

ISSUE 24 / JULY 2013 / FREE

Oxfordshire MusicScene

@OMSMAGAZINE

IT'S FESTIVAL O'CLOCK! WHO'S PLAYING IN A FIELD NEAR YOU THIS SUMMER?

A WORD WITH THE ORGANISERS
AND THE BANDS

THE STORY SO FAR: WYCHWOOD
AND WOOD REVIEWS

ALSO INSIDE:
THE AUGUST LIST, PIL,
RALFE BAND, SPRING OFFENSIVE



NEWS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
DAILYINFO.CO.UK -
YOUR ONE-STOP GUIDE TO OXFORD LIFE

THE GLORIOUS 10TH
THE ORIGINAL
CORNBURY
MUSIC FESTIVAL
5th | 6th | 7th JULY 2013 THE GREAT TEW PARK OXFORDSHIRE

SQUEEZE KEANE VAN MORRISON
IMELDA MAY AMY LAWSON
MAGDONALD ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN
KING CHARLES THE PROCLAIMERS BELLOWHEAD
BEVERLEY KNIGHT JAMES ARTHUR SETH LAKEMAN
THE OVERTONES OSIBISA TIFT MERRITT BO BRUCE
JJ GREY & MOFRO JACK SAVORETTI STAXS
MATTHEW LEE NELL BRYDEN VELVET STREAM

FESTIVAL OF WORDS WITH QI AND UNBOUND
Alan Davies | Hugh Cornwell | Julie Burchill | Katy Brand | John Niven | Robert Llewellyn | Salena Godden | Chris Sullivan | George Chopping

THE ABSOLUTE RADIO COMEDY EMPORIUM HOSTED BY ED GAMBLE
Abandoman | Comedy Club 4 Kids | The Showstoppers | Ed Gamble | Luisa Omielan | Nish Kumar | Stuart Goldsmith
Finn Taylor | John Robbins | Silky | Vikki Stone | Jonny & The Baptists

KIDS ZONE
Circus Skills | Bhangra Dance | Bollywood Dance | Bhangra Tots | Indian Mythical Dance | Pirate Pantomime
Kids Songs | A Journey Around The World | From The Fields To The Feast | Clay Making | Under The Canopy Creations
Face Painting | Painting and Making | Funky Puppet Making | Pinhole Cameras

Fairground | Gourmet Caterers | Festival Shops | Disco Shed | Amazing VIP and Glamping

Save the Children
WWW.CORNBURYFESTIVAL.COM
can't HERO VINTAGE TV HOOK NORTON

Fancy honing your local music knowledge chops and having great fun while you're at it? What about forming a team for our mega pub quiz? **Oxjam** (those that organize the yearly Takeover nights) have teamed up with O2 Academy, *Oxfordshire Music Scene* (that's us), *Nightshift* and We Got Tickets to stretch those brain cells – they/we will all be contributing a round and presenting those questions on the night. Top grub on offer and prizes galore. And it's all for charadee! (Oxfam). It's at Big Society on Cowley Road on Sunday 28 July at 8pm. £3 entry, teams of 6 and over 18s only.



Oxjam takeovers are on the increase. The annual event is gaining in popularity and Didcot is the latest town to host an event for the first time ever. To make it work, they need helpers. If you want to be involved in proceedings (and it could be a nice introduction for anyone who wants to get in to live music production) they need volunteers; bands, fundraisers, sound technicians, artistic types, singers, sound equipment, sponsors and other locals with a passion for keeping it live. If you're interested, email oxjam.didcot@gmail.com or visit their website www.oxjamdidcot.co.uk. Oxjam Oxford are also on the lookout for volunteers – you can find out the sort of people they need at www.oxjamoxford.co.uk.

Local live music specialists PinDrop Performances and Modern Art Oxford present, for your delectation, a series of open-air summer gigs. On 13 July we have After the Thought, Alice Ream and My Crooked Teeth. 24 August brings us The Yarns, the August List (see full interview later in this edition), Tamara and A Martyr and Huck, all on 7 September. They start at 7.30pm; prices are £6 or £5 for concessions. Visit www.modernartoxford.org.uk for more info.

The first acts have been announced for the next instalment of Gathering Festival, the multi-venue metro festival on Saturday 19 October. Making the trip to Oxford this year will be Aluna George, Local Natives, London Grammar, Temples, Cheatahs and many more TBA. Venues include O2 Academy, The Bullingdon, Cowley Road Methodist Church, Port Mahon, Truck Store. Tickets £20.

In terms of actual hard rock music we have a lot going on. New to Oxford promoters Black Bullet Live present The Temperance Movement at the O2 on 10 July. Their southern fried take on the genre comes across like a car park scrap between Lynyrd Skynyrd, the Black Crowes and AC/DC. Tickets £8 in advance on ticketweb.

Mayors of Miyazaki, described by DiS as 'tetchy, aggravated and raw' will be calling at the Wheatsheaf, Oxford on Friday 16 August. The band are touring to promote their second album *Holy Cop* which is receiving airplay from Steve Lamacq and Janice Long. It's £4, doors 7.30pm.



St John the Evangelist on the Iffley Road is fast making a name for itself as the venue for the discerning punter who values ambience as well as high quality performances. Mike Heron (Incredible String Band) and Trembling Bells should be no exception with a one off gig on 30 July. According to the *Guardian* it'll be 'an intriguing double bill, matching one of the originators of the experimental British psych-folk scene against its most interesting current exponents.' You have been told. Tickets are £12 advance from www.wegotickets.com. Doors 7.30pm.

Marc West



Brian May (pictured), yes, him, once guitarist with Queen, played the same church recently. He was on his Born Free tour with Kerry Ellis, an intimate, stripped down show. He performed an acoustic version of Queen's 'Somebody to Love', alongside Beatles covers and solo material.

NEWS

We are well and truly in festival season, both outside and (perhaps wise, given the state of British Summertime) inside at the first ever **YardFest** at the Courtyard, specialist youth work centre in Bicester. It's for the Teenage Cancer Trust and it all kicks off at 6pm Friday 5th July and is £8 advance or £10 on the door. The main stage is hard and indie rock with Canterbury, LostAlone, Evarose, Yellow Fever and Broken Revolution. The acoustic stage sees the Method, Make Out Kids, James Blowers and Jack Little doing their thang.



The tectonic plates of Oxford music seem to have had another shift with a few of our favourites calling it a day. Big casualty is **Trophy Wife**, who will surprisingly be going their separate ways after the release of their debut album (see album review later in this magazine). Also packing the guitar cases for the last time will be **Very Nice Harry**, and we say a big 'adieu' to **Charly Coombes and the New Breed** – though we expect they will continue in some form as separate entities.

Under 18? Wanna have a groovy night with some top choonz but not allowed in anywhere? Not to fear, the O2 Academy is the place for you on 28 July (which is the start of the summer holidays, so you've absolutely no excuse). Teeny bopper faves such as Mic Righteous, Harry Shotta, Drumsound and Bassline Smith as well as Semtex, Matrix and Futurebound will be having it large. The night is named **Hyper 14** and it will cater strictly for 14–17 years old (which means we won't be allowed in to review, thank goodness for you!). With freebies, foam, pyrotechnics and hyped up entertainment, it should do exactly what it says on the tin... Strictly no alcohol, doors 6, curfew 11.30. Tickets £15 adv from 0844 477 2000 or ticketweb.co.uk.

Heavy metal is not a genre that gets much coverage in these 'ere parts, but local author and part time metal head chick **Sarah Tipper** is publishing a follow up to *Eviscerated Panda*, the chronicles of a fictional thrash band and related escapades in the now defunct rockers bar Gloucester Arms and beyond. Heavy metal chick-lit anyone? For more info check out Sarah's Amazon Author Page www.amazon.co.uk/Sarah-Tipper/e/B00A8Z50VC and Facebook www.facebook.com/EvisceratedPanda.

Irregular Folk will be hosting a series of musical events in a massive Bedouin tent at The Perch in Binsey in their picturesque gardens by the river. Saturday 13 July sees three bands take to the stage; newcomers the May Birds, indie/folk/ rock with We Aeronauts, sea shanties with Ballina Whalers. They'll be attempting to do a Salters Steamers boat trip again, if they get 25 takers you can get a return journey to the Perch and back from Folly Bridge for just £10. Email ahoythereboatfolk@gmail.com if interested. Doors: 7.30pm. Tickets: £6 adv, £7 on the door. The 3rd of August is a special all-dayer with Message to Bears, Salvation Bill, Nairobi and many more on a very fine bill. See www.irregularfolk.co.uk for further details.

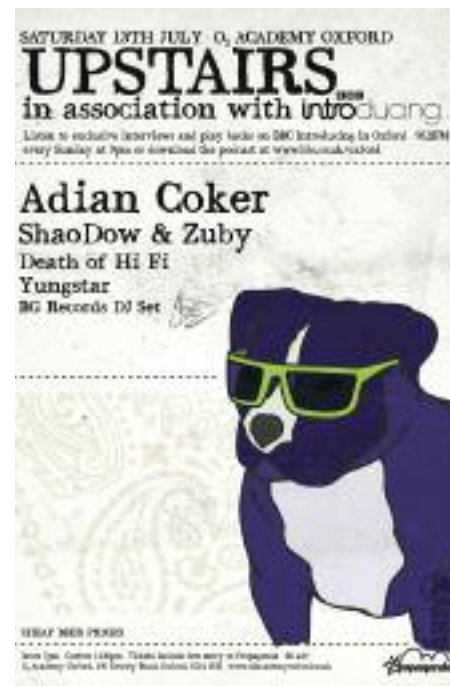
OMS has a new website address. If you visit www.back2left.co.uk, you can see, and tell all your friends about, recent and back issues. You can also see the latest issue of our sporting sidekick *Off the Ball*, issue 2 of which has just been published. Don't forget to get in touch if you want to write or photograph stuff for either magazine. Contact back2left@gmail.com.

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Front cover pictures: main Truck (Claire Williams), L-R Cornbury, Wychwood (Leo Bowder), Wychwood (Leo Bowder), Wilderness



THE 2013 FESTIVAL GUIDE

Cornbury

Great Tew Estate; 5, 6, 7 July

Squeeze, Keane, Van Morrison, Echo & the Bunnymen, Bellowhead. www.cornburyfestival.com



Cowley Road Carnival

Cowley Road, East Oxford; 7 July

Truck Stage, sound systems/DJs, SNSBL DNCHL, Dubwiser, Tony Nanton, Skylarkin'. www.cowleyroadcarnival.co.uk



2000 Trees

The Cotswolds; 11–13 July

Frank Turner, Mystery Jets, Stornoway, Dry The River, Fighting With Wire, Fight Like Apes, Gunning For Tamar. www.twothousandtreesfestival.co.uk



Truck festival

Hill Farm, Steventon; 19–20 July

The Horrors, Spiritualized, Ash, Subways, Dry The River, Rolo Tomassi, Wild Swim. www.truckfestival.com



Halfway To 75

Isis Farmhouse Pub; 20 July

Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band, Long Insiders, Nick Cope, Aps Connolly, Empty White Circles. www.halfwayto75.com



Riverside

Charlbury; 27–28 July

dB Band, Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band, The Epstein, Samuel Zasada, Dreaming Spires, August List. www.riversidefestival.charlbury.com (Free!)



D-Fest

Red Lion pub, Drayton; 27 July

The Epstein, Yellow Fever, The Scholars (Free!)



Irregular Folk

The Perch, Binsey; 3 August

Message To Bears, Beth Porter, Salvation Bill, Nairobi, Jordan O'Shea. www.irregularfolk.co.uk



Wilderness

Charlbury Estate; 8–11 August

Rodriguez, Empire Of The Sun, Noah & The Whale, Martha Wainwright, Tom Odell, Ghostpoet. www.wildernessfestival.com



Fairport's Cropredy Convention

8–10 August

10cc, Alice Cooper, Seth Lakeman, Levellers, Moulettes, Danny & The Champions Of The World. www.fairportconvention.com

Towersey

Towersey, nr Thame; 22–26 August

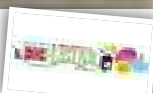
The Blockheads, The Unthanks, Martin Carthy, Martin Simpson, Spiers & Boden. www.towerseyfestival.com



Big Feastival

The Cotswolds; 31 August–1 September

Basement Jaxx, Lianne La Havas, Rizzle Kicks, Norman Jay. www.jamieoliver.com/thebigfeastival



Simple Weekender

Waterstock Meadow, Thame Road; 16–18 August

Flight Rhythm, Andy James, Pieman, Ed Steele, DJ D, Em Williams, James Weston. www.simpleproductions.co.uk



Gathering

Various venues, East Oxford; 19 October

Aluna George, Local Natives, London Grammar, Temples, Candy Says, Cheatahs, Charlie Boyer. www.gatheringfestival.tumblr.com



LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU: THE PEOPLE IN CHARGE TELL US WHAT'S IN STORE THIS YEAR...

Andy Pickard

Riverside festival

Looking forward to...

"I've always loved Supergrass, so seeing Mick Quinn and the dB Band will be awesome! Brickwork Lizards are one of the most original and talented bands I've seen for ages. Death of HiFi will be an amazing change in musical direction."

New and improved...

"Rapture/Truck Records are running the second stage and they have put together a very special line-up, it's going to add a piece



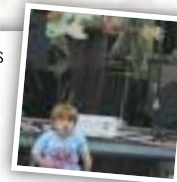
of glitter to a presentation of Oxford's finest music.

Favourite moment...

"Seeing the crowds come pouring through the gates after we had to hastily re-schedule the event last year due to flooding. It almost brought a tear to my bonny blues..."

On Riverside...

"A beautiful location on an island in the countryside. An old-fashioned gathering, people socialising, listening to music... for FREE!"



Hugh Phillimore

Cornbury festival

Looking forward to...

"Keane, Tift Merritt & Dora The Explorer, Van Morrison."

New and improved...

"Save The Children's Campfire Sessions Competition and the creation of our tenth Anniversary Glorious 10th Ale with Hook Norton."



On Cornbury...

A village fete with a rock'n'roll twist, a quintessentially English event – good natured, inclusive and slightly eccentric – with a lovely friendly family atmosphere."

Cornbury highlight

"Joe Cocker in 2005."



Andy Rea

2000 Trees (Cotswolds)

Looking forward to...

"Frank Turner is headlining and he headlined our first ever event in 2007, so it feels special to have him back, plus he's ace! This is his only small festival appearance of the year so it's going to be something special. Looking forward to discovering my new favourite bands live."

New and improved...

"We have a new entrance to speed up traffic flow, a



pedestrian bridge and other improvements to the logistics – boring but important!"

On 2000 Trees...

"Small is beautiful. We limit capacity to 5,000 to keep the special atmosphere, which also means queues are tiny compared to big events. The line-up is fresh and loud. The festival has won two national awards and it's a labour of love for us, plus we have a great team of volunteers to make the magic happen."



Ralph Broadbent

Truck/Y Not Festivals

Looking forward to...

"I am definitely looking forward to catching The Horrors and hopefully Wet Nuns, if we're not too busy on the weekend! I was really chuffed when Gaz Coombes came in, as he's a local legend and I know that a lot of people around Oxford are looking forward to seeing him."

New and improved...

"We've got a new Veterans and Virgins stage, which is showcasing favourites mixed in with new talent. We've also got a new Saloon Bar, curated by Club House Records, which will be transporting Truckers to the Wild, Wild West."



On Truck...

"Truck is the original, warped village fete. At sixteen years old, it is the original small festival, while still offering Truckers a fresh and unique experience each year. Truck has a long legacy of nurturing undiscovered talent, having had a host of some of the biggest names in the music industry in the past, including Biffy Clyro and The XX. We are continuing this trend by supporting artists like Oxford's own Lewis Watson, who we reckon is on the cusp of big things."

Personal highlights...

"Truck 2012 when Temper Trap were playing 'Sweet Disposition' on the last evening. Everyone was having an amazing time and it just summed up the whole weekend for me."

THE FOOD, THE WEATHER, THE DRINKING, THE MUD, THE CHARACTERS... AND THE TOILETS

FESTIVAL STORIES FROM THE LOCAL ACTS WHO WILL VERY LIKELY PROVIDE THE SOUNDTRACK FOR YOUR FESTIVAL WEEKEND

The Epstein

Appearing at Truck, Riverside, Towersea and seven festivals in Holland and Belgium

"The first festival I played in was with a band called Llama and was the Clearcreek Festival in Buffalo, Wyoming. We took an old beat up limo into town and played a storming set in the town square. We were playing between the school brass band and a local bluegrass trio. The last one we played was De Parade Festival in Amsterdam last summer. We played to a packed tent right at the end of what had been a baking hot day before jumping in the nearby river for a swim afterwards.

There is a travelling festival in The Netherlands called De Parade which spends 2-3 weeks in each major city and is a mix of art, theatre and music. We have had the pleasure of playing it a few times now and the atmosphere is really, really

special. Playing the acoustic stage at Glastonbury was amazing... plugging into this massive sound system and within minutes the sound guys had it all sorted and we were looking out into the biggest tent we had ever played. It was like tent arena!

We played a festival in Holland a few years back where the stage was in the central square of this town and we played to a crowd with the beautiful old buildings surrounding us all. Half way through the set loads of kids came onto stage and sat there watching intently from close up... It was a wonderful combination of the grand and the intimate.

The main thing that can make it hard for bands is the lugging of equipment across large fields full of people... easy and ok if it's sunny, not so when you are hauling everything through mud!"



The festival DJ... Count Skylarkin

Appearing at Cornbury, Cowley Carnival, T In The Park, Latitude, Camp Bestival, Secret Garden Party, Brixton Splash, Standon Calling, Shambala, Leeds, Katalyst

"My last festival was probably Outlook in Croatia last year; I played the Beach stage on the Saturday with DJ Shepdog. We were there 72 hours and didn't sleep till we got on the flight home. Those RyanAir stewards had a job on their hands waking us up in Stansted. At Glastonbury in 1995. Me and my mate blagged a tent off some scouts and walked right in over the fence. Pulp famously played the main stage. I only had ten pounds on me. But it was good stuff.

There's a bloke - I think he's from Denmark or somewhere - and they fly him in every year to play the backstage bar at Latitude. He plays about 8 hours a night, Wednesday to

Sunday, mixing punk, new wave, disco, heavy metal, psychedelia, hip hop, and nailing industrial quantities of tequila. Come the Monday morning he crowd-surfs out of that tent every year.

What's not to like? Well, the weather usually - but I mustn't mind that too much as here I am after two decades still spending the best part of three months kipping in a tent every year. What I love about festivals is the same thing I loved about them as a teenager - at their best they are a shining example of how people can be with each other. Come back from a good festival and you smile at people in the street and make conversation at the bus stop, or in the supermarket queue. Till someone looks at you like you're a nutter, at least.

My 'drinking policy'? It's gotta be cold. Unless it's not."



Black Hats

Appearing at Cornbury Festival (6 July), Faringdon Festival (August), Farnham Live (September)

First and last festival you played?

First was Riverside at Charlbury and the last was Gathering Festival at the O2 Academy.

Camping or a quick in out?

Don't think we've camped at one we've played but that's not to say we wouldn't. Have camped as punters loads of times.

Favourite festival to play?

Truck 2012 was amazing. We have a soft spot for it because of its history and it was great to play last year when it really returned to form. We lucked out at Wychwood a couple of years ago. Playing inside on the BBC Stage during the only half hour of rain that weekend - the tent was rammed.

Any fave/worst moments on stage at a festival?

Probably when the Truck Monster came on stage with us. That was cool. No bad moments playing. Our tents got

destroyed in a storm at Reading one year. Not so much fun...

What's the 'drinking policy' for a festival gig?

Don't do a 'Fixers'.

Fave festival food stall ever?

One year at Glastonbury when it was too hot... The Rasta with the watermelon stand became pretty godlike that weekend.

What do you prefer - club gig or festi gig?

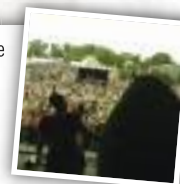
Both can be epic in their own way. Festi gigs do bring on the adrenaline a bit more though.

Favourite festival band apart from your own?

Local - Dive Dive. Bigger - Prince probably.

What do you like/dislike about festival gigs?

Some of the big ones have got stupidly overpriced, which is a shame. Best thing is discovering someone or something new on a little stage away from the big crowds. Festivals are target rich for memorable musical moments.



The Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band

Appearing at Boomtown, Camp Bestival, Winterwell, Cheltenham Jazz Festival, Towersea and Truck

"The majority of us go camping but a member of the band did once stay in a Travelodge. Absolutely beyond me - although to give him his due, he was very clean.

Camp Bestival was the first festival we played - we had the most incredible time. At one point we were hanging out in Chuck

Berry's dressing room with the Flaming Lips. Lovely chaps - we had no idea who they were of course. The guys all down gallons of Rabbit Foot Spasm Band Cider of course - there's a good reason why we have our very own brand. It's good to wander around and discover new music and I know a lot of people stumble across us. We're always a lot more er, relaxed, when we play a festival. I know poor directions, mud and knackered loos can get you down but we always have a great time when we stay over at festivals. We've played some of our greatest gigs in the mud, and met some very memorable characters. The novelty never wears off."

The Ralfe Band

Appearing at Wilderness and End Of The Road

First festival you did and the last?

The first festival I played was Glastonbury Acoustic Stage and the last was Wood this year.

Weekend as a camping punter or a quick in/out?

I've camped a few times mainly at Glastonbury - it's been a good chance to see great artists play like Leonard Cohen and Springsteen and it's always good for a random late night wander into some strange tent in the corner of the festival.

Favourite festival to play?

I think Glastonbury on one of the big stages or tents.

Fave/worst moments on stage at a festival?

Best moment is whipping up a crowd into a dancing frenzy. Worst, walking around barefoot, after a gig, surely a noble

ambition, only to cut my foot open on a broken bottle. This was in Belgium at Dour Festival - an apt name that day.

What's the 'drinking policy' for a festival gig?

Local ale and cider and the odd swig from a passing bottle of liquor.

Fave festival food stall ever?

Will Pouget's food tent at Wood Festival, is easily the best food I've had at a festival, not to mention his dancing, which is free.

Favourite festival band apart from your own?

Iggy Pop is pretty hard to beat.

What do you like/dislike about festival gigs?

I like to surprise new people with my music and a festival is great for this. When the evening sun comes out and bathes its light on a field its great. Its also a chance to see other people play for the first time. A graveyard slot can suck a little, but overall festivals have brought good times to me.

19TH - 20TH JULY 2013

TRUCK

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WE SUPPORT LOCAL MUSIC
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Festival season is probably the busiest for BBC Introducing in Oxford. We've got big plans for 2013 – we're busy suggesting acts for Glastonbury, T in the Park and Reading and Leeds, plus hosting a stage at Truck and putting forward acts for local festivals Wilderness and Cornbury. The good thing is that we have a bevy of great local bands to choose from.

Cornbury Festival, held in The Great Tew Park is a classy affair. Last year I saw people quaffing champagne – a sight not often seen at festivals. Van Morrison is the star of the line-up this year, plus, of course, Oxford's Candy Says, who impressed us at our recent Introducing gig, co-curated by Supergrass legend Gaz Coombes. They'll be opening up the weekend on the main stage and we'll be there live from 8–9pm on the Saturday to bring you highlights from the first two days.

Truck is a huge deal for us – we are really excited to be involved. We've got ten and three quarter bands on the Veterans and Virgins stage on the Friday 19 July. There is a real mixed bag playing for us; from the afrobeat pop of 'Duchess' to the deliciously fuzzy sounds of Beta Blocker and the Body Clock, and we, of course, have a few surprises up our sleeves – including a secret headline act. Dave Gilyeat, presenter of the show, said of the line-up "It's so good, I'm tempted to pitch my tent in front of the stage along with three days worth of food and drink.

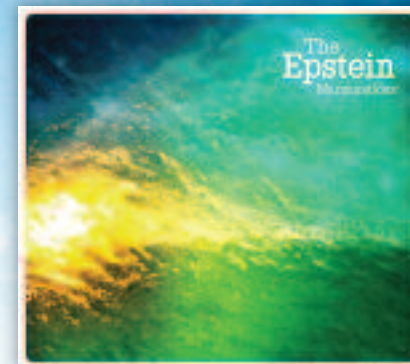
Unfortunately, we have a live radio show to do too!" We'll be broadcasting on Radio Oxford from the festival – with live recordings from the stage and interviews with the bands.

We'll also be heading to Wilderness, where we'll have three local acts opening the main stage. I think it is possibly the most beautiful festival site – surrounded by trees and

with deer in the undergrowth – it is pretty magical! Last year I spent most of my time falling over in the roller disco, attempting to dance the Lindy Hop in the Speakeasy and swimming in the reed-filled lake. In preparation, we got involved earlier this month at the Wilderness preview gig at the Ashmolean – Empty White Circles, Rainbow Reservoir and The August List played in the basement of Oxford's oldest museum. Rainbow Reservoir even made up a new song for the occasion called 'Judith – a Cautionary Tale' – inspired by a statue of this rather clever historical figure. The story goes that she used her feminine wiles to defeat an army who were sacking her town.

Plus we'll be doing some other stuff, probably, because that's what we do. If you want to get in touch send me an email Elizabeth.green1@bbc.co.uk.

The Epstein Murmurations



New album out now

Available from Truck Store,
Rapture Records and online
www.theepstein.com



THE AUGUST LIST

OMS MEETS KERRALEIGH AND MARTIN FROM OXFORD'S BRILLIANT NEW 'BACKWARDS COUNTRY' (THEY SAID IT!) DUO



Who's in the band and what do you play?

Kerraleigh – vocals, harmonica, melodica, harmonium, percussion; Martin – guitar, vocals, drums, percussion.

What's an August List?

AL: A Willard Grant Conspiracy song.

Describe your sound

AL: It has grit, soul, fire and fog!

How does a typical August List song come to life?

AL: We write about love, life, death and making merry. We both start very differently. Kerraleigh needs the music first so will often demand that Martin keeps playing whatever he has just done on guitar over and over again. Martin starts with the lyrics. All songs

end up going through the playground until we are both happy with the finished product. We never use a song that only one of us likes – it has to be mutual.

Where do you record?

AL: In the beginning we started recording songs in our kitchen on a 4-track but neither of us are particularly technically minded. For our EP *Handsome Skin*, we recorded at the Ladder Factory studios near Swindon, and Silver Street Studios in Reading. We have just booked time to record our second EP.

What are your favourite Oxford bands?

AL: We are big, big fans of Vienna Dito and also think Empty White Circles and The Epstein are great.

What's the best gig you've done?

AL: We really enjoyed playing The Punt this year (they played at the Duke's Cut pub) – we like it busy, hot and just the right side of rowdy.

Tell us about your influences

AL: Without Jenny Lewis we may never have become a band – her album *Rabbit Fur Coat* is the reason we started playing and singing. The Low Anthem have had a big impact on us – we think their album *Oh My God, Charlie Darwin* is best.

How did *Handsome Skin* (their debut) EP do? Did you pick up much coverage elsewhere?

AL: It has really just come to life this summer. Thanks to the local support (especially the wonderful folks at Truck Store) and

online reviews, it has started to earn attention.

Who does the driving to your gigs?

AL: We share.

How are gigs outside Oxford?

We started gigging in Reading before we moved to Oxford so have a great following there. The Rising Sun Arts Centre is a firm favourite to play.

What could you not do without for your gigs – apart from each other!

Vocalzone and diet Coke! ■

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Leo Bowder



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John Lydon has the kind of natural authority onstage you might expect from a man who has been intimidating UK punters since 1976 (not to mention the civic authorities). "I'm Johnny F*%^@ Fabulous" he declares in a monotone – "I do not do requests. This is not a wedding or a bar mitzvah. I don't belong on a cruise ship". At one stage he berates the crowd – "If you're going to throw plastic glasses at the stage, make sure there's no liquid in them. Beer is for drinking. You a***holes." The security staff get a rollicking too, for allegedly mistreating an audience member. John is a man of the people and at the end he touchingly hails us as his friends. Lydon may have gained a few pounds over the last few decades – long gone is the speed-honed scrawniness of the late 70s/early 80s – but he still has The Fire. That characteristic wail and snarl has lost none of its potency, despite him claiming to have a hangover, which adds an extra hoarseness. If anything it has become stronger.

And what of the music? PiL, whilst not quite having the notoriety of the Pistols were by far the more musically inventive – straddling the line where disco, punk, and tribal dub collide. Ex-Damned member Lu Edmonds is the secret weapon – on both guitar and Egyptian saz – never playing quite what one expects.

Ex-Slits Bruce Smith is a powerful drummer and percussionist, helping to give them their signatory jagged sound. Ex-er... the Spice Girls touring band member Scott Firth is an electric and upright bass champion; his bottomless low frequency charge giving the band its relentless groove. The first track is a belting 'Four Enclosed Walls', then 'Albatross', 'This Is Not a Love Song', 'Public Image', 'Warrior', and from 2012's *This is PiL* (first new material in 20 years) 'Reggie Song' and 'One Drop'. Finally a particularly explosive 'Rise' (way less mellow live than on record) and they end on the Leftfield collaboration 'Open Up' (which he has long since made his own).

Sneering, yelping and cursing – as well as kind of singing, Johnny Fabulous still has it. He knows what he wants and knows how to get it (ageing fans sneered at his butter commercials, but Lydon laughed all the way to the bank and it funded last year's successful comeback album.) There is, however, an implicit challenge in this – where is the new breed? Who now can claim that anger is an energy that can bring about a sonic revolution in the 21st century? Instead it's left to an ex-punk Londoner nearing 60. Ever get the feeling you've been, er... inspired? (LB)

Jake Smalls



PLASTICINE MERMAIDS AT WOOD

WOOD FESTIVAL BRAZIER PARK, SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE

If every festival this year has the mixture of sun, good vibes and plasticine mermaids sculpted to the trees, then we are in for, what my Australian comrades would call a “bonza summer”.

If you like your ale real, your hot dogs organic and your music wearing its roots proudly on its sleeves then, as they say in *Almost Famous*, “You are home...”

The green and pleasant land that is Braziers Park boasts not only a picturesque setting perfect for a weekend of music, workshops and drinking, but the ecological structure for one of the UK's greenest festivals.

After a year out Wood returned with the family-friendly utopia where children run free in the sunshine – admittedly the sunshine was sporadic, but the painted faced children did seem to be running free all over the place – and probably the friendliest, most relaxed, small, festival you can find was ready for action, albeit mellow and laid back action.

The weekend saw an eclectic mix of music on the main stage – African dance, English folk, blues rock, alt rock and more, whilst the tree tent hosted bands largely from the local(ish) Clubhouse Records label. Americana is a genre loosely thrown around at present to cover any music made by someone who has heard a Bob Dylan record, but the Clubhouse roster offer humour, feeling, and, most importantly, a broad array of great songs. Highlights included the full run through of Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska* album, hypnotic Senegalese magic from Jali Fily Cissokho, the aptly named Wood Brothers (earthy country-blues from the east coast of Americana), and Wood stalwarts Danny & the Champions who always captivate.

It may be smaller than most festivals, but it's not about size – it's what you do with a field full of weekend hippies that counts. In among the workshops teaching you how to compost, carry out shamanic healing and repair your bike, lie numerous innovative activities; from baby massage to harmony singing (KTB also got the whole crowd going on Saturday night), to how to play the spoons.

Beautiful setting, brilliant music, happy people – that's the Wood way... (JS)

Leo Bowdler



CARAVAN PALACE

WYCHWOOD FESTIVAL CHELTENHAM RACECOURSE

Wychwood is laid back, intimate, and child friendly – not one for your gurning pillhead, acid crazed crusty or the lagered-up Britpopper. Friday saw early 90s smooth pop groovers Soul II Soul putting on a consummate performance after The Beat did what they do best – first rate ska and boogie boy rock steady, which is impossible not to move to, and Toploader did ‘Dancing in the Moonlight’ (who'd have thought?).

Saturday was rawk'n'roll with Eddie and the Hot Rods (still singing ‘Do anything You Wanna Do’) then old skool indie with the Wedding Present (still wearing black), and the wondrous Caravan Palace – bringing a bit of French glamour and joie de vivre. “Ah yerh rehdeh to dahnce wizzuss?” the lead singer asks, coquettishly, before a particularly funky hour or so of Gallic electro-swing. A great thing about this kind of festival is you end up seeing/hearing acts that wouldn't have been on the radar before. Like Vienna Ditto, they brew an original concoction of rockabilly drum and bass with haunting vocals. Afterwards is Oxford's very own The Goggenheim; just this side of strange – with a striking image and a sound impossible to pigeonhole. That night on the main stage is Human League. I was sceptical but they were a revelation.

After a leisurely hot shower (an absolute impossibility at Somerset's finest), I retire, only to be woken by the chorus of Blur's ‘Parklife’ from the Headphone Disco. Sunday is even more leisurely. We join a bongo session then catch the Ukulele Orchestra doing novelty versions of Reed, Bowie and the Pistols. Bill Bailey is his usual cleverly hilarious self (“hands up who doesn't like to be tricked into surveys?... there is a bloke on Twitter pretending to be Big Ben – Tweets every hour”... etc.). What is a revelation – to me at least – is what an inventive musician he is, transforming the *Match of the Day* theme into a Jewish lament and showing how singing in German – over heavy metal riffing – works, but it doesn't in a Welsh accent. And finally the mighty reggae ravers Dreadzone – a couple of new songs, but mostly old favourites – it seems they are slightly preaching to the converted – but I'm a believer. By then the crowd is thinning as parents et les enfants begin to balefully consider Monday Morning. (LB)

Angus Barnett



THE RALFE BAND THE PERCH, OXFORD

Marrying ghosts of the music-hall whimsy-rock moments of the Small Faces with some of the avant-garde darkness of Man Man, Ralfe Band have the inventiveness and pop sensibilities of both, with the chops to bring it all together.

I'm a sucker for a band who can create a joyous melody and who can also make it sound so fragile and beautiful or raucous, yet, as if it's barely holding together. Oli Ralfe and his two cohorts played old tracks and stuff from the new album *Son Be Wise* with verve and brio. At one point Mike Monaghan was playing a complex new bassline whilst also banging out the beat on the bass drum and snare.

From the off they raised the mood with two of the newer songs – ‘Hidden Place’ with a chorus line that sounds like a dementedly dangerous offer but one that you would gladly waltz into while off you're your head on Absinthe. Then the life-affirming ‘Barricades’. Two-nil and the game's hardly even started.

Later on, we dip into the back catalogue with ‘Attics’, with its mad, insistent piano line driving everything forward. They are capable of slow magnificence as well. Part of the encore is ‘Magdalena’, a delicate, haunting beauty. Then ‘Museum’ a funky, cartoon carnival, haunted ballroom romp.

If they can make such a wonderful racket with just three of them (including some virtuoso washboard playing), I can't wait to see what they can do when they recruit more people to play live. Hopefully, when they play at this year's Wilderness, they'll be able to. (AB)

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Caroline Cooke



SPRING OFFENSIVE

SPRING OFFENSIVE ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST CHURCH, OXFORD

When you've been a band in Oxford as long as Spring Offensive have, you've got to think outside the box if you want to keep playing in new and original venues. Libraries, restaurants, living rooms, even museums become fair game. For a band like Spring Offensive, nothing seems as fitting as a church – and not just because it's guaranteed to be tall enough to house their 12-foot lead singer. Tonight's proceedings see the band take the curator reins, bringing together a collection of their favourite local and national acts.

The first of which is newcomer to the local scene Sweet William, aka William Healey, whose echoey acoustic guitar, and Americana-tinged vocals prove a welcome starting point to the evening. He performs his last two songs in the middle of the crowd, delicate guitar ballad 'The Storm' is followed by the heartfelt set closer 'Sandy', complete with occasional apposite harmonica.

A brief poetry-filled break before Adam Barnes takes to the stage, sorry, altar, accompanied by a pianist, whose presence improves his sound infinitely. Though lyrically and vocally rather uninspiring, the piano takes the songs to new levels, giving emphasis to big, emotive sections and decorating the softer parts. Later in the set, he covers 'You Raise Me Up', displaying the impressive vocal range he doesn't quite manage to effectively utilise in his own material.

Next up are Salvation Bill, who are demonstrably the oddest band in Oxford, but wear the title with pride. Who else would stop half way through their set to howl at the moon? They come into the audience to do their last song, an acapella cover of

'Take It Easy' by The Eagles, tellingly under rehearsed (all three have lyric sheets), but nonetheless brilliant.

On to the 'plugged-in' part of the evening, and Pixel Fix, three of whom seem to have forgotten to wear socks, impress with their hazy atmospheric synths, jangly guitars and earnest outlook. They've fostered an impressive depth to their songs, especially considering their relative youth, and look set to follow in the footsteps of fellow Oxford atmospheric art-poppers Wild Swim.

Finally, Spring Offensive take to the stage to wild applause and recent single 'No Assets', moving straight into the rigid, staccato guitars of fan favourite 'Ridgefield', frontman Lucas fittingly gesticulating to the audience like a priest preaching his sermon. Older track 'I Found Myself Smiling' makes a welcome appearance, while urgent, harmony-laden 'Worry Fill My Heart' sees characteristic awkward jerky dancing from the band, a trait that seems to be echoed by many of the crowd members who've seen the band before. At this point, Spring Offensive welcome a choir made up of friends and other local bands to the stage, amongst them members of Gunning For Tamar, Alphabet Backwards, We Aeronauts, Adam Barnes, Salvation Bill and King of Cats. They enter half way through '52 Miles', as guitarist Matt's bare vocals accompanied by a thumping bass drum build up into a mass choir vocal. They finish with new song 'Synapse to Synapse' before the ethereal 'Not Drowning But Waving' falls away from a cacophony of noise into a reprise of final lyric 'I will be blamed for this' just the five band members' unaccompanied voices. (CC)



SALVATION BILL



HODGEPODGE FESTIVAL CRAWLEY INN, WITNEY

This was the fourth instalment of the annual extreme music festival in rural Oxfordshire, and the organisers have once again managed to step it all up a gear. Notable site improvements included moving the camp site to the adjacent hill instead of in the valley (great for catching the sun as the weather was very kind), a new larger outdoor open mic marquee, and a smoothie/cake stall. Thankfully there is still very much a do-it-yourself mentality where participation and experimentation are encouraged.

Musically the festival lived up to its name, with the Friday night DJs such as SRS and Don Johnston offering a party-starting mix of swing, electro beats and funk. Confusingly, The After Hours Quintet are the first band I manage to catch, playing some nice jazz and funk numbers over a DJ set. Later, six-piece funk/ska band the Popes of Chillitown got the crowd bouncing, the lead singer getting involved in the pit to ensure maximum entertainment.

Saturday daytime saw the outdoor marquee come to life with the open mic philosophy working really well. My personal highlight was seeing Oxfordshire's own Pieman beatbox the sun-catching festival goers into a frenzy.

Inside, Rapidax layers distorted guitar drones over hardcore breaks, all while screaming his head off. Awesome. Wombcorps then launches us into brutal gabba and hardcore techno, and we realise it's still daytime and we should probably get some dinner. Saturday night is a truly savage electronic assault; Brokoli and Ghost of 3.13 flew over from Bulgaria especially to play – melodic and devastating breakcore and jungle that really gave the soundsystem a workout. Headliner Ceephax Acid Crew is actually one man, but he has a lot of machinery and treats us to a varied selection of acid-tinged techno bangers.

The best bits? It still has a very limited capacity, the Crawley Inn still offers a mind bending array of real ciders, the crowd is friendly and, best of all, the music is full on. (AF)

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DUBWISER

'WISE GUY' SPIDER TELLS LEO BOWDER ABOUT NEW EP

Spider's on the line. Dubwiser's producer, drummer and co-vocalist starts off talking about his Oxford band's latest offering, *Dubwiser Dancehall*, a genre-hopping, eye-popping contemporary roots-fest of an EP, but soon shares his thoughtful reasonings on the state of UK reggae.

'It (*Dubwiser Dancehall*) is an imprint. Nowadays you don't have conventional labels; music is a multimedia thing. It's a way of life. Rather than wait for labels, we just thought we'd try on our own. Bands are democracies, but *Dubwiser Dancehall* will not be a democracy. It will be starting with a few people who know what they want to do; it's not free fall, but will involve collaborations with other artists.'

Even though he got the name Spider from the eight braids he has, OMS points out that it could be because he puts

his hands (and voice) to so much. He did vocals on EP track 'Eye Popper', is a producer for Camden's Roundhouse studios and used to sing in recordings by Potato Farm, Night Trains, Bad Manners and Madness. In addition he has been a bandsman with Lee Perry (vocals, drums and keyboards) as well as working with Aswad, Mad Professor, Horace Andy, Shy FX, the Streets, Beverly Knight and many more recording artists, and he produces movie soundtracks. Spider is based in Hackney (East London), and is one of the privileged few who 'does music' for a living. One might marvel at how there is time for Dubwiser. We ask how long he has been connected to the Oxford music scene. "Me and best friend Jonas [Torrance, Dubwiser vocalist] were in a band called Rhythm Driven, Tads and Malcolm joined

us and in all we've been going for about 20 years."

OMS: How has UK reggae changed in that time?

Spider: "Reggae has changed a lot – it used to have a figurehead with Bob Marley, but now it doesn't have the same prolific catalogue or the same appeal. It's now more international, and at the same time in the UK there's more of a multicultural element. There's a hip hop mentality and with the advent of technology, a lot of people making demos, so a lot is still undiscovered. With reggae, people think they can write two chords, rest on the branch and smoke some herbs. There's a lack of belief. Many people shout 'Jah!' and "Selassie I!" and make the noises, but they don't live the life. There's still some good stuff; but some of the stuff is too aggressive."

OMS: What is the difference between Jamaican and UK reggae?

Spider: "In Jamaica it is influenced by the US. Its now all the gals [girls] tunc. There's only so much "baby I love you" you can say. Life in the UK is quite serious. People are struggling. Everyone's moaning; but I don't hear people writing about it in a clever way... Reggae had a conscious message. People almost make music now to make noise, and dub step is better at it than most. Damien Marley is a good example, or Fat Freddy's Drop from New Zealand. In the UK Jah Shaka is still influencing the sound system. All these people are doing great work in reggae, but they can't do it alone."

Indeed not. Thankfully, Spider-man and Dubwiser are here to help it on its way. ■

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Party Seven will not disappoint anyone familiar with ORFSB's punked-up take on rhythm and blues. What the Pogues did with Irish traditional music is what the Rabbits have done with their chosen genre. This is the kind of thing to put on if you're letting the constant drudgery/weather/stark reality of UK life get to you, but also the fuel for a nutty night out. This is unapologetically fun music made by fun people on a variety of topics. Roll up, roll up (your jazz cigarettes)! Ghost stories! ('Nancy Mitford Disco') Booze! ('King of

Wine') Witches! ('Eynsham Witches') Camping! ('The Great Outdoors') Ice cream! ('Matassa's Ice Cream Parlour') Pubs! (Birdman of Barley Mow) Boomtown Carnival! [Eponymous. Where they'll be playing]. Shimmering brass, intricate guitar, driving bass; held together with the cement of sparkling piano and wry lyrics – all sturdily built upon a foundation of drums. This is a house of ill repute, your honour! There are definite musical developments from previous offering *Year of the Rabbit* – blusier tones, a certain Mediterranean vibe in places and elements of samba and calypso. This promises to be the definitive contemporary summer soundtrack; a groovy, cool and soothing musical salve for austerity Britain. (LB)



TROPHY WIFE TROPHY WIFE

Trophy Wife unleash their much-anticipated debut album as a self titled, pay-what-you-like release, then drop a bombshell by announcing they are splitting after a short UK tour. We know from past works that the band have been influenced by dance/electronic production methods (as was evident with their *Bruxism* EP collaborations), and this continues throughout the LP. 'Absense' opens like Depeche Mode at their most brooding; sorrowful lyrics and an interesting low-key opener that swells into anthemic status and really sets

the tone. 'Glue' resonates with the vocal style of Alexis 'Hot Chip' Taylor and really showcases the strengths of the band; weaving the vocals perfectly into a moody percussive number. Past single 'Microlite' continues with the excellent production and bittersweet vocals – a perfectly mellow summer evening's soundtrack. They seem to have mastered the skills of the subtle build, 'Always Falling Away' layers sharp percussive hits to throbbing synths and vocal harmonies that could cause a nightclub meltdown. Trophy Wife leave us with a record that is part New Order, Hot Chip and Foals, yet manages to retain a unique sensitive sound that has its own place in the Oxford scene. We're poorer for their departure. (AF)



THE AUGUST LIST HANDSOME SKIN EP

The August List comprise married couple Kerraleigh and Martin Child, originally from Dorset, but now living in the middle of the Oxfordshire countryside. You wouldn't know it though – their sound has more in common with the shit-kickin', whisky guzzlin' deep south of the US of A than Pimms and cricket on the village green. Infused with strong narratives and southern twang, Kerraleigh's rich, powerful vocals, complete with occasional authentic yelps,

intertwine with husband Martin's resolute guitar, over low key, but fitting, percussion. First track 'Bird House Song' opens from warm solo vocals into a jaunty, melodic country ballad. 'Death Penalty' brings a nice contrast between content and style, with its upbeat intro, and 'Forty-Rod of Lightnin'' utilises juxtaposing male vocals and lingering, considered harmonica to excellent effect. EP closer 'Homeland' shows The August List can do slow and refined as well as brash and powerful, with Kerraleigh's vocals more airy and reflective than on the previous tracks. On this showing, August List can go straight in to Oxford's country music first team. (CC)



RALFE BAND SON BE GOOD (HIGHLINE RECORDS)

Mojo magazine described them as "a whisky-soured folk trip from east to west" – we like to describe their sound as 'drunken folk'. A brilliant live act, they've achieved a respectable amount of success, releasing their debut album *Swords* on Skint, one of the tracks 'Parkbench Blues' being synched on a TV advert for Rightmove. They also recorded the soundtrack for the film *Bunny & the Bull* which was released on Warp and have appeared as a pub band on *The Mighty Boosh*. So, to their debut for Highline Records (their third album proper), who released *Alphabet Backwards*

and Piney Gir's album. Single, 'Come on Go Wild' is a groovy, upbeat highlight, almost Shadows-esque guitars and funky lyrics that stands out as being a couple of notches, on the face of it, higher in entertainment value than the rest of the album. If only just a couple more tracks were able to inspire such wild frivolity then we might take them up on their offer. There are some genuinely beautiful moments though – in the gently twinkling 'Magdalena', and 'Kings and Queens', where singer Oly whispers his words of wisdom on war. Of a similar ilk is 'Ladder', an introverted love song that slows the pace. All in all, a record that becomes more rewarding after repeated listening – there are plenty of hidden charms. (AF)



LIMBO KIDS RG3

RG3 is the second EP by Limbo Kids, following on from *Wanderlust* which made quite a cyber-splash on its release last year. Comparisons were drawn with Blessing Force contemporaries Trophy Wife, and it was easy to see why even before discovering that the 'Wife's own Kit Monteith had been on production duties. Formed around a core of ex-Minor Coles frontman Mark Stephenson and Alphabet Backwards' James Hitchman, but now with a live band adding to the sound, *RG3* extends upon the group's early promise. On the title track, the crisp, rhythmic

production is again at the forefront, but instead the listener is drawn to the two writers' undeniable sense of melody – Stephenson's verse leading into a catchy Hitchman-led chorus punctuated by some lovely sine-wave keys. 'Kaleidoscopes' is a much more delicate affair – but follows the same formula – with one driving guitar accompanied by a reverb-sodden partner giving the whole thing a chilled out vibe not unlike the quieter moments on the most recent Youth Lagoon album. There's something a bit more 'pop' about this EP – and this is best exemplified by closing track, 'Headstrong'. Despite skirting the line dangerously close to the landfill indie of Sunset Cinema Club, Stephenson and Hitchman's gift for melody win through. (UL)



GRUDLE BAY COLDER

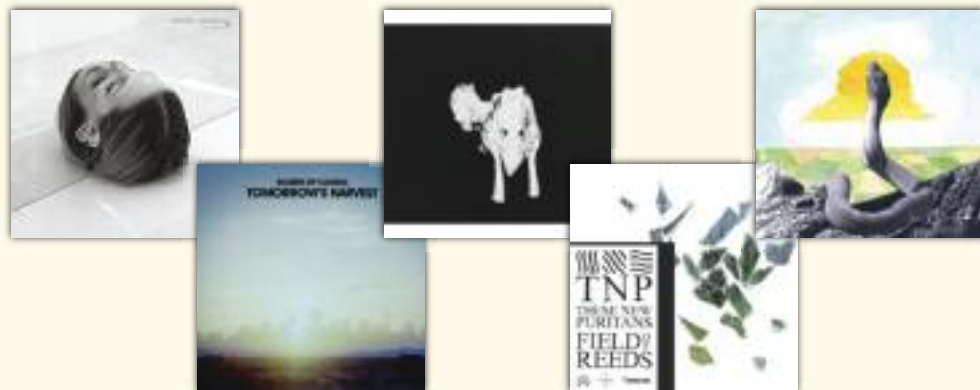
This rather stunning 3 track EP drops just in time for British summer to limp into play and suddenly life is good. Abingdon-based Grudle Bay offer electronic inspired guitar music, a glorious soundtrack of technicolour head bopping vibes. Title track 'Colder' is conversely the warmest sounding of the tunes on offer, rattling along at a fair

pace but displaying thoughtful restraint throughout. 'Running' relaxes the pace and conjures feelings of The Beach Boys jamming with A Guy Called Gerald. 'Fool Around' is a spacey, ethereal offering that once again proves that the band know their onions, expertly building layers of percussion and strings. After a string of fine releases, could it now be time to put together a Grudle Bay album, we ask ourselves? Now would be the perfect time to step up into the gap left by Trophy Wife. (AF)



NATIONAL RELEASES

WITH JAMES & ANDREW FROM PROGRESSIVELY LESS ELEPHANT



The **National** are now widely considered a "big deal", having risen from the ranks of the loveable underdogs (which really suited them). New one *Trouble Will Find Me* is a rare beast in that it is a record that is unashamedly big-sounding, while being possibly the most restrained work by the band to date. Where previously drama and emotion were inescapable, here we find more layered instrumentation; with songs that gently tug rather than tear at the heartstrings. This is no bad thing though, and the likes of 'Pink Rabbits' and 'This is the last time' show that the band still know how to pack an emotional punch.

Eight years and a month-long internet-based treasure hunt later and we finally have a new **Boards of Canada** album *Tomorrow's Harvest* – and it has been well worth the wait. Beginning with a synth-trumpet that sounds like a mid-80s TV ident, you immediately know who you're dealing with. There are all the usual BOC signposts – backmasked speech, numbers station-esque counting and minute long vignettes scattered about the album. The record seems to be pitched somewhere between the nightmarish *Geogaddi* and the sun-kissed, guitar heavy sounds of *The Campfire Headphase*. Lead track 'Reach for the Dead' is a highlight, with scattershot percussion complementing a gripping arpeggiator perfectly. It's clear from the advertising campaign and imagery of deserts and ghost cities that it's a meditation on the world of tomorrow, and a soundtrack to impending disaster. 'New Seeds' encapsulates this wonderfully – with a juddering guitar sample bookended by some classic BOC chimes and probably the album's best melody. Fantastic.

Iceland's finest (that's **Sigur Ros** as we still haven't forgiven Björk for cancelling an appearance at a festival we attended last year) have just put their latest record *Kveikur* up to stream, though print deadlines have meant we haven't been able to live with it for long enough. Now writing and recording as a trio following the departure of long-standing member Kjartan Sveinsson, the band

appear to have made a conscious effort to focus on stirring melody, bringing the instrumentation back into the foreground. The likes of 'Brennisteinn' and 'Kveikur' provide a welcome, brooding edge that was lacking amidst the fragile ambience of previous record *Valtari*, but only time will tell how *Kveikur* sits in their back catalogue.

Field of Reeds by London-based **These New Puritans** is a quite remarkable release that will undoubtedly place Jack Barnett and co. amongst the most ambitious UK bands. Predecessor *Hidden* was a compelling mesh of huge Japanese drums and pastoral woodwind. *FOR* drops the propulsive percussion for the most part. Instead, the focus is on a deeply English sense of isolation, ambience and three largely instrumental suites that explore themes of nature and change. This is a seriously dense record, but one that will surely reward repeat listens: time to get exploring.

We've found a new soundtrack for the summer to rival the new Kurt Vile release. *Bend Beyond* by **Woods** is the seventh album by the band – and is a sparkling collection of twelve pop songs that amble by in the blink of an eye. Each song could be a single – it's one of those albums, much like the early Shins records (and indeed, singer Jeremy Earl's voice bears more than a passing resemblance to James Mercer), that you could imagine blaring out of a beach hut as much as an inner city café. 'Impossible Sky' reminds us of early 2000s Oxford indie/rock/popsters Goldrush, 'Find Them Empty' adds a dash of psychedelia, and the title track has a case of the mid-70s Neil Youngs. The best thing is though, that they've got another six albums of material to explore. Daunting, but exciting.

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Upstairs ft. Adian Coker

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Sat 14th Sept • £8.50 adv

7pm - 10pm • Rescheduled show - original tickets valid

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Tues 24th Sept **SOLD OUT**

The 1975

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+ Fearless Vampire Killers
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Fri 27th Sept • £8 adv

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Fat Freddy's Drop

Fri 4th Oct • £6 adv

Evarose

Sat 6th Oct • £7 adv

Zico Chain

Mon 7th Oct • £15 adv

The Quireboys + Bonafide

Weds 9th Oct • £8 adv

6.30pm

Nina Nesbitt

Thurs 10th Oct • £13.50 adv

Kids In Glass Houses

+ Propellers

Sat 12th Oct • £10 adv

UK Foo Fighters

(The No.1 Foo Fighters Tribute)

Sun 13th Oct • £7 adv

Nadine Shah

Fri 18th Oct • £18 adv

6.30pm

From The Jam

'All Mod Cons' 35th Anniversary Tour

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6.30pm

Guns2Roses & Metallica Reloaded

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Multi venue festival

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The Cat Empire

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Blue

Sun 27th Oct • £16.50 adv

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6pm

Wretch 32

Fri 1st Nov • £9 adv

The Family Rain

Fri 8th Nov • £11 adv

7pm - 10pm

The Doors Alive

Fri 15th Nov • £25 adv

6.30pm

Gary Numan

Sun 17th Nov • £14 adv

Gabrielle Aplin

Thurs 21st Nov • £20 adv

Turin Brakes

Sat 30th Nov • £15 adv

6pm

The Naked and Famous

Sun 1st Dec • £25 adv

Ocean Colour Scene

Marchin' Already Tour

Mon 2nd Dec • £22.50 adv

Black Star Riders

Thurs 5th Dec • £10 adv

Night Beds

Sat 7th Dec • £12 adv

Absolute Bowie

Weds 11th Dec • £17.50 adv

6.30pm

Airbourne

Thurs 12th Dec • £25 adv

The Darkness

Thurs 12th Dec • £18.50 adv

Adrian Edmondson & The Bad Shepherds

Fri 13th Dec • £28 adv

Happy Mondays

'Bummed' 25th Anniversary Tour

Fri 13th Dec • £12 adv

Electric Six



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