's the start of what is more immersive music theatre than a gig, one that brings together both traditional songs and Winn's specially written prose linked to the area around south-west England's coastal path.

Winn's 'The Salt Path' chronicles her and her husband seeking solace from dark times by walking the 630 mile coastal path. A copy fell into Gigspanner's hands; they researched the area's traditional songs, then invited Winn to contribute, and now here she is onstage next to the band. The invitation turns out to be a stroke of genius. Gigspanner and Winn gel so well that her evocative prose and the traditional songs can seem as if they are occupying the same space, overlapping each other like in a Venn diagram. Winn's delivery has a rhythmic musicality that smooths the transitions between what's spoken and what's sung. When Winn recites flowers' names, Gigspanner's fiddles are buzzing bees; when she describes the knitting of fishermen's jerseys we hear the ghostly click clack of the knitters' needles courtesy of drummer Sacha Trochet. When Gigspanner sing about the decline of fishing and tin mining, Winn follows up by depicting unemployed men in a food

bank queue.

The band's superb musicianship is to be expected as there's a bevy of folk's A-Listers on stage. The Gigspanner Big Band is the Gigspanner trio led by ageless fiddler extraordinaire Peter Knight and augmented by award-winning multi-instrumental duo Phillip Henry and Hannah Martin, and Bellowhead founder and melodian maestro John Spiers.

The traditional songs are given a contemporary make-over, and though there's no brass section this big band easily create a multiplicity of textures by rotating which instrument(s) and which voice(s) take the lead, while Phillip Henry's dobro guitar weaves in and out, at times sounding more Indian than south-west England. The only original song is about Winn and her husband's travails and brings a lump to the throat, while 'The Dilly Song' is wonderfully weird and baffling.

Even more impressive is the cumulative effect of the songs and prose creates an ever more engrossing atmosphere; I swear for a second I smell the salt air of the sea. Saltlines succeeds brilliantly in giving a bird's eye view of the south west's past and present using only the magic of words and music. Gigspanner and Raynor Winn get a standing ovation. It is well earned.

Colin May

LEWSBERG / THE COOLING PEARLS /

iiis

Common Ground

It's a shame iiis can't call themselves 'Eyes', as they pronounce it, 'til you learn there's at least fourteen other bands with that name on Discogs alone. Commencing in deceptively low-key mode they soon move into multi-faceted intricacy that draws you in further with every song. At least two of the three members are veterans of the local scene, including bassist Caroline Low from recently reanimated 90s local favourites Wonderland. 'Vapours' blends understated drumming and a woozy (their word) feel with some spikier, almost Billy Corgan-style guitar, rising then falling like a gentle storm.

The Cooling Pearls don't play live very often so it's no surprise to see a very decent turnout for a Monday. The local six-piece still blend folk traditions and instruments with more up-to-date song structures to create something difficult to label but easy to enjoy. Fronted by Aiden Canaday, one of the forces behind tonight's promoters Divine Schism and creator of their great posters, the songs are highly personal, several referencing members of his family. Onstage he inhabits a persona quite distinct from his usual quiet demeanour, closing his eyes and curling his hands round his mike as if

it's providing him with life. As a contrast a lovely moment comes when the toddler daughter of two of the members invades the stage in ear defenders, wanting a bit of attention.

Rotterdam's Lewsberg have drawn comparisons with The Velvet Underground but recent album 'Out And About' sounds rather more like fey mid-80s-style UK indie. However, tonight they really do sound like the New York legends, at least the first incarnation, the standing female drummer doing nothing to dispel the impression. But they diverge by avoiding any signs of their visual aesthetic, such as dark glasses and polo necks. They also come across as a lot meatier than the LP, starting with an epic steam train of a song driven by minimal drums and screeching guitar with high notes held seemingly forever. Songs are frequently very wordy, fortunately sung and (sometimes spoken) in English, often sly observations on everyday life. While we don't get the gorgeous, keyboard-led 'Angle of Reflection', they score points for wrong-footing those expecting the albums as recorded, except the 'The Corner' which is a note-for-note recreation.

Art Lagun

LORD BUG / NOOR

Common Ground

Acoustic singer-songwriters are less than ten a penny so you need something special to stand out and in Noor's case it's her voice, limpid and high-register that occasionally recalls the late, great Minnie Riperton and brings a soulful, jazz edge to her songs. She manages the difficult task of covering Adele's 'Daydreamer', but really shows what she can do with an a capella take on Gregory Porter's 'No Love Dying'. Of her own songs, if 'Me & My Body' – about meditation and self awareness – is a bit too whimsical, 'Other Side of the Sun', with its sparse guitar, has a pleasingly pure, daydreamy feel.

Lord Bug is the artist name of local student Libby Peet, who won *Nightshift* Track of the Month recently with her song 'Dog's Dinner'. Tonight she's backed by a full band, including sax, trumpet and violin and yet instead of swamping her simple melodies each part is used judiciously,



MAMMOTH PENGUINS / BROKEN CHANTER / THE KOKROACHEZ / MAGNOLIA

Florence Park Community Centre

“Fuck success and fuck expectation,” declares Mammoth Penguins singer Emma Kupa partway through tonight’s headline set, a statement that could pretty much sum up the ethos of DIY gigs like tonight, where Divine Schism host four diverse bands who, you’d imagine, harbour high hopes, but not at the expense of artistry and the offer of fun. What is success anyway if not the sense of community that grassroots music fosters so brilliantly.

Mammoth Penguins’ sometimes obstinate, sometimes ebullient fuzzpop stretches itself between almost grunge numbers and lighter tracks that remind us a little of

Moldy Peaches’ Kimya Dawson, or maybe Mo Tucker’s solo work. Whichever way they point their tunes there’s a sense of indefatigable positivity, even as they explore the vagaries of life and love.

Before them Glasgow’s Broken Chanter bring a sweet, sad folksiness to their post-grunge pop, David MacGregor’s lovely, rich Scottish brogue bringing a weight of emotion to bear on airy yet melancholic songs like ‘Allow Yourself’ and chunky grunge-pop numbers like ‘Extinction Event Souvenir T-Shirt’, recalling King Creosote at times, while set highlight ‘The Rain Doesn’t Always Fall’ treads close to Stornoway in its

vocal lightness.

Local teen rockers The Kokroachez, meanwhile, sound like they’re getting stronger by the gig given tonight’s highlight is recent single ‘Heroes & Gods’, closely followed another new one – so new in fact it hasn’t got a title yet. They can get heavy and sassy, as on ‘Pest Control’, but it’s when they’re at their most melodic they’re at their best.

Tonight’s show stealers though are young Norwich seven-piece Magnolia, whose wonderful mix and mismatch of styles simultaneously shouts “fuck success and fuck expectation” in musical form

while suggesting serious success could be theirs. Violin and sax bring eclecticism and adventure to their rhythm-heavy, prog-leaning sound which comes with just the right degree of hysteria. There’s a freeform feel to everything they do but at the same time they’re well regimented. At one point we imagine what Ornette Coleman might have sounded like had he emerged in the post-punk era, at other times there are hints of Van der Graaf Generator’s *outré* prog-rock. Someone mentions Hawkwind, another references Black Midi and yet no-one can put a firm finger on the band, which is always a very good sign. They’re barely a year old as a band and all still in their teens but Magnolia already sound like they’re blooming brightly.

Dale Kattack

MAVEN GRACE

The Jericho Tavern

Readers of a certain vintage might remember electro-indie band Psychid who, alongside The Rock Of Travolta, were picked to support Radiohead in South Park in 2001. The quartet released their eponymous debut album in 2003 before seemingly disappearing. Singer Tom Havelock has subsequently enjoyed serious success, particularly across South East Asia with his band Prep, as well as a songwriter for other acts, notably with Matrix and Futurebound. But little was heard from bandmates Henry Jack and Marcus Efstratiou.

So it’s a warm welcome back to their spiritual home for the pair of them with their new band Maven Grace tonight. Henry formed Maven Grace with singer Mary Home a while back and the pair were spotted early on by Bryan Ferry; subsequently they recorded an album with Chris ‘Merrick’ Hughes who also produced the Psychid album. Tonight’s gig, part of a short run of shows ahead of the release of their second album, finds them

joined by a full band, including Marcus on drums.

This adds a weight to their previously airy electro-pop, tonight’s opener ‘No Music’ richer, darker and more expansive than we’ve heard on record, almost reaching into Portishead territory with Mary’s ethereal but downbeat vocals perched atop tumbling toms and atmospheric synths. It’s when they keep to this style they sound at their best: the gothic euphoria of ‘Darkness’ and trip hoppy new single ‘Miss Arizona’. ‘Take Me To The Water’ rides in on cool, icicle-like synths but feels like it’s missing a big crescendo, while ‘Tide Stands Still’, with its neat guitar spangle perhaps reveals too much of a Radiohead influence. Violin elevates ‘Queen of Seaside Park’, while ‘Hail To The King’ restores the darker dynamic. Most of tonight’s audience seem to be friends and relatives along for an overdue catch-up rather than the gig itself and you feel Maven Grace would flower more fully in front of a bigger, more enthusiastic audience. For now, this is a very welcome return to town for a pair of stars of Oxford music past – ones who still seem to have a bright future ahead.

Dale Kattack

FIEVEL IS GLAUQUE / BERNICE

Common Ground

Fievel Is Glauque is a strange name. We looked it up, and we’re still not entirely sure what it means, but that’s a fitting for an idiosyncratic act bursting with character. Ostensibly they’re a jazz band, and there are plenty of eloquently fiddly Pat Metheny guitar parts or Joe Zawinul synth lines to bear this out. But those keyboard runs are played on some garishly corny sounds, direct from the FM synthesis era, as if the gig were secretly an opportunity to check all the presets on a Yamaha DX7. For every muso noodle – and the band is nothing if not incredibly accomplished – there’s a big pop melody, with one foot in the baroque eloquence of vintage French beat-chanson, and the other foot on a dry ice swaddled amp in some 1987 stadium gig, and vocalist and founder member Ma Clément’s style is half Cleo Laine, half Jane Wiedlin. They do The Clash’s ‘Somebody Got Murdered’ like Peter Dinklage melded with Tapir!, but their own songs are odder, part no wave bossa nova, part abstract torch song. By the end of the set half the audience is sat down, studiously following the music’s twisty paths, and the other

half is jiggling about like loons. They’re both right.

But even this is eclipsed, both in terms of quality and headfuckery, by support act Bernice. The Toronto trio play as if they’re trying to trip themselves up, with crystal pure, stately vocal lines clashing against fractal synth tones and restless, intricate – and sometimes bloody silly – rhythms from a Roland HandSonic (a digital percussion device). Occasionally they remind us of the hand-made quirk of Homelife, but they’re more like Suzanne Vega drowned out by someone playing Alex Kidd In Miracle World, or a Cardigans demo lost in a hall or mirrors. Fievel Is Glauque play a track sounding like ‘From Langley Park To Memphis’-era Prefab Sprout having a crack at the theme tune to *Sorry!*, but Bernice managed to top that in the style of Burial and Sade rewriting the theme tune to *Taxi*. Bernice is not a strange name, but they are a band who will fox you, intrigue you, and make you laugh out loud as a digital cuica divebombs a drum&bass ballad, which is far stranger and far more wonderful.

David Murphy

DOLLY MAVIES / JOELY JUNE / EVA GADD

The Bullingdon

Dolly Mavies, Joely June and Eva Gadd are like Neapolitan ice cream: equally distinctive, equally enjoyable but one is ultimately your favourite.

Opener Eva Gadd sings proficiently but perhaps needs to reach beyond her unequivocal talent and experiment if she’s to stand out. Joely June’s songs ambulate between Warpaint and The Beths, and she looks and sometimes sounds like a lost sister of First Aid Kit. She and her band look like they’re meant to be on stage as she seems to squint down at us like a bird of prey and the cool insouciance of a rock star and her band build their musical nest around her; the guitarist and drummer add to both her arresting presence and captivating sound. Their performance is full of harmonies, changing dynamics and looped vocals as she leads us through her musical maze, entertaining and never predictable.

Dolly Mavies equally draws us in by becoming the Melpomene and Thalia of her songs. You can’t take your eyes off her: every bleary-eyed moment, every angry blackout, every pole vault of euphoria

caught in those lyrics is drawn in the sinews of her face. Sometimes her performance can be a bit too dramatic – at one point it looks like she and her keyboard player are doing safety instructions on a plane – but mostly it works and even when it doesn’t, her voice takes over. Dolly Mavies has been compared to Florence & the Machine, however, she feels closer to Angel Olsen, if Angel was interrupting a support group with a long, angry power chord. She even knows that the way to stand out in the harsh tricolor lights of The Bullingdon is to wear a sparkly coat. She looks experienced, in control, contoured indelibly to the Oxford music scene through hard graft and born showmanship.

All three artists make an impression and the magnitude of their combined talents almost make you chortle at tonight’s gig’s humble price tag. It is acknowledged that it’s not what you say but how you make people feel that counts and Dolly Mavies, Joely June and Eva Gadd make you feel a lot, and like a good ice cream binge – fulfilled.

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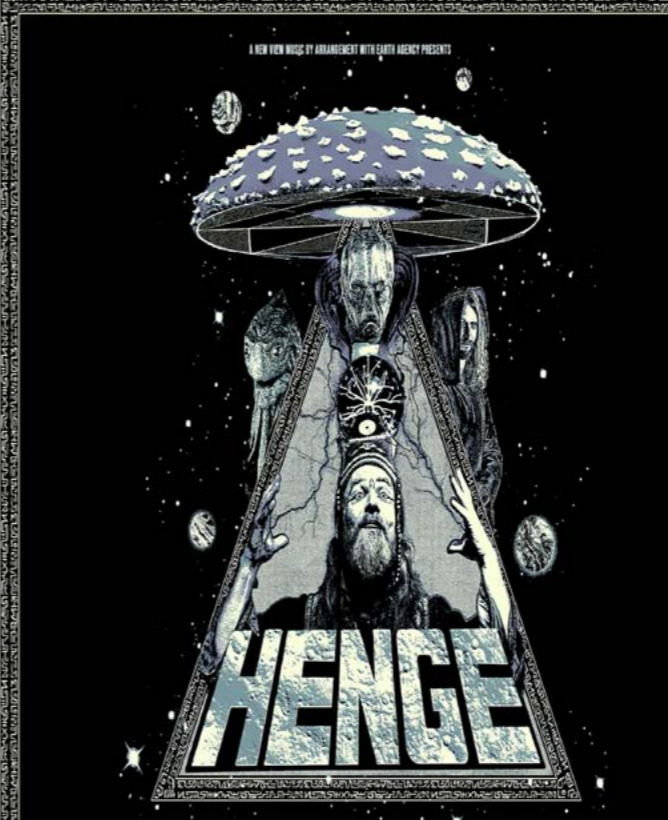
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WHAT'S MY LINE?

A monthly look at jobs in local music. This month it's **NIGEL BROWN** and he's *The Harcourt Arms'* **OPEN MIC HOST**



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

What is one thing you have to do as part of your job that the average person might not know?
"Trying to read my own writing to see who's coming next."

What's been the single biggest highlight of your career so far?
"Of the 1,500 or so musicians who have played at the open mic over the years it would be impossible to single out just one performance. Or even a hundred. What makes it all worthwhile is when someone gets on stage who's never performed before anywhere, or perhaps hasn't played for decades, or wants to try a new song, or is passing through Oxford for just one night. Whatever the reasons, every week there are spine-tingling voices that silence the pub; blistering instrumental breaks; songs to dance to, and an incredible variety of genres. On top of that is the jamming – the person whose name is on the slot might invite others to play alongside. It's great seeing musicians of all abilities pushing their own boundaries, working with musos they may or may not have met before, in unfamiliar genres, unfamiliar songs, and enjoying themselves – and the great thing is that it works. The audience is consistently supportive and appreciative of the effort and the

result. And aside from the jamming the open mic is great for the musos to meet other musos. It's a buzzing community centred around a love of playing live."

And the lowlight?
"I got food poisoning a few weeks ago – my fault, sorry everyone."

How much did Covid affect your job?
"The Harcourt Arms was shut during lockdown of course, but we moved the open mic online, the community extended itself, still with many of the regulars but also old and new performers who logged in from the US, Colombia, Spain and Japan, among others. It was very different from being in the pub but we kept the torch lit throughout."

Who's your favourite ever Oxford musical artist?
"Too many to choose one, so here's a top 20-ish of those Oxford artists who have floated my boat over the years: The Spiralites; Nina

Whitfield; No Horses; Miranda Elloway; The Oxford Beatles; Niki Savage; Mambo Panthers; JJ Soul; Batey and Quelch; The Knights of Mentis; Raymond Burke; The Hex Collective; Rory Evans; The Balkan Wanderers; The People Versus; The Scott Gordon Band; The Holy Fools; The Cripple Creek Gals; The Gastric Band (best band name ever), and Mandolirium. And many more, as they say..."

What's the single most important piece of advice you'd give to someone wanting to do your job?
"Stay on top of everything all the time, but look relaxed. You know, like a swan struggling gracefully up a waterfall."

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

When was the last time you heard genius?
"Last Sunday. But actually 'genius' is completely missing the point. I'm interested in people having a good time, and personally I care about music that moves me."

Have you ever compromised your integrity in the course of your work?
"No. And guitar picks never get lost and strings never go out of tune."

Would you swap your job for any other?
"No."

Are you rich?
"Musically, absolutely rolling in it!"

Do you consider your job glamorous?
"Not glamorous, but fulfilling, yes."

What's your favourite thing about Oxford's music scene?
"It's the reason I stayed in Oxford after I visited last century. There's so much talent, and so many sessions for people to try out their stuff, see other performers, hook up and jam."

INTRODUCING....

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

EB

Who is she?
Electronic artist EB is Emily-Beth Hill. "I formed in a downstairs bedroom in rural Northamptonshire with an Acer Aspire 5520, a trial copy of Mixcraft Studio that I had to renew every two weeks with a freshly made email address, and my mum's acoustic guitar." She moved to Oxford to study Audio Production in 2014. "I learned a lot during this time but was encouraged away from the genres of music I most wanted to work with, in favour of what was going to be more likely to pay my rent." Time spent in the USA inspired her debut EP, 'Rodeo Queen'. A European tour was booked for 2020 but the pandemic struck. 2021's 'Celestial Orientation' was written during lockdown and according to EB "reflects the uncertainty of it all." More recently she has been "experimenting with genres I always loved but never got to work with before, and work on using my social platforms to tell interesting stories and bring people entirely into the worlds that had previously only existed in my imagination." Her latest project 'Institutum: Compendium I', released this month, is "a cross-platform experience that tells the story of an artist and an administrator figuring out their true purpose while working for an organisation hell-bent on recruiting as many participants as possible for reasons we don't know yet."

What does she sound like?
From the sugar-fuelled Kids TV hip hop of her earliest songs, through the rapid-fire lines and atmospheric electronica and dream-pop of 'Celestial Orientation', to the harsh, malevolent electro-rock of new single 'Rebirth', EB's precise rhymes remain central to her ever-developing sound as an inventive and uncompromising artist.

What inspires her?
"Seeing people do things for the sheer love of it. When I visit my parents, my dad will proudly walk me around the allotment he built from the ground up and explain to me in great detail what is going well, what needs improvement. My mum will point out every piece of furniture, tell me from which charity shop it came from at what price, and meticulously explain how she managed to upcycle it to fit her vision. I hope to apply myself to my own projects with

as much love and care for detail." **Her career highlight so far is:** "In 2019, I was asked to join a panel hosted by Bob Boilen of NPR at a conference in Austin, Texas. They played my song and we spoke about it. It was like a fever dream, and incredibly overwhelming." **And the lowlight:** "I played a show in Birmingham and was handed five £1 coins as compensation. Not even enough for a pint." **Her favourite other Oxfordshire act is:** "Depolarize; I've been to a few of their shows and their energy is incredible!" **If she could only keep one album in the world, it would be:** "'Artifacts' by Beirut, because the song 'Elephant Gun' is on there and when I was young, I convinced myself that that would be the last song I would ever listen to in my life. Even now I don't listen to the song very much and have to quickly skip to the next song before it ends, you know, just in case." **When is her next local gig and what can newcomers expect?** "To be confirmed. Expect screaming and dancing and a performance style you've never quite experienced before." **Her favourite and least favourite things about Oxford music are:** "It's twofold; Oxford is small, and that means that the DIY music community is incredibly tight, regardless of genre, and that's a wonderful thing. However, it's hard to get yourself established as a new artist in such a tight-knit community, particularly if the music you make doesn't quite fit the bill of musicians who are already playing gigs regularly." **You might love her if you love:** Poppy; The Streets; Deftones; Billy Nomates; Jennifer Touch.



ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

THIS MONTH IN OXFORD MUSIC HISTORY

20 YEARS AGO

A moment of poignancy looking at the front cover of July 2004's *Nightshift*, featuring as it did local electro-pop trio Trademark, whose album 'Want More' was released that month. Back then *Nightshift* was enthusing about the band's techno-savvy update of the classic synth sounds of Human League, Depeche Mode and Pet Shop Boys and chatting with lifelong friends Oli Horton and Stuart Meads as they prepared to perform at **Truck Festival** at the end of the month. Tragically Stuart died, alongside partner Gavin, in October 2013 with Trademark's new album all but complete. Joining Trademark at Truck this month were headliners **The Eighties Matchbox B-Line Disaster** and **Chip Taylor & Carrie Rodriguez**, along with perennial Truckers **The Electric Soft Parade**, and **Goldrush; Million Dead; Electric Eel Shock; Dive Dive; Sons & Daughters; Simple Kid** and **The Cribbs**. **Bryan Ferry** and **Brian Wilson** were the biggest names in town this month; the former was playing (badly) at **Cotteslowe Park**, while the latter was at **The New Theatre**. Elsewhere **The Levellers** were playing **Oxford Town Hall**, and **Tim Booth** was at **The Zodiac**. Down in the Demos, Demo of the Month went to **Tim Science**, formerly of eeeblee and Science Never Sleeps and still out there making great electronic music as one half of **Means of Production**: "Equally abrasive and soothing, you'll not find a tune in here for love nor money,

but when you've got rhythms like this, you don't need melodies," we said.

10 YEARS AGO

And here we are again, Truck continuing to make the month of July their own. This year's event featured headline sets from **White Lies** and **The Cribbs**, who were joined across the considerably expanded site by the likes of **Los Campesinos!**; **Blood Red Shoes; Sam Duckworth; Roots Manuva; Gang of Four; Andrew WK; Jaguar Skills; Peace; Cerebral Ballzy** and **Slow Club**, while the Oxford end of things was held up by **Stornoway; The Original Rabbit foot Spasm Band; The Goggenheim; Flights of Helios; The Ralfe Band; The Family Machine** and **Pixel Fix**. Cornbury Festival hosted **Simple Minds; Jools Holland** and **The Gipsy Kings**, alongside **The Feeling; Southside Johnny & the Ashbury Jukes; Georgie Fame; Suzanne Vega** and **Kid Creole & the Coconuts**. And the festival fun didn't end there, with **Cowley Road Carnival; Charlbury Riverside** (featuring **The Epstein, Candy Says** and **The Shapes**); **Wittstock (Peerless Pirates, Superloose, Reckless Sleepers)** and **Irregular Folks Summer Session (The Irrepressibles, You Are Wolf, Duotone)** bolstering the outdoor fun quota. Those who preferred to stay out of the sun could see **James, Pete Doherty, Parquet Courts** and **NOFX** at the **O2 Academy**, or maybe go and buy a copy of **Rawz'** new album 'The Difference'.

Dr SHOTOVER – Kiss Me Hardy

Bonjour, Jeune Jacques Fruit. Welcome to <<Françoise Hardy Memorial Day>> in the East Indies Club bar and bistro. Pull up a Louis XIV chair and click your fingers imperiously at Bedingfield our cadaverous steward. He will ignore you in a lofty Parisian manner before grudgingly serving you some vile aniseed-flavoured drink while accordion music plays loudly in the background. Today we are discussing pop hits themed around French food and drink. Let me get you started with Radiohead's Crêpe, closely followed by Gilbert O'Sullivan's Éclair. But it doesn't stop there, ohh non. Petit Richard – Good Golly Miss Merlot? Very good. James Brun – Papa's Got a Brand New Baguette. Le Docteur Feelgood – Raclette. Les Fabs – Cassoulet It Be. DJ Jazzy Jeff et le Petit Prince - Pump up the Bouillabaisse. Franc Sinatra – Escargot (It's my Kind of Town). Les Fabs (encore) –

Love Me Dubonnet. And so it goes on... Santé! [Wanders off singing 'I'm a Crêpe, I'm a weirdo-oh-oh']

Next month: Monsieur Farage? Noilly Prat.



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TOP TRACK

CAMILLE BAZIADOLY

Depending on when you read this, the UK is about to go to the polls to sweep aside 14 years of Tory cruelty and corruption or already has a new Labour government who probably won't change things nearly as much as is needed, while the England men's team are either heading for Euros glory or have already succumbed to extra-time defeat in predictable fashion, probably to Slovakia. It's the hope that gets you, innit.

So anyway, this month's batch of tracks has a distinctly downbeat feel to it, which feels apposite. But hey, you know *Nightshift* – bunch of old goths innit, glum can be good. And by Odin, Camille Baziadoly is good. A French-born singer, she's moved to Oxford and on this debut offering, 'Skin On Fire', is backed by an illustrious set of locals including renowned keyboard wiz Sebastian Reynolds, former Guillemots and Suitable Case For Treatment drummer Grieg Stewart, and Brickwork Lizards' Malachy O'Neill. Together the band do just the right amount – a lush yet unobtrusive backing for Camille's lovely birdsong voice, which is ethereal, almost wordless. Not that it needs words, even as Camille sings about holding her breath in the grip of pain (cue metaphor for the last 14 years of Tory rule) – it's all oohs and coos, backed by swooning cello, sparse piano notes and minimalist, shuffling beats, and comparisons in the press release to the late, great Julee Cruise do, for once, seem to be born out. It's like a celestial aria. We might get a different colour of liars and shysters in government and we might lose on penalties again, but when there are songs like this to be heard, there'll always be some corner of the world that is beautiful.

JOELY JUNE

There seems to be a lyrical theme developing here as Joely June offers us her song 'Not A Crier', which is about putting on a brave face through emotional

pain. Like Camille Joely June opts for the less-is-more approach, allowing her voice to do its thing. The song is a sparse, acoustic confessional, her voice hushed and breathless and in need of little musical adornment, though the pedal steel does bring a nice atmospheric country undertow to the song. "I miss you all the time" sings Joely June as she tries to hold it altogether (and ultimately can't), whether at home or in the supermarket ("I'm not a crier, but for you it's all I do") and *Nightshift* resolves to hunt down the scoundrel who's broken her heart and give them a Chinese burn.

DEAD OTT

Home alone is where we also find Dead OTT, the hip hop moniker of James Ottley whose song 'Come Home' is about the birth of his son during Covid lockdown – about having to leave his wife and newborn at the hospital and toast the birth in solitude (doubtless while guffawing chinless wonders partied in Downing Street). As such the tone of the song is sombre – moody and minimalist, the words delivered almost deadpan: "It's the greatest day of my life / I had a beautiful child with my beautiful wife / Suddenly the whole world looks bright / But I'm gonna be alone tonight". It has a suitably late night vibe with its gloomy, spectral synth tones and softly chattering beats. It steadfastly avoids self pity though, concluding "Really haven't got a reason to moan / All I want you to do is come home," a simple, effective message from a period of time that continues to cast a shadow over so many people's experiences.

SHOCK HORROR

Enough of all this glumness, let's ROCK! Well, yes, but it's hardly party time in Shock Horror's musical world, particularly as the title of their first track here, 'Anxiety', hardly screams good times. And musically it's less Russ Abbott's 'Atmosphere', more Joy Division's. Actually, it's more Joy Division's 'Shadowplay', but stuck in a big gnarly rock blender with Radiohead's 'Idioteque' and maybe a dash of Placebo for good measure. It's uptight, almost hysterical, grunge-informed rocking, all rush and flurry and with a bit of a goth edge and pleasingly dirty. A second song, 'Nothing New, Nothing Real', is similarly indebted to Radiohead's noisier side, with a big, towering stadium grunge chorus over serrated guitars. While influences are worn proudly on sleeves, this is a big step up for Shock Horror from what we last heard of them, the band really beginning to show their teeth and claws: where

before they were shouting, now they're snarling, and big, dirty, pissed-off rock music is sometimes just what you want in a big, horrible world.

MARK BOSLEY & KATHRYN BEVIS

Of course, you can get angry without being noisy about it – speak softly but carry a big stick at the old saying goes, and so it is that local veteran Mark Bosley makes his point about the state of the world in almost pretty fashion. Here he teams up with poet Kathryn Bevis to offer no less than three different versions of 'The Goose & The Common', the 18th Century protest rhyme that feels as apposite now as it did during the land enclosures centuries ago. "They hang the man and flog the woman / Who steal the goose from off the common / Yet let the greater villain loose / Who steals the common from the goose" sings/ speaks Kathryn over an airy madrigal. The acoustic and folk-rock versions are probably more traditional mediums for the words to be delivered but we particularly like Mark's EDM version, which sounds like Giorgio Moroder composing an electronic jig for the soundtrack of a folk-horror sci-fi. And then we remember we shouldn't be enjoying it nearly as much as we are; we should be loading up on Molotov cocktails and heading up to the manor house to reclaim what's rightfully ours.

VERNONS FUTURE

Last time we reviewed Vernons Future they had one musical foot in 60s jangle and psychedelia and the other in something stranger and more electronic. On this new song, 'Steerpike', they seem more ready to combine the two while sticking steadfastly to the more downbeat end of their spectrum. Over a mix of bubbling electronics and almost surf-pop guitar the singer wanders and wonders glumly but not quite morosely, reminding us a lot of Terry Hall, particularly from his underrated Colourfield period. For all its sombre mood you can imagine a room full of goth-inclined indie kids dancing self-consciously along to this sometime in the mid-1980s. Frankly anything that reminds us of Terry Hall gets a thumbs up.

SPLINTERS

Something of a side project this, featuring Jody & The Jerms guitarist Niall Jeger and singer Carly/Jody. This song, 'Given Up Trying', is a sparser approach to the Jerms' often ebullient fuzz-pop, piano and cello combining with Spanish guitar for a more downbeat duet, one step up from a lament. Yes it's a bit glum but didn't

we just mention that glum can be good? There's a weary, weathered elegance about the song which almost feels like a slow waltz, even though it's not in waltz time. "Maybe I've given up trying" lament Carly and Niall as the world slowly spirals into darkness. There doesn't seem like an awful lot of hope to be had here but at least they're going down in style.

MIKE ABBOTT

And sometimes glum isn't so good. We've reviewed Mike Abbott previously, including a full album of country covers many moons ago, but this is just a one-song offering, delivered with no ceremony – not even a hello in his email, just his name and an MP3 attached. Said MP3 is the song 'The Game', which seems to be about having an affair with a married woman who leads poor Mike a (less than) merry dance as he sits around moping and waiting for her to call. "I'm all alone in my room" he ruminates darkly and huskily, in a style that briefly recalls Johnny Cash's glorious take on 'Hurt', but from here it's all a bit self regarding and self pitying as he sings "I didn't know you were married" and "When you come we'll have sex" over a plaintive piano, but there's a distinct lack of romance, however doomed, about the song. For much of the time Mike sounds like he really needs to clear his throat and the song feels less like a lament to existential loneliness and more like an ode to heartbroken horniness.

PLASTICSOLE

Of course, music doesn't have to be glum to be depressing as PlasticSole prove with their song 'All That You Wannabe'. The bombastic opening has us hoping for some unabashed stadium rocking but quickly the band, who describe themselves as indie rock, descend into the kind of vaguely feelgood blues-infused soft rock that tends to be the soundtrack to family-friendly community days or beer festivals in out-in-the-sticks pubs. At least until they get to an almost proggy keyboard solo, followed immediately by a for-the-sake-of-it guitar solo and then back to some easy, undemanding soft rock chugging, tailor-made for the most undemanding of audiences. If PlasticSole had lived up to that initial promise of all-out rock bombast, or maybe followed their underdeveloped prog tendencies this might have been salvageable if dated good time fluff. As it is it feels like music that sold its soul for the prize of offending the least number of people in any given pub/village hall/marquee. Even better, the band have promised us they'll be releasing a new song every month for the next year, which feels like we've just won another five years of Tory government in the school tombola.

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

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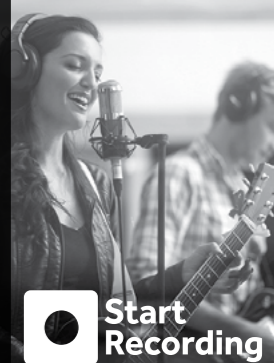
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OXFORD GIG LISTINGS

JUN FRI 28
THE BULLINGDON
SELF HELP

OFF KILTER ROCK FROM OXFORD
+KILLER KOWALSKI, BABY MAKER

SEP FRI 27 **SOLD OUT**
THE BULLINGDON
SOUTH ARCADE

Y2K ANGST ROCK ICONS

OCT THU 31
THE BULLINGDON
JOYWAVE

AMERICAN INDIE ROCK

JUL TUE 09 **SOLD OUT**
O₂ ACADEMY
GLASS ANIMALS

HOMETOWN ALBUM LAUNCH SHOW

SEP SAT 28
O₂ ACADEMY2
ELLES BAILEY

SMOKEY UK BLUES ROCK

NOV FRI 08
THE BULLINGDON
LACK OF AFRO

ADAM GIBBONS R&B/SOUL PROJECT

AUG FRI 02 **SELLING FAST**
THE BULLINGDON
FEROCIOUS DOG

FOLK FUELLED ROCK

OCT TUE 08 **SELLING FAST**
THE JERICHO TAVERN
TOM MCRAE

CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED SINGER SONGWRITER

NOV SAT 09
O₂ ACADEMY2
DANNY MELLIN

HOOK LADEN INDIE ROCK FROM OXFORD
+BLUE BAYOU

AUG SAT 03
O₂ ACADEMY2
BLACK PARADE

00'S EMO ANTHEMS

OCT THU 10
THE JERICHO TAVERN
THE HOWLERS

VISCERAL STOMPING ROCK

NOV TUE 12
O₂ ACADEMY2
CRASH TEST DUMMIES

GOD SHUFFLED HIS FEET 30TH ANNIVERSARY

AUG TUE 20 **SELLING FAST**
THE JERICHO TAVERN
HAMISH HAWK

INTIMATE ALBUM LAUNCH EVENT

OCT FRI 18
THE JERICHO TAVERN
THE LEYLINES

HEART POUNDING FOLK REVELRY
+PAUL HENSHAW

NOV WED 13 **SELLING FAST**
O₂ ACADEMY2
TWIN ATLANTIC

SCOTTISH ALTERNATIVE ROCK

SEP FRI 13
THE BULLINGDON
THE ENTITLED SONS

NEW OLDSCHOOL ROCK MUSIC

OCT FRI 18
THE BULLINGDON
HENGE

EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL ELECTRO JOYMONGERS

NOV FRI 15
THE BULLINGDON
DECO

80S INFUSED INDIE POP

SEP WED 25
THE BULLINGDON
LAURAN HIBBERD

ISLE OF WIGHT INDIE POP

OCT SAT 26
THE JERICHO TAVERN
TAPIR!

LIFE-AFFIRMING INDIE FOLK

NOV WED 20
O₂ ACADEMY2
FEET

RAZOR-SHARP INDIE ROCK