

Oxfordshire MusicScene

OMS

SUMMER
2017

FREE

ISSUE
31



DJ SHADOW

RETURN OF THE MASTER BEATS CRAFTSMAN

INSIDE: KRAFTWERK, SLOWDIVE, SAM LEE, BRICKWORK LIZARDS
FESTIVAL REVIEWS: SEAN PAUL, PETE TONG IBIZA CLASSICS,
RAG 'N' BONE MAN, THE MAGIC NUMBERS, DISCO SHED & MORE

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Reborn local heroes **Ride** are sounding in fine stage fettle judging by their appearance at the 6 Music Festival in Glasgow. The former Creation shoegaze trailblazers play the New Theatre, Oxford on July 10, having already appeared at Glastonbury, their first local show in many years. They have also announced a major UK tour. The eagerly awaited new album, the Erol Alkan produced *Weather Diaries* is just released. (See our album review in the Local Releases section). Tickets for New Theatre gig with Spectres supporting, can be bought from atgtickets.com

Riverside (29-30 July), the free, local, 2-day festival in Charlbury have just revealed the lineup for this year and it looks like a good 'un. Saturday has ex – Scholars Zurich, August List, Flights of Helios, Brightworks, Daisy and Self Help while Sunday sees Prohibition Smokers, Knights of Mentis, Black Hats, Water Pagent and Mighty Redox – just roll up and enjoy – visit riversidefestival.charlbury.com

Swiss Concrete's Russell Barker has enterprisingly compiled his formative Midlands gig memoirs in to a series of fanzines. **Lunchtime for the Wild Youth** is now on to issue 2 with memorabilia and stories of seeing bands like Stone Roses, Carter USM, The Primitives, Fatima Mansions and the Cure and plenty more way back when. His daughter's drawings of the bands and venues also feature. Proper DIY this. You can order it now from etsy.com/uk/shop/BarkerPress

Better stock up on the energy bars as 3 all – day events just popped up on the local gig calendar. First up is the tasty – looking **Yam Tam Tethera #1** at the local brewery tap room **Tap Social Movement** on Sunday August 13. Lineup details are sparse, with only **Self Help**, **Flatlands** and **Slate Hearts** announced so far but , worry not, there will be plenty more. And even better – it's free...

Cowley Road will be the main destination for state – of – the – art indie bands in September and October. Local promoters Divine Schism and Idiot King have teamed up for **If Not Now, When?** – an unmissable, 3 stage, one – dayer at East Oxford Community Centre and Fusion Arts on September 2. Already in the bag are Tigercats, Alpha Male Tea Party, shoegaze from Fever Dream alongside a host of local lights including Kid Kin, Kone and Be Good. Some £15 'early bird' tickets are available from WGT.

MUSIC NEWS

There's a history of multi – venue metro festivals in Cowley Road with Truck's OX4 and then Gathering setting the pace. Well now Future Perfect have taken up the baton with **Ritual Union** on Saturday October 21. Venues are the O2 Academy 1 and 2, The Library, The Bullingdon and Truck Store. The first stage of acts announced includes Peace, Toy, Pinkshinyultrablast, Flamingods, Low Island, Dead Pretties, Her's, August List and Candy Says with DJ sets from the Drowned in Sound team. Tickets are £25 in advance.

The Jericho Tavern in Walton Street have a new promoter to run their upstairs gigs. Heavy Pop are well – known in Reading having run the Are You Listening? festival there for 5 years. Already confirmed are an appearance from **Tom Williams** (formerly of The Boat) on September 16 and **Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band** on October 13 with Peerless Pirates and Other Dramas. Promoters and bands wishing to book shows should drop an email to info@heavypop.co.uk.



OMS is published 5 times a year, every May, July, September, November & February We are always on the lookout for people to contribute – mainly gig and music reviewers so get in touch at back2left@gmail.com, at the OMS Facebook page or on Twitter @omsmagazine Please send news and music links for review to above email address.

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NO WEAR AND TERR

D'nB night Terraforms celebrated 9 years of action recently. Joint head - chiefs, DJs Greencode and Bolo shared the club's all - time favourite tunes..

Calibre - Up in Smoke

Rolls with a nice crisp break and lovely trumpet sounds on the intro leading to a warm bass and filters.

Logistics - Cold Light of Day feat Sherry Davies

Love the vocals of Sherry Davies with a nice break and LFO bass.

Emalkay - The World feat Lena Cullen

(Teebee Rmx) Teebee kills it - from 2011 with his remix of dubstep don Emalkay's The World...never gets old.

Halogenix - Beyond the Boundaries

Unique drum pattern and delicate drum edits. Love the drop, just working perfectly with deep sub bass line and atmospheric pads.

Skeptical - Desire feat. Collette Warren

This rolls nice with Skeptical's trademark punchy crisp drums. Collette Warren's vocals and a driving bassline - quality tune.

D-Bridge feat CMX - Tesserae

This is such a beautiful piece of music. Half time, minimal style drums roll through it. Lush, hypnotic pads and processed vocals.

Break - Authentic

Released in 2006, 2 years before they headlined Terraforms opening night. Break is far from short of prestige releases. Well-deserved air time at our events over the years.

Vicious Circle & Nocturnal - Welcome to Shanktown

VIP Vicious Circle bring the meat-grinder as they return to this track with an unforgettable re-lick! A Terraforms fave.

Calibre - Deranged

Seminal time for the Soul:r label. Calibre's skills shining seamlessly, from funk to a drone - like bass which only Calibre could tune to such perfection!

Marcus Intalex - Temperance

Paying our respects to one of the most influential and talented artists in d'n'b. It's hard to pick a favourite. RIP Marcus Intalex.

Hear the 9th birthday live mix on Soundcloud. Klute guests at the club at the Cellar on July 14

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RETURN OF THE MASTER BEATS CRAFTSMAN DJ SHADOW

Josh Davis, better known by his uber - cool handle DJ Shadow is at it again. On to his fifth full studio album, **The Mountain Will Fall**, the wizard DJ/producer will touch down in Oxford for another live performance.

Whilst his early track In/Flux inspired one Mixmag scribe to coin the term 'trip hop', there has never just been one Shadow sound. His Endroducing... created entirely out of samples, from Metallica to jazz, led to a further branching out into hip hop and rockabilly (as on previous single Nobody Speak, the video including a hilarious punch up at the UN). Current single Systematic which features the multi - platinum - selling rapper Nas is burning up the airtime as we speak. In the middle of a giant, country - hopping world tour, he took some time out to speak to OMS.

How did the Nas collaboration Systematic come about?

Nas co-owns the record label I'm on (Mass Appeal Records), so from the time I signed with them I had secretly hoped to make a track together. I made a beat with him in mind, sent it over, and he agreed to lay down the verses. Then I built the track up around what he wrote.

How did you decide which artists to collaborate with for the new album (Nils Frahm, Run The Jewels and Matthew Halsall)?

I knew early on in the album-making process that I wanted to try to work with other instrumentalists, rather than a bunch of vocalists. I also didn't want them to come from the hip-hop

or electronic music realm. Nils and Matthew make great music in their own right, but it's very different to what I do, so I thought the collaboration process would produce interesting results. Run The Jewels, meanwhile was a similar situation to Nas in the sense that I made the beat and knew that I had to have them and no one else.

Why did you decide to move away from more sample - based songs?

It isn't so much a case that I wanted to do less work with samples, but rather that I wanted to do MORE in other areas of production. A lot of people know me as "the sample guy," and I've done extensive work in that area, but I never wanted to limit myself as a producer or

"A lot of people know me as "the sample guy," and I've done extensive work in that area, but I never wanted to limit myself as a producer or music-lover..."

music-lover, and there's so many other ways to be creative. For example, there's a horn section in Nobody Speak. In the old days, I would have searched and searched for a sample that fulfilled the sound I had in my head, occasionally settling for something close, but not quite right. This time, since I knew exactly what I wanted, I sat down and wrote the horn parts myself, and then recorded them and mixed them so that they sounded natural in the track. It was nice to prove to myself that I could create music in other ways; it's all a part of being multi-faceted in my profession.

Who wrote the lyrics for this album?

The rappers, with some direction from myself.

Do you have specific criteria when you are going to use samples in your work?

First and foremost, I sit down to listen to music for enjoyment and discovery. If, during that process, I hear something interesting or evocative or unusual that I might want to use, I record that excerpt or moment and save it for later. Then, once I have thirty or forty such moments, I listen to them as a group and usually pluck the audio that speaks to me the strongest.

From there I try to decide the best path for that sample, which is entirely dependent on the context. Drums, melodies, solo instruments/sound effects, and voices all contribute different things to a composition, so every sample is tasked with fulfilling a specific ingredient to the sonic stew. Of course, it helps in my music making that I try to find unusual or unknown audio from which to borrow from...this is a key step in the process.

If I'm only listening to big names and classic albums everyone has heard, my samples wouldn't be all that interesting.

With easily accessible production software, do you think this devalues the craft?

No, because there's no algorithm for good taste. Anyone can be a DJ, anyone can play guitar... we all know that. What separates the few from the many is the ability to consistently provide unique ideas executed well. Technology is there to assist in this, but first the ideas have to be there.

How has the world tour been going?

I tend to play most often in France, England, USA, Canada, and Western Europe (Netherlands, Belgium, etc). But I have also toured in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and South America.

Apart from Oxford, which British city are you most looking forward to visit?

I've been coming to the UK for 24 years now, and I always like playing in Manchester. It's one of the best cities in the world in terms of audience enthusiasm and fan loyalty.

DJ Shadow speaking to
Stewart Garden and Leo
Bowder

**Catch him live at
O2 Academy Oxford,
Thursday September 28**



JONNY PAYNE'S CHEW CLUB MEETS AGS CONNOLLY

"the closest you can get to stompin' your boots near the Nashville City Limits whilst reminding yourself you can play a hand of Aunt Sally afterwards."



Why did you start to write songs?

When I was younger I wanted to be an actor but I don't think I was very good at that. All the songs I wrote between the ages of 12 and 25 were absolute garbage, but I remember when I was 12 I started to write and I thought 'that's what I wanna do. I'm going to be a songwriter'.

The authenticity in Ags' songwriting has drawn the attention of his favourite songwriters and those most influential to him, and has pulled them into his life as his artistic contemporaries under the alternative Country banner; Ameripolitan music

Your song *When Country Was Proud* was ranked in *Country Music People's* top 50 country songs of the last 30 years. That's quite an honour isn't it?

It is, yeah. Some of the people in that list are some of the biggest names in Country music. To be considered alongside them is an honour. Stuff like that makes me want to keep making good music and striving to carry on.

With this golden stamp of approval from the Americana community who hold the genre's beacon alight we should cherish the fact Ags is still based in Oxfordshire. Watching Ags is the closest you can

get to stompin' your boots near the Nashville City Limits whilst reminding yourself you can play a hand of Aunt Sally afterwards. Ags' modest demeanour and self-professed title as the lonesome songwriter keeps him at arm's length in the gig venue, but his lyrics pull you so close to his heart. With the stories he has to tell, you're left feeling like you're the temporary hombre sitting at a some dive bar on the highways of Texas swapping stories of over a can of PBR.

Do you think about everything you've done up to this point or are you always thinking about what's next?

I'm always thinking about the next song. You always hope you're going to keep writing better songs. It's a rewarding thing writing a song. Standing back and thinking; that's what I wanted to do.

Listen in to the full Ags interview and others on the Chew Club podcast series on iTunes or Soundcloud

Ags plays Fat Lils in Witney July 7
& Rose & Crown in Charlbury August 5
Check out agsconnolly.com



THE RIDDIM SECTION

Leo Bowder ROUNDS UP the local Reggae scene

The last two months have seen reggae well represented in the Oxford area. Local, undisputed heavyweights, **Zaia** have finally just released their debut album **Butterflies**. 9 tracks of reggae - based niceness (although they branch out into folk and jungle - usually not in the same song) it is the local release of the summer so far, Amy MacKown's vocals tying the dynamic dubwise sounds together beautifully. They played their launch at the Bully, with **Shumba Youth** (ex-local collective Positive Vibes), **Multifari** (a one man dub remix project) and the ferocious **Document One**, who helped produce their album. Earlier, Grammy award winners **Morgan Heritage** were in fine form at the O2; Peetah and Gramps 'Rockaz' Morgan and siblings keeping the vibes alive and the quality high with tracks from their new album **Avrakadabra** and some old classics.

In terms of what's on the horizon, the annual **Boomtown Festival** will touch down August 10 - 13 in Winchester (about an hour from Oxford). The reggae line up is spectacular, as usual, with **Ziggy**

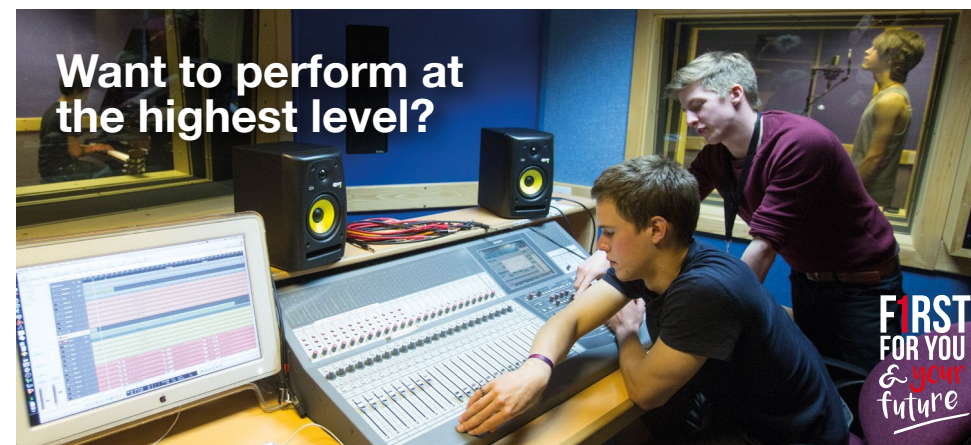


Photos by Leo Bowder
Top left: Shumba Youth; Top Right: Morgan Heritage

Marley, The Specials, U-Roy, Protoje, Toots and the Maytals, Big Youth, Dawn Penn, the Hempolicks and Channel One. Expect a mad, hectic, fun - filled time.

The O2 Academy on July 8 sees Natty Mark's **The Dub magazine** (well worth a look for local reggae related tings - issue 13 is out now) putting on club night **Dub for the Elders**, with local band **Jamatone**, **Multifari**, **Tom Dred** (ex-Dublins) and **Shumba Youth**, whilst on the 21st, same place, the sweetly - voiced lovers rock king **Freddie McGregor** visits, with locals **White Magic** and **Sir Sambo** supporting. Later at the Bullingdon we have hotly tipped ska-skankers **The Skints** on October 4 and a familiar name to these shores, **Gentleman's Dub Club** on the 24th. In the mean time, **Desta Nation**, **Sir Sambo**, **Ultra Culture**, **One Drop**, **Cornerstone** and our monthly **Riddim Show**, with me **Leo B**, can be heard on local radio station **Destiny 105.1FM** (check online for details).

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WHAT'S IN YOUR RECORD COLLECTION

With local band on the rise HAZE

"the moans of Mark E Smith over the dissonance of Hex Enduction Hour gets rid of any sense of positivity."

What was the last record you got excited about? Damn by Kendrick Lamar. We all loved To Pimp A Butterfly and whilst Damn moves away from the jazz - dominated instrumentation (done by another of our favorites Kamasi Washington), Damn is still lyrically and musically very interesting. You've got to give him credit for the unlikely collaboration with Bono...it sounds like a disaster at first but worked a treat..

Up in the morning – what's the first thing you listen to?

Probably something by The Fall; the moans of Mark E Smith over the dissonance of Hex Enduction Hour's music gets rid of any sense of positivity. On a more upbeat day anything off of Parquet Court' Light Up Gold, with it's iconic opener Master of my Craft, would be a go-to listen. If it's proper sunny it has to be some Mac Demarco...if we're feeling particularly high spirited.

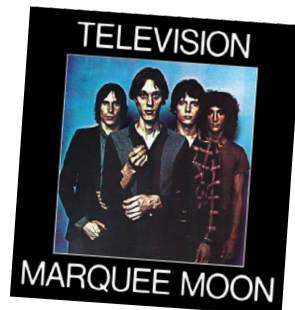
Record that made you want to form a band? Me and Dan (drummer) have been in a band since we were about ten, and were listening to albums like Green Day's Dookie, and probably Guns n Roses' Appetite for Destruction back then. The main inspiration to form a band was the legendary film School of Rock. The record most inspirational to our music would likely be Television's Marquee Moon.

Record you wish you'd written? Country Teasers' The Empire Strikes Back; it's a perfect combination of disjointed guitars, lyrical originality, social commentary and stripped back production. It's a great record with a real relevance to our time.

Last gig you went to? Shame in Bristol; we supported them at The Cellar a few nights beforehand. As always, they were brilliant live, as were the supports Sorry and Lice. Lice are a really exciting new band; their music sounds like an odd mix of post-punk, doom rock and surf-inspired guitar lines.

How do you hear about new bands? We usually find our new favourite acts supporting other bands we like. There are so many fresh new bands emerging at the moment (particularly from the London and Bristol scene). Bands that come to mind include Shame, Lice, HMLTD, Hotel Lux...it's always great when we get to play alongside the bands we love.

Singer / guitarist Will Harrison interviewed by Stewart Garden Haze's ace, scratchy, post-punkin', funkin' debut EP Digital Fulfilment is out now. They headline the O2 Academy on August 19 with support from Birthday Card, Father Demo and Milk.



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COMMON PEOPLE SOUTH PARK, OXFORD

SATURDAY HIGHLIGHTS

The **Uncommon Stage** is our first stop in this, the second year of Common People, where we manage to drink in the folksy blues local 6-piece **Little Red**. Their innate ability to story-tell makes them a perfect choice for the family friendly side of the festival, a rousing, thumping Black Dog setting us up for the rest of the day. Seasoned campaigners **The Epstein** hit the same stage with their atmospheric sounds, providing a charming and humble set. With songs that encapsulate emotion and intensity, they manage to burn through the summer sun. Crowd favourite I Held You Once is as tumultuous as ever. A lull was cast with a collaborative set by **Jess Hall** and **Duotone**. Enthrallment was enabled through Hall's virtuous, reflective vocals and Duotone's tender and tranquil stage presence, tied together snugly by their communal coyness. Alt-pop wonders **Saint Etienne** effortlessly grace the main arena with movie-like wonder. Singer Sarah Cracknell seductively whispers through opulent songs that eulogise British routine. Selections from new album Home Counties' sit comfortably alongside previous hits, like their Balearic pop re-imagining of Neil Young's Only Love... a reminder that they can still give modern pop a dose of necessary kick - arse.

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Pioneering indie quartet **Wild Beasts'**

ambition is noticeable both in the way they project themselves and their keenness on exploring new and bold territory. Sensual melodies and sinewy grooves throb throughout, Alpha Female hitting the sweet spot. We do however get the feeling that the intricacies are lost a bit in this arena which is more used to household hits. Pop-noir duo **Vienna Ditto** fizz through a set that oozes quality via the misty tones of Hatty Taylor and Nigel Firth's constant, edgy, thrilling, sci-fi - infused goodness. They party in the pandemonium allowing ringmaster Firth and lioness Taylor to balance on their circus tightrope of carnage and genius. Lookers in are left in no doubt that this band is something special.

Common People really pulled it out of the party bag this year by booking international sensation **Sean Paul** who fired up what was already a breath-taking day. Hits such as Rockabye, No Lie and Baby Boy get the Commoners roaring. (AD)

SUNDAY HIGHLIGHTS

While the programme on the main stage can be a little on the safe side for example **Amy MacDonald**, **Becky Hill** and **Cuban Brothers**, there's much edgy entertainment to be found elsewhere and that's probably the heart of this festival.

The **Big Pig Record Club** tent has a whole weekend of swingin' 78rpm - founded japes that keeps the party - goes jiving non - stop. Round the corner, the garden shed you'll never find in Homebase, the Skylarkin' - curated **Disco Shed**, that is, complete with disco lighting, smoke machine and inside, some of the best turntable craftsmen on the site. Hats off to **Skylarkin'** and **Wrongtom's** roots - rockin' while local spinner Patrick Bickerton aka **Peepshow Paddy** expertly housed it up, eliciting much shape - throwing.

The **Uncontained Stage** is also a heaving throng and we find **Goldie** himself here - he gained fame as a drum and bass producer (with his immortal 90s classic Timeless and key track Inner City Life), his set today was pure reggae - every track a banger. Elsewhere, back in the enormo - arena, you need a big presence to fill it, and **Rory Rag 'N' Bone Man** Graham is just that, skillfully holding the crowd in the palm of his hand, leading a full - crowd singalong and reminding us that we're Human after all.

The **Uncommon Stage** which has seen an amazing assortment of local vibes all weekend, **Rhymeskeemz** shake the tent off its poles, whipping the crowd up with their grime, hip - hop and old skool turntablism creations. Just when



Above: Flats & Sharps
Right: The Magic Numbers
Wood ©Jason Watanabe



you think the dancefloor throng can't go any harder, by the end, they're doing just that. Abingdon's **Kanadia** have been steadily earning a reputation in the area, their epic, white noise melts the evening air. Guitars squall joyfully in Meet the End, while the new single, the thunderous Ocean Blue with its Foals -like twinkling also gets the people a - whooping.

We were a little skeptical. A fifty-piece orchestra playing Ibiza '90s classics as headliner? Really? But from the moment the swirling intro to Fatboy Slim's Right Here, Right Now dropped, to the final, saccharine rush of You Got the Love, **Mr. Tong** had us. A highlight, amongst many, was Faithless's Insomnia, partly because of the sound. There was something 3 dimensional about an entire orchestra playing; it hits you from the middle, not just from the speakers.

A different kind of intensity was being displayed by **Mr. Shadown**. He'd orchestrated a full-on moshpit- with sheer musical aggression and (imaginary) swordplay during Katana Flow and a nunchucks flourish in Get Stronger. Though quiet of late locally - Shadown ain't going anywhere... and neither is Common People if the crowds rolling in are anything to go by. Bring on year 3. (SG / LB)



WOOD BRAZIER PARK, WALLINGFORD

The ultra-green, small and friendly weekend that heralds the start of festival season in Oxfordshire. Green Party flags, solar - powered stages, compostable bogs and a lack of any commercial advertising sets the scene, but the village fete atmosphere can turn slightly psychedelic as you book in for the likes of a shamanic journeying followed by a session in the community love blanket. No, it's not your average festival.

The music - as it is a music festival - is a rootsy blend of artists from all points of the globe. The mandatory stipulation is that every third band must feature a member of the Bennett family, who run this show, in some form (rumour is that Joe actually appeared with 74 different acts this weekend). Numerous acts could be cited for amazing, relaxed and joyful performances despite torrential downpours on Friday evening and Saturday afternoon.

High points include **Jody Stephens** (founder member of legendary band Big Star) harmonising with collaborator **Luther Russell** in the Treebador tent. Cornwall's **Flats and Sharps** close the Friday night with a rabble - rousing, foot stomping, bluegrass masterclass. Stalwart of Wood, **Danny (and the Champs) Wilson** gathered an ensemble of mates to the stage for good time singalongs, soulful ballads and a beautiful duet with his teenage daughter.

Top billing for the festival was questioned by some, as **The Magic Numbers** have been quiet whilst pursuing solo careers and side projects, but time has only made them stronger. The Saturday night closing set was a joyful mix of old hits, up tempo new songs and hand clapping anthems to

get the whole crowd singing as one. Romeo Stoddart's effortless cool in singing Curtis Mayfield's People Get Ready over the serene harmonies of Michelle and Angela, and the entire audience, would have been a suitable high point, but the final encore of Neil Young's Harvest Moon brought members of most of the other bands on stage to take the winning biscuit.

Cementing their reputation as the nice guys of rock n roll, the Numbers gave the lead vocal to **Ben Ottewell** (formerly of Gomez), who had played before them, in the epic finale.

As the last feral child leaves, streaked with facepaint and sheep's milk ice cream, the sound of organic carrot flutes mingles with the last drum workshop and calm returns to Braziers Park. It may not have the West End glamour and Michelin - starred food of Wilderness - neither does it have the pop-tastical star line up and town centre convenience of Common People but no one can deny the convenient truth of it - as the t-shirt says-Wood is good. (JS)



CC Smugglers
©Jason Watanabe

LIVE

OMS31

SLOWDIVE

o2 Academy Oxford

Photo by Marc West

Slowdive must be pinching themselves. Going from being labelled 'worse than Hitler' by the Manic Street Preachers, and a final show at a half-full London Garage in the mid-90s, to sold out UK shows, numerous marquee festival slots and a unanimously rapturously received new record twenty years later... Too often, when bands return, their new material can feel like a slog when placed within a set of old favourites, but with Slowdive the likes of Star Roving and No Longer Making Time sound like they've been in deep-freeze since 1995. It all fits perfectly next to the likes of Alison, Catch the Breeze and set highlight Machine Gun. Indeed, the new material is a hypnotic mix of the swirling majesty that permeated Souvlaki and the minimal restraint that made up Pygmalion.

It almost feels like a greatest hits set, even with the new material - and the fact that they're in the sometimes suffocating downstairs room of the Academy never threatens to dampen the enthusiasm of the crowd. Maybe it's the kind of music - it reaches deep into the far corners of the venue and the reception from the crowd is appropriately reverent. Slowdive are often negatively compared to My Bloody Valentine, and whilst there are similarities, it's obvious to me that no-one before or since has operated on a similar level - their music retains a positive, hopeful side, alongside the usual shoegaze melancholy, which sets them apart from other bands attempting a similar style.

Tonight, it's the expansive numbers that really hit home - a resonant, pulsing rendition of Avalyn, a frantic, stratospheric Souvlaki Space Station and to finish the main set, their brilliant, emotive version of Syd Barrett's Golden Hair. Slowdive are majestic, welcoming and life affirming, and it is utterly refreshing to see a band at the peak of their powers really enjoying what they are doing. Tonight that band is Slowdive. (JC)

THE PAINS OF BEING PURE AT HEART

THE CELLAR

To help suppress those shoegaze blues after the magnificent Slowdive gig earlier in the week, many could be found here for the Pains... who give us highlights of their upcoming album, along with favourites from their career. Bursting into the playful Until the Sun Explodes the stage erupts with a vitality that is a demonstration of the clever indie pop that the band are best known for. Tracks from the upcoming album are in perfect contradiction with their previous material. The Garrett sounds wise and mature - it's almost psychedelic, like stepping inside a kaleidoscope, with guitars soaring like a hawk, a far cry from the New York from which the band originate. Meanwhile, on Anymore, guitars wail alongside the lyrics, invoking shades of The Smiths. Treasured tunes such as Heart in Your Heartbreak, Come Saturday and Eurydice are portrayed through buttery, breezy vocals, lifting choruses into anthemic life. Singer Kip Berman lets everyone know that tonight is the last night of the tour, claiming playing Oxford to be 'the cherry on top of the iciest bun', and in some ways, it really shows in their performance. Ending the show with glittering guitar eruptions via Belong, Pains... are truly loved. There is no stopping yourself from being drawn in by their charm as they thrive in the snug setting. Tonight has seen moments that shimmer and twinkle like the disco ball hanging overhead. Let's hope it's not another 8 years before we see these gems again. (AD)

LIVE

Brickwork Lizards
©Geoff Hayward

BRICKWORK LIZARDS

THE CELLAR

The Brickwork Lizards have long been one of Oxford's most eclectic acts and the eleven - strong collective are in fine form at The Cellar. Malachy O'Neill's bass fiddle thumps away solidly and Spencer Williams' trumpet shines out from the back of the stage with molecular clarity. In many ways the band are a vehicle for Tarik Beshir's masterful fretwork on the oud, an instrument many lesser musicians couldn't even spell. The star of the show tonight however, is MC Tom O'Hawk who bobs and weaves across the stage, pint in hand, as though locked in a sparring match with his own record collection. There are few performers who can simultaneously evoke the spirits of Biggie Smalls and Al Jolson. The band's original songs, such as Blame It on Me and Wonderous Nights have mellowed with age. (JB)

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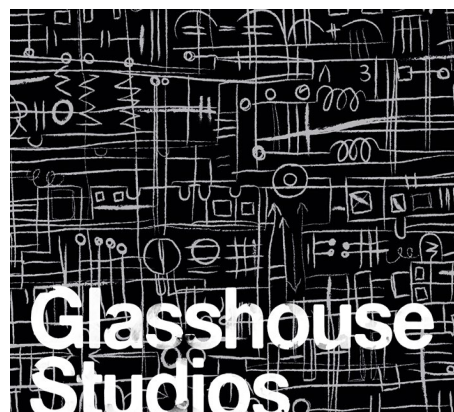
OMS31

LIVE

SAM LEE WESLEY MEMORIAL CHURCH, OXFORD

Haunting is an overused word, but it certainly applies to Duotone, starting off this evening as they do with seemingly infinite variations on a hush (some of them surprisingly loud). Few people alive can use a loop pedal like Barney Morse Brown, and if you were to look away at times you might think that the Divine Comedy or the Beach Boys were on stage.

Duotone's loops and textures provide a fitting opening to Sam Lee & Friends, who launch into soundscape after soundscape, with the traditional songs Sam has collected, sung over shruti, dulcimer, fiddle, ukulele, piano and percussion. And then they throw a dark and funky rendition of Bonny Bunch of Roses into the mix that almost sounds like something from a spaghetti western. Sam, an amiable host, almost to the point of cuddly, sings in bare feet like Sandy Shaw. The audience seems unable to resist his requests, at first to sing along with the chorus of Phoenix Island, and then, rather surprisingly, to storm Parliament on June 8 (It worked! – Ed). Doubtless he can expect some avid listeners at GCHQ. Both his words and music seem to be about not so much stories as journeys. Which perhaps makes sense, as according to Mr Lee, most of them seem to come from along the A40 (his words not mine). Highlight: the finale, a mournful The Fade In Time. (James Bell)

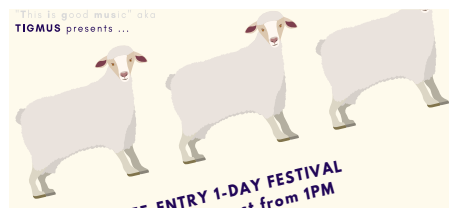


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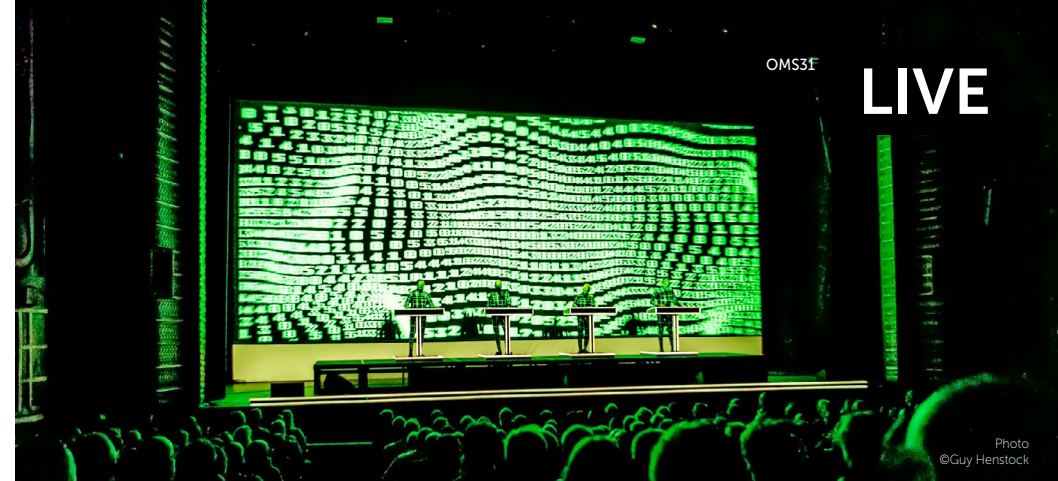
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OMS31

LIVE

KRAFTWERK 3D THE NEW THEATRE

Legend has it that Kraftwerk's studio Kling Klang is so secret that even Michael Jackson wasn't allowed in. Fortunately, we're allowed a glimpse at their products now and again, though these are the first shows since the Tate Modern in 2013. With no new music since the Tour de France soundtracks in the mid – 80s, their R&D department has clearly been moving in to the visuals for these 3D shows – tickets for which sold out faster than you can say 'we are the robots' and put on your 3D glasses for the show. There's little showmanship – the band, all dressed in 6 Million Dollar Man – style suits, look like they could be doing a crossword – the only nod to the locality is during Spacelab when the old – timey looking UFO which has been virtually exploring the auditorium lands outside the New Theatre. The set comprises a selection from throughout their super – illustrious career, 5th member Emil Schult's art given a new lease of life on the 3D screen. The angular, geometric shapes and stark red and black of the Man Machine – era work particularly well, also the fascinating train journey in mono for Trans Europe Express and the car journey for a sublime Autobahn – Kraftwerk love travel. The band's imagery gives nods back to quainter eras but looks forward too hence the old style desktop used in Home Computer, the kitschy neon signs that accompany Neon Lights and the historic Tour de France footage. One of the highlights, but there are many, of a game – changing show is near the end when the curtain raises to reveal the 4 iconic robots, still with those flashing, disco ties, for a barnstorming The Robots, the later version from the Mix album. The band leave the stage, accepting the rapture individually along with a little solo piece, perhaps to show that they are actually playing, a human touch given the lack of interaction throughout. An incredible spectacle that shows that Kraftwerk aren't quite ready to become a museum artifact just yet. (SG)

OCTOBER DRIFT MODERN ART OXFORD

The very fact that October Drift haven't, as of yet, had the national acclaim they truly deserve is as baffling as any abnormality in modern music. Their punchy choruses, post punk – inflected ethos and sheer exuberance surely too bold and charismatic to ignore for much longer. A band who wear their heart, soul and spleen on their sleeves as regards live performance, October Drift create energy and enthrallment from the get-go and the momentum doesn't deplete throughout their engaging and enticing performance. There are big choruses a-plenty, not to mention snarling vocals and a penchant for huge, ethereal breakdowns in a set which would keep the most disgruntled and fickle music fan enthralled for the entirety. The audience, unable to hold back their appreciation, become a tangible part of the show, sweating and shouting in a venue usually reserved for quiet, meditative reflection. Cathartically mellowed, every audience member leaves with glowing faces and settled souls. (RB)



BBC INTRODUCING, OXFORD WITH SHOW PRODUCER LIZ GREEN

LIZ TURNS THE SPOTLIGHT ON THREE FUTURE FAVOURITE LOCAL BANDS

I love so many things about producing the show each week, but the feeling of discovering and playing amazing new local acts for the very first time is one of the best things. It's such a privilege to have bands upload new music to us, and when we ask them to come on and introduce their track, their excitement and surprise is pure magic! The standard of music we're sent via the uploader each week is incredible, and over the last few months it has been a treasure trove – here's just a few that caught my ear recently:

In January we spoke to John Young from five-piece jazz-electro band Wandering Wires. The band formed while studying in Oxford and combine electronics and synthesizers with acoustic drums, trumpet, flugelhorn, double bass, saxophone, violin, and bass clarinet.... resulting in something very special. Their self-released album Departures reflects both their classical training and some of their listening habits - with obvious nods to the likes of Boards of Canada and Bonobo. You may have already seen them supporting The Comet is Coming at the Academy in June. Find out more about them here: wanderingwires.bandcamp.com

We featured pop punk band Better Than Never back in March - with huge guitar hooks and catchy vocals, they're definitely worth watching out for. The band have an extensive UK tour this summer with dates in Nottingham, Birmingham and London and many more in between. Check out their new EP Head Under Water here: betterthannever.bandcamp.com

Oxford based band Tarpit are an excellent new find. We played their first ever track Bystander on the show in June. They describe themselves as 'a not-indie band', and citing influences like My Bloody Valentine, The Jesus and Mary Chain and Dinosaur Jr, this young band bring amazing new energy to a classic alt-rock sound. Hear their sounds here: facebook.com/TarpitMusic or just go see them live at The Cellar on August 26 when they support Easter Island Statues.

BBC Introducing in Oxford is live on 95.2FM, Digital, Online and Freeview channel 722 every Saturday night from 8, with Oxfordshire's latest new music (plus each show is podcasted too!). If you're making music in Oxfordshire – make sure you upload it to us! bbc.co.uk/introducing



Photo: Better Than Never

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NATIONAL RELEASES

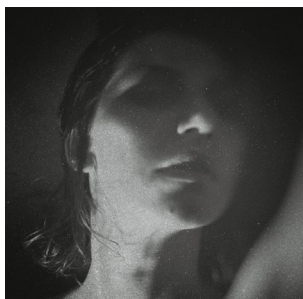


GIRLPOOL – POWERPLANT ★★★★

The musical equivalent of being invited in for a lovely cup of tea by a close friend, Girlpool's beautiful new album is a tender and intimate indie treasure. Combining the wonky pop melodicism of Pavement with the woozily enveloping distortion of My Bloody Valentine, and the sweet harmonies of the Breeders, Harmony Tividad and Cleo Tucker write seemingly simple songs about seemingly mundane things. However, repeated listens reveal layers of meaning and new points of interest: the heavenly vocal harmonies; lyrical imagery that lodges in the brain; unusual arrangements; chord progressions that subvert expectations without sounding contrived. Full of their native Californian sunshine, but not without a dark side, this is an album to take to heart. (4/5) [TM]

ALDOUS HARDING – PARTY

Like Harding's homeland of New Zealand, Party is sparse and mystical, and feels both calm and unsettled, a juxtaposition Harding weaves throughout a turbulent but altogether wholesome album of songs which strip away any delusion of happy-ever-afters. The serenity of tracks like Imagining My Man are mirrored by the haunting, pathos-ridden Party and Horizon, evoking Antony Hegarty. Indeed it's almost impossible to listen to this and not be drawn back to I am a Bird Now. Harding has an ability to write strong and succinct melancholia which need little or no studio production to make them compelling. However, the album does reach diminishing returns – the more idiosyncratic compositions all used up in a first few songs, and the drama is sometimes not recognised by more thorough production values; occasionally the album screams out for a rumble of timpani or crowing brass arrangements, anything to soak into the raw, naked flesh of Harding's work. However, there is easily enough in this beautiful offering to please. (RB) (3.5/5)



SLOWDIVE – S/T

With the natural scepticism of any iconic band reforming and re-imagining, there was certainly a wince at the news of Slowdive, a band who shimmered and stumbled their way through the nineties, returning for another bite at their ethereal apple.

Come on, how often do these reunion things really work? The answer is... rarely. And it takes the work of unfathomably consummate songwriters and performers to continue the stream of consciousness after twenty years in the wilderness. Slowdive are, thankfully, one of these musical anomalies, and this is as good as anything the band have ever released to date.

With their attitude never wavering and the non-confrontational intensity as piercing as ever, Slowdive take us to new, uncharted beginnings with a seemingly endless supply of epic soundscapes and dreamlike fantasies.

The wall of noise, credited to bands of their original era, is a supple and contextualised creation, never finite or intrusive, and rather playfully tugs and pulls at the sleeve of the listener, inviting them to join an adventure in a strange and alluring land. (RB) (4/5)



THE AMAZONS – S/T

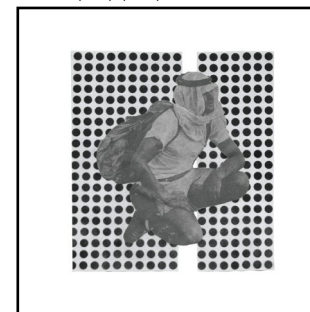
A lot like the rainforest, The Amazons are a band that appear so pragmatically purged by modern consumerism that all that is left is totemic tree stumps and nondescript beige pulp. If there was a level of originality or distinction, all is now lost in clichéd choruses and unimaginative ideology. Their debut album fits a profitable demographic, serving up the 14 to 18 year olds something to wince about when they reach maturity. It bounces along with all the enthusiasm of a fluffy puppy, tail wagging and tongue lolling but totally unaware of its own existence and lacking any coherent consciousness. There are, at times, chinks of a band that are perhaps still just a little inexperienced and not ready to take the risks necessary to be an act of any merit, but these are few and far apart in an album which has a distinctly mechanically reclaimed feel to it. There just isn't a soul to The Amazons work to date, it knows nothing of subtlety or nuance, tells us nothing about how the Amazons feel, what they believe or where they are going.

With youth on their side, we can only hope they learn from their naivety and move on from such an overplayed and overused viewpoint. (RB) (2/5)

NATIONAL RELEASES

ULRIKA SPACEK – MODERN ENGLISH DECORATION

In the current reawakening of psychedelia, Ulrika Spacek are climbing their way to the top of this unconventional pole like a swarm of dystopian robots invading a governmental intelligence headquarters. Their propensity for hypnotic, droning compositions, beginning with simplistic concepts and bending to the point of fragmentation, has made them an awe-inspiring live act. It is another brave and confrontational album, the band refusing to conform as regards song structure or narrative, and for that alone, it is to be admired. There is certainly a Spacek sound and it's captivating enough to last for an album or two, the band surviving bountifully on the strange paradox of having constant repetition but no hooks. Anyone looking for progression may be somewhat disappointed, Spacek at present, still sticking unashamedly to a style and ethos which has got them this far and as the album progresses it does begin to plod, the uniformed tempos becoming a little like stirring a bucket of firming concrete. Fans of Ulrika Spacek are sure to adore it but this will do little to bring new faces. (RB) (3/5)



CHASTITY BELT – I USED TO SPEND SO MUCH TIME ALONE

Soft and subtle, warm and whimsical, Chastity Belt are a plucky little 3-piece that evoke the nostalgic summer days of Real Estate with the uncomplicated artiness of Yo La Tengo. Their third studio album, this is no different to their previous offerings and encapsulates their dream pop mantra if not necessarily raising any eyebrows.

Tracks such as Caught in a Lie have such a sumptuous tone and delicate technique that the simplicity is quite delightful and sits perfectly with reverberated and delay-soaked lyrics. There probably isn't enough variance to hold the attention for too long a period of time, indeed there is a formulaic and at times tired structure to all their work, but in terms of mists of mellow fruitfulness, it certainly contains a poignancy which refuses to dissipate throughout. This is certainly an album worth dipping tired toes into after a long day scurrying through our post-modern existence. (RB) (3.5/5)



RIDE - WEATHER DIARIES

Ride's first since 1996's polarizing (read: loathed) *Tarantula* with expectations set to 'ridiculously high'. By those criteria this faces an almost insurmountable task, not least because of the influence the band has had on the musical landscape since they left us. Thankfully, it's more *Going Blank Again* than *Carnival of Light*, and there's a sense of urgency that propels this, even against a tide of lyrical clangers and a distinct lack of choruses. Lannoy Point lays the foundation with its driving rhythm, atmospheric electronic textures and chiming guitars. Likewise, standout track *Cali* combines a simple, cyclical chord progression and sweet, nostalgic melodies to lovely effect. However, too much falls into a comfortable, mid-tempo groove, with pleasant but unremarkable tunes, veering dangerously close to *Snow Patrol* and *Feeder* territory at times. A strong album by anyone else's standards but not quite up to their own. (TM)

THE GREAT WESTERN TEARS - TALES FROM TALLOW

Playing with restraint can be the hardest trick to pull off musically, and GWT deserve massive respect for doing it so well. This album exudes the sort of effortless grace that takes an awful lot of hard work to achieve. Songwriters Dava Waterhouse and Garry Richardson have come up with an LP that combines stark and haunting lyrical imagery with understated and quite beautifully realised music.

Favourites are *Hang My Hat* and *Blue Checks*, *White Cotton* but there's really not a dud here. The whole band excel; Kurt Hamilton's pedal steel and Fern Thornton's backing vocals rating particular mention. *Cherish The Great Western Tears* and be very glad to have them around. (HG)

SALVATION BILL - FATE'S FORMAL HANDSHAKE

Silver tongued local songsmith Oli Thomas aka *Salvation Bill*'s first full-length album, and it collects tracks which have been peppered throughout live sets as far back as his time with *Ute* (*Sad Psalm*) and *The Grinding Young* (*Blackwood*). Both of these songs sit firmly in the mournful, reflective side of Thomas' canon - but another of his strengths has always been in wry, tongue-in-cheek, sideways glances at a menagerie of local characters. Indeed, the subjects of *Monster*, *Captain Flash & Bitch Cassidy* and *The Grim Reaper* could be used to fill out the cast of an Oxfordshire remake of *The League of Gentlemen*. It's a fully absorbing listen, and one that has been worth the wait. Thomas' gift for seeing worth in the mundanity of life makes his subjects infinitely more empathetic to the listener - and the album serves as a testament to this talent. (UL)

MOOGIEMAN - GIRLS AND FILM

Moogieman records drums in his private bath tub. He obsesses over analogue photography and has made an album to celebrate this wonderful fact. For about five years he has delivered material which would slash the wrists of lesser artists. I humbly confess my love for songs on this *Bandcamp* release such as *Pinhole* and *Diana*. The entire 19th century should weep at his heels. Instagram should salute every way in which he is digitally crap. But these are songs that can burst your heart into a thousand sentimental pieces with none of the lacklustre lyrics this phrase might suggest. (JB)



SELF HELP - ALWAYS TRASHY IN FILLYDELPHIA

Is mid-2000s indie trendy with the kids again? From the first track on *Self Help*'s new EP, it seems so. *Gemma* is a solid track but to these tired ears it sounds like an Arctic Monkeys B-side from 2006. Thankfully the EP really picks up from there - *Goopy* and *Fall Under the Table With Me* sit far better with the *Modern Lovers* comparisons I'd seen elsewhere - frontman Danny Jeffries has a way with words that recalls the sarcastic observations of modern life by a *Leisure* - era Damon Albarn. This band works best when they pick up the pace, and *Won't You* is a case in point - it's a refreshingly simple romp through young love with a chorus you'll catch like a cold. (UL)

DEADBEAT APOSTLES EP TWO

If the *Deadbeat Apostles* take their visual cues from Jose Guadalupe Pasada then their musical nonce might come from *The Cramps* or *Carl Perkins*. In fact they could have taken their cues from any group who wield retro guitars, on any stage, anywhere west of NYC where you'd struggle to fit a matchbox, or your 1950s second hand clothes. They are the type of assembly who could make a bastard of an album. However, for now, Oxford must suffice with their new EP on which *Male Man* and *Barefoot* are the standout tracks. Their recent support slot with *The Long Insiders* split middle-aged eardrums. Tinnitus turned up to 11. (JB)

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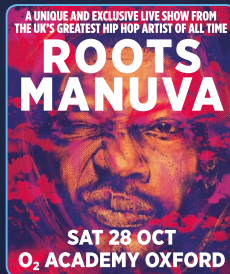
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Sat 25th Nov • £10 adv • 6.30pm
Saedly Dorus and the Hoolie Band

Thurs 30th Nov • £22.50 adv
Scouting For Girls

Fri 1st Dec • £14 adv • 6.30pm
Jagged Little Pill A tribute to Alanis Morissettes Classic Album

Sat 2nd Dec • £12.50 adv • 6.30pm
The Prince Experience

Fri 8th Dec • £15 adv • 6.30pm
Absolute Bowie

Fri 8th Dec • £21.25 adv
The Twang



Thurs 21st Dec • £23 adv
Slade

Fri 22nd Dec • £17.50 adv • 6pm
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