

ISSUE
69

MAZAWATTEE

OXFORD'S PRIME INDIE FOLKERS BREW UP FINE DEBUT
'ENGLISH MEAN TIME'.

INSIDE: JULIA-SOPHIE, YAANG, DOUBLE YELLOW LINES,
RIVERMAN RECORDS PICKS, LIVE REVIEWS, FESTIVAL REVIEWS
& LOCAL RELEASES

THE BULLINGDON

OCTOBER 2026

GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Thursday 1st October Karaoke Free Entry: 9pm-Midnight Doors: 9PM Thursday 1st October Li Jin Hao: <i>Falling From a Moon</i> Doors: 7PM Friday 2nd October Jacob Hawley: <i>Fighting Age Man</i> Doors: 7PM Friday 2nd October Red Light District Doors: 11PM Saturday 3rd October Student of the Year Bollywood Edition Doors: 11PM Sunday 4th October Sandro Ford: <i>Lager Than Life</i> Doors: 7PM Sunday 4th October Definitely Not Nirvana Doors: 7PM Monday 5th October Lime Garden Doors: 7PM Monday 5th October Yummy Fur Doors: 7PM Tuesday 6th October Caitlin Cook: The Hero <i>We (Sort of) Need</i> Doors: 7PM Wednesday 7th October Brothers in Band <i>Dire Straits Tribute Show</i> Doors: 7PM Thursday 8th October Karaoke Free Entry: 9pm-Midnight Doors: 9PM Friday 9th October Night-ish Doors: 7PM Friday 9th October Nightmarket Special (Movin N Groovin) Doors: 11PM Saturday 10th October Simple Lou Nour Doors: 11PM	Sunday 11th October Madra Salach Doors: 7PM Tuesday 13th October Girl Group Doors: 7PM Tuesday 13th October Bhvcklisted Doors: 11PM Wednesday 14th October Erja Lyytinen Doors: 7PM Wednesday 14th October Boogaloo Doors: 11PM Thursday 15th October Karaoke Free Entry: 9pm-Midnight Doors: 9PM Thursday 15th October Off Campus <i>vs Heated Rivalry</i> Doors: 11PM Friday 16th October MC Devo Doors: 7PM Friday 16th October Right Groove Doors: 11PM Sunday 18th October Simple in the Jungle General Levy Doors: 11PM Sunday 18th October Celya AB: We Must Stop <i>Meeting Like This</i> Doors: 7PM Monday 19th October Adult DVD Lil Mort Doors: 7PM Monday 19th October Matthew C. Whitaker (Henge) Doors: 7PM Tuesday 20th October Tom McRae Doors: 7PM Wednesday 21st October Morgan Rees: <i>What a Bummer</i> Doors: 7PM Wednesday 21st October Welly Doors: 7PM	Wednesday 21st October DINE Records Presents Cam Smith Doors: 11PM Thursday 22nd October Karaoke Free Entry: 9pm-Midnight Doors: 7PM Thursday 22nd October Besnard Lakes Doors: 7PM Thursday 22nd October Boogaloo Doors: 11PM Friday 23rd October One Night in Nashville Doors: 7PM Friday 23rd October Bully Boiler Doors: 11PM Saturday 24th October Reggaton Party Doors: 11PM Sunday 25th October Odetta <i>Agatha Posy-Rose</i> <i>Lina Roze</i> <i>Hollie Stringer</i> Doors: 7PM Monday 26th October Formal Speedwear Doors: 7PM Monday 26th October The Breakup Monologues: <i>Artificial Intimacy?</i> <i>Weapons of Mass Persuasion</i> <i>Propaganda During War and Peace?</i> Doors: 7PM Tuesday 27th October Radiohead Tribute By Paranohead Doors: 7PM Wednesday 28th October Yaang Doors: 7PM Thursday 29th October Karaoke Free Entry: 9pm-Midnight Doors: 9PM Thursday 29th October Love Music Hate Racism Electronic Against Hate <i>Julia-Sophie</i> <i>Maria Uzor</i> <i>Octavia Freud</i> <i>DJ Simplex</i> Doors: 7PM	Thursday 29th October So Fetch Halloween Party Doors: 11PM Friday 30th October Noasis <i>'The Definitive Oasis Tribute Band'</i> Doors: 7PM Saturday 31st October Soul Sista Halloween 2026 Doors: 11PM Saturday 31st October Robidfest 2026 Hacktivist <i>Bidsurg, The Dead XIII, Black Candy</i> <i>Novacrow, Vampyra, Rattlesnakes</i> <i>Devilhusk, Necronomicon</i> <i>Twin Skeletons</i> Doors: 12:15PM Sunday 1st November Robidfest 2026 NOtrixx <i>Lesbian Bed Death, The Crawling</i> <i>Maatkaare, SwamóIX, Dacara</i> <i>Spared an Endless Orbit</i> <i>Omegathrone, The Blade Itself</i> <i>Sabretooth</i> Doors: 12:15PM Tuesday 3rd November Hang Massive Doors: 7PM Wednesday 4th November Ben Poole Doors: 7PM Wednesday 4th November Industry X Phaser <i>X The Isis X Country Living</i> <i>Extrat Extra! Read All About It</i> Doors: 11PM Thursday 5th November Karaoke Free Entry: 9pm-Midnight Doors: 9PM Friday 6th November The Men They Couldn't Hang Doors: 7PM Friday 6th November Soul Sista Doors: 11PM Saturday 7th November Simple Osmosis Jones Doors: 11PM Sunday 8th November Five Mile Radius <i>KT & Harrison</i> <i>Josh Cox</i> Doors: 6PM	Monday 9th November Dan Schreiber: <i>This Changes Everything</i> Doors: 7PM Wednesday 11th November Liz Lawrence Doors: 7PM Thursday 12th November Finlay Christie: <i>Champagne Casanova</i> Doors: 11PM Thursday 12th November Vigilantes Doors: 7PM Thursday 12th November Boogaloo Doors: 11PM Friday 13th November 80s Night Sledgehammer Tribute Band Doors: 7PM Friday 13th November Red Light District Doors: 11PM Saturday 14th November Emo Night Brooklyn Doors: 11PM Sunday 15th November Dermot Henry Doors: 7PM Tuesday 17th November The North Doors: 7PM Tuesday 17th November Sergi Polo <i>LIVE in English!</i> Doors: 7PM Wednesday 18th November Will Wilde Doors: 7PM Wednesday 18th November Tom Stadel: <i>Rules - 2026</i> Doors: 7PM Thursday 19th November Karaoke Free Entry: 9pm-Midnight Doors: 9PM Thursday 19th November The Samurai Seven Doors: 7PM Thursday 19th November Boogaloo Doors: 11PM
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OMS 69 EDITION THANKS

OMS MAGAZINE PRODUCTION CREDITS

We'd like to give a big hug and thanks to everyone who contributes to the OMS magazine!

Francis Bookwood, Charlie Burnham, Sam Coles, Gary Davidson, Hugh Garrety, Nathan Gothard, Steven Green, Simon Guillard at Aardvarky, Ian Hanham, Robbie McKinnon, Geno Naughton, Dave Roberts, Kevin Rodd, Aria Sky, Charlotte Stevens, Adam Thompson, Liam Walsh, Thom Wilson.

OMS Magazine

Email: back2left@gmail.com.

Back issues at: back2left.co.uk

Edited by Stewart Garden

Design & words by Autumn Neagle

Published by Back & to the Left

Publishing.

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"Fleetwood Mac folkie twists with lots of melodic stashes and old school taches." Entertainment Now

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JULIA SOPHIE BACK FOR ANTI - RACISM SHOW



You've not had anything out since 'forgive too slow' in 2024. On reflection, were you happy with the album? How did it feel with the reaction it got?

I'm really proud of 'forgive too slow'. I think with a bit of distance I can see it more clearly now, and perhaps appreciate what I was trying to do with more than I could when I was right in the middle of releasing it. It was quite a vulnerable record for me. There was a lot wrapped up in making it — not only the music itself, but returning to music as a solo artist after a long period of having quite a complicated relationship with the music industry. So getting it out into the world felt significant in a way that went beyond whether it was going to be commercially successful. The response was incredibly meaningful. Of course, you always want more people to hear something you've poured yourself into, but what mattered most was that the people who did connect with it, seemed to connect quite deeply. I had some beautiful messages about the record. That intimacy means a lot to me. I think I'm less interested now in chasing the machinery around music and more interested in making work that feels truthful and has some kind of emotional life of its own.

Have you started thinking about a follow up?

Yes, I've been writing again, and although I deliberately gave myself permission not to rush into "the next album", I appear to be accidentally making one anyway. The new material is more upbeat and playful, whilst still holding something slightly uncomfortable underneath. I've been thinking a lot about production, and pushing myself into places that aren't necessarily where I naturally feel safest. When the album is ready, I think I'll let a few singles out into the world first, and allow the wider world around the record to reveal itself from there.

How are you feeling about playing live again?

I'm excited, and probably the right amount terrified! Playing live has always been quite an intense experience for me. There's something incredibly exposing about it, particularly with being a solo artist, where I can feel very alone up there on stage. But that's also what I love about it. There's a point where all the preparation disappears and you're just in a room with other people, making some energetic experiential co-created experience happen in real time. That visceral energy, the unpredictability and rawness of performing live, will always be a part of who I am as an artist; however, I think I'm much better at knowing how to hold and look after myself within it than I did when performing in a band.

What do you feel about the racism issue that LMHR and EAH have been highlighting - did you feel that you wanted to do something?

Absolutely. One of the reasons I wanted to be involved is that I think music can create spaces where people encounter one another differently. At its best, a music scene is built out of difference — different histories, cultures, identities, sounds and ways of seeing the world — and that intersectionality is part of what makes music culturally alive. At the same time, I don't think we can romanticise music and assume those spaces are automatically inclusive. Racism and prejudice exist within music communities because they exist within the wider culture. They have to be actively challenged rather than simply assuming that everyone in the room shares the same values. For me, taking part in something like Electronic Against Hate is a small but tangible way of saying what kind of community I want to belong to. There are moments when simply being privately opposed to something doesn't feel sufficient. Showing up matters.

JULIA SOPHIE WITH MARIA UZOR, OCTAVIA FREUD AND DJ SIMPLEX, ELECTRONIC AGAINST HATE, THE BULLINGTON, OCTOBER 29 Photo: Siobhan Cox



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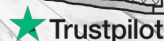


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Another random selection of nice records that have turned up in collections recently.

MUDDY WATERS - FOLK SINGER A rootsy blues album for people who think they don't like the blues. Stripped right back to two acoustic guitars, Muddy accompanied by Buddy Guy, with occasional acoustic bass by Willie Dixon. Released in 1964, stuffed full of what have become blues classics, the Stones, Pretty Things and Yardbird will all have had this one in their collections. As the title says this is true American folk music - essential.

MICHEL POLNAREFF - S/T 1966 debut album from eccentric French singer song-writer Michel Polnareff. A nice mix of swinging sixties pop with a groovy Gallic twist. Some songs were recorded in London and Jimmy Page, then a session musician, plays guitar. The big hit, in France anyway, was 'Love Me Please Love', later covered by Sandie Shaw and The Residents, among others.

HERBIE MANN - IMPRESSIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST Herbie Mann was an American jazz flutist, active from the mid 50s to the early 2000s. He often explored music from different parts of the world, and played with local musicians to expand his repertoire. He ventured

into Bossa Nova, used African rhythms and even tried reggae; here, in 1967, he ventures to the Middle East, adding oud and zither to the usual jazz combo. There are a few versions of traditional songs, but most are written by Mann incorporating the same Eastern rhythms and stylings. Oddly there is a version of the sixties pop tune 'Do Wah Diddy Diddy' tucked away at the end of side one, which I could live without.

LAURA NYRO AND LABELLE - GONNA TAKE A MIRACLE 1971 LP from renowned New York singer songwriter Laura Nyro. A superb set of classic soul and r&b cover versions, impeccably backed by Labelle. Excellent production work from Gamble & Huff, a nice mix of ethereal ballads and danceable funkier tunes. Ironically for someone so well known as a songwriter this is probably my favourite and, I think, most consistent Nyro album.

MASAHIKO SATO - BELLADONNA OF SADNESS Soundtrack to a 1973 trippy Japanese adult animated feature. Sato was a pianist and arranger working in a fairly mainstream jazz style, who became involved in more free jazz toward the end of the sixties before discovering electronics. This score is by turns moody down-tempo, heavily percussive electronic pieces, and gentle folksy ballads sung by Mayumi Tachibana. Original issues of this album cost well into four figures, but it got a nice re-issue by Finder Keepers in 2020.

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Fri 2 Oct: Live & Local Mick Quinn's DB band — Emma Hunter	MUSEUM OF OXFORD 6:30-9pm — £8 / £10 / £12
Various dates: Lunchtime talks & walking tours Led by local historians, exploring Oxford's music history	MUSEUM OF OXFORD Daytime — £5-15
Sat 17 Oct: Beats, Rhythms & Rhymes Produced in collaboration with Unlock the Chains Collective	MUSEUM OF OXFORD 6:30-9pm — £8 / £10 / £12
Sat 24 Oct: Anyone Can Play Guitar film screening Followed by Jon Spira in conversation with Dave Gillyeat	ULTIMATE PICTURE PALACE 5-9pm — Tickets via UPP
Fri 30 Oct: Sounds from the Basement Mount St. Helen solo — Dolly Mavies	MUSEUM OF OXFORD 6:30-9pm — £8 / £10 / £12
Fri 6 Nov: Afterhours Acoustics Premium Leisure solo — Robin Bennett & friends	MUSEUM OF OXFORD 6:30-9pm — £8 / £10 / £12
Fri 4 Dec: Mount St. Helen at Modern Art Oxford Performance at Open Call Preview Party	MODERN ART OXFORD 6-9pm — Free
Fri 11 Dec: Oxford's Sounds: Reimagined Produced in collaboration with Cities and Memory	MUSEUM OF OXFORD 6-9pm — £8 / £10 / £12
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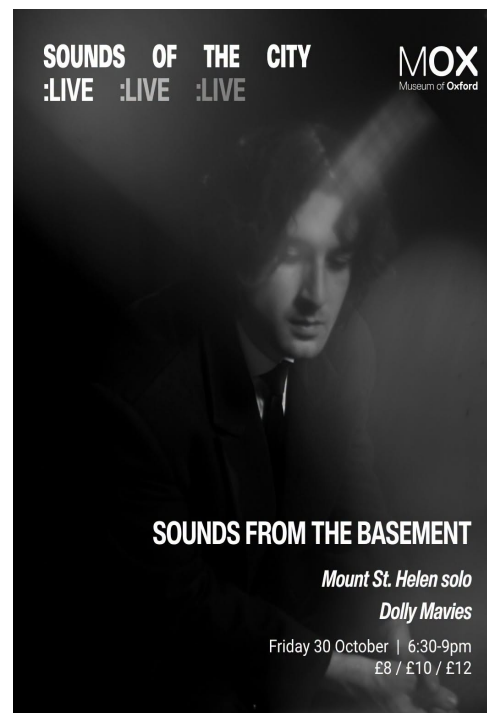


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Dolly Mavies
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£8 / £10 / £12



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AFTERHOURS ACOUSTICS

Premium Leisure solo
Robin Bennett & friends
Friday 6 November | 6:30-9pm
£8 / £10 / £12

MAZAWATTEE

OXFORD'S PRIME INDIE FOLKERS BREW UP FINE DEBUT 'ENGLISH MEAN TIME'. With Stewart Garden.

So debut album ready for release - how do you feel about it?

It feels quite surreal! We were playing local open mics about 18 months ago, and we've come so far since then; getting here with this group has been incredible, and we can't believe that we're releasing our debut album. We've been working really hard, so it feels great to have an album of music we've made together ready to share.

Obviously previous singles are included on it - how did you approach getting the new songs together, did you do them all together?

The previous singles have been re-recorded with our newer members (bass and lead guitar). It felt important to us that these songs were included in a way which represents our current sound, along with the new songs we've made together.

How does a Mazawattee song typically come together - are there different songwriters in the band as well as singers?

There are different songwriters; both Chloe KA (vocals) and Louis (lead guitar) have contributed songs to this album. Our usual process is that I (Danny) will write a song and then bring it to the band for each member to add their flavour and influence to it - this is the Mazawattee formula! 'English Mean Time' is the product of our best material so far. However, we have already got plenty of new songs in the works for the next album which people might hear at some of our upcoming gigs.

It opens with 'Waterslide' and also includes 'Basically Everything' which are hard acts to beat - any of the new ones you are thinking will be live favourites?

Honestly, it's hard to pick a favourite as each of the tracks means something special to us. For live energy, I love the harmonies on 'West Country' and the raw emotion of 'Lost In Space'. 'Holiday' is also a great live song which tends to get the crowd moving!

Can you tell us any albums or songs the band will listen to around recording sessions or any particular artists who influence you generally.

Naturally, we're influenced by the things we listen to - particularly around the time we're recording. During the making of this album, we were listening to a lot of Zach Bryan and Charli XCX (Chloe got the 'Brat' album on tape, which is the only way to listen to music in her car!).

The album is called 'English Mean Time' with England flags falling all around. What were you feeling around the time of the conception of the album and what was your thinking behind the cover?

People often describe our sound as nostalgic and quintessentially English, which makes sense - it's a nod to the music we grew up on; The Beatles, Oasis, and even the Spice Girls! Writing this album during a classic English summer really brought those roots to the surface.

The title 'English Mean Time' and the falling flags on the cover came from feeling the tension in the country right now, but also wanting to reclaim those symbols. The flag has been co-opted by the Far Right for too long, but it doesn't belong to them - it belongs to us; it belongs to everyone. Showing them falling around us is a nod to where we are culturally, but putting it front and centre is our way of showing it can stand for something far more positive, including the music of our country.

Any plans for a launch?

The 'English Mean Time' album launch party is at The Bullingdon on Friday November 27. It's going to be a great night of music, with awesome support acts and great vibes!

Ahead of our album launch, we're playing some smaller shows supporting touring bands visiting Oxford. You can catch us at The Handlebar on October 22 supporting Preen, and there is a duo show at The Library on November 5 supporting Genevieve Miles.

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FRI 16TH OCT
TRUCK OXFORD
THE HOWLERS
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WHAT'S IN YOUR RECORD COLLECTION WITH DOUBLE YELLOW LINES



What was the first record / CD you bought?

Conrad: 'Champagne Holocaust' by Fat White Family - My father got me into this horrible bunch at a much too young age of 12, 'Auto Neutron' and 'Wet Hot Beef' introducing me to the wonders of heroin-deranged psychedelia and grotesque lyricism. Joe: 'Breakfast In America' by Supertramp - I found it as I was leaving an antique store, and noticed it was an original pressing; too good to miss. Zsolt: 'The Satanist' by Behemoth - As a starry eyed 15 year old exploring metal music for the first time, this album introduced to me a world of transgression and rebellion, delivered with sophistication and finesse that captured my imagination like nothing else. Vic: 'To Pimp A Butterfly' by Kendrick Lamar - Modern classic with the funkier soul, jazz infused hip-hop. This record is loved and has liberated many.

Which Oxford bands are you liking at the moment?

Conrad: No Worries If Not! Absolute joy to see live and a delight to play with. They embody the Berlin techno-cabaret spirit. All hail the baguette innuendos! Toby and Zsolt: We saw Slunk at The Nest in May and thoroughly enjoyed the spoken word narration across the continuous jam. They reminded us of the epic prog bands of the 70s in scope and the instrumental passages were simply sublime. Also some killer guitarwork, jealous of those jazz chords!

Someone you have worked with that is in your record collection? Conrad: I am forever grateful for the numerous times fellow band and good friends The Borough have let me sofa surf, got many a good story to tell from our adventures together.

Who has the coolest hair or clothes in pop?

Joe: Personally I'm obsessed with the Thin White Duke era of Bowie hair, less inventive than previous dos but just too cool overall. Conrad: Bjork! A different style every album. For a while I had no idea what Bjork actually looked like (still don't really). ZSOLT: Kate Bush's erratic costumes and presence always match perfectly with whatever antics she gets up to! Yet behind the chaos, it feels intentional and calculated, always enhancing her art.

Favourite lyric? Conrad: Tom Waits' 'Tango til They're

Sore' - "Let me fall out of the window with confetti in my hair, I'll tell you all my secrets but I lie about my past, send me off to bed forevermore" - always lingers for me. That romantic dark storytelling, the mythologies we make from life's experiences... Toby: Tally Hall 'Sacred Beast (Demo)' - "While the neighbours fight to paint their yards the best shade of green, we'll be in the gardens growing". - I like the portrayal of insignificance of the battle centuries later in the modern day. Joe: Paul and Linda McCartney 'Monkberry Moon Delight': "Well, I know my banana is older than the rest" - or maybe - "So I sat in the attic, a piano up my nose" is another zinger. Zsolt: "And in the end the love you take is equal to the love you make" -

'The End' by The Beatles, nothing more to be said. Vic: "I'm still flesh, I hold on to awful feelings" - "The Glow Pt.2" by The Microphones. A gentle reminder to ground myself.

A record you wish you'd written? Conrad: 'Henry's Dream' Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds - a hedonist's nightmare, lyrics akin to a drunken tale told by a brooding character you vaguely remember from a fever dream. It's sleazy, carnivalesque and has that western jankiness I love. I want to spit like Nick does. Toby: 'Sketches of Brunswick East' by KGATLW. The psychedelic arrangements and surrealist engineering have been enormous inspirations to my own writing; every song on the album makes me wish I was Stu Mackenzie. Joe: 'Queen Of Denmark' by John Grant. Funny and clever lyrics, sung and arranged to maximise the deep sadness and deadpan humour simultaneously. Very beautiful and confusing. Zsolt: 'The Snow Goose' by Camel - to be able to write an hour of such dreamy yet cohesive music with no lyrics and still keep it as interesting, dynamic and engaging as they've done is a trait I will forever be admiringly envious of. Vic: 'El Jardin de los Presentes' by Invisible - The catchiest melodies to soothe the brain. These guys take a more organic approach to prog rock than any other band I've heard. Tomás Gubitsch is also a genius and a big inspiration to me as a song writer.

Favourite producer / story about someone you've worked with? Lucy Leave guitarist Mike happened to teach half of us before we started the band in Sixth Form, and then went on to suffer our dreadful three hour rehearsals in the practice room next door, to the point of him warning us to use ear protection (sorry Mike).

DOUBLE YELLOW LINES EP 'IS THERE ANYTHING FURTHER' IS OUT NOW

BAND RECOGNITION: YAANG MANCHESTER BLISTERING POST PUNK TRIO FEATURING WORKING MEN'S CLUB MEMBER AT THE BULLINGDON.

Why Yaang? Oliver - Davey had the name, it was spelled as Yang back then. I wanna say we chose the name the day we formed, but I can't remember. He was big into Taoism. We added the extra A to become easier to find on the internet. Stupid thing to have to do but we didn't want to change the name completely.

Which bands were you in before? Ben - I was in Working Men's Club. It was a good experience but I felt oppressed, nowhere near as much creative freedom and fun that comes from being part of Yaang.

Any merch plans? Oliver - I wanted to do mugs a while ago but then realised we could only afford to make 4 or 5 which means we'd have 2 left to sell. You don't have to be Mr. Wonderful to know that's not a solid business idea.

What are the band's special powers? Oliver - If I had a super power I would like to have x-ray vision but only for things I've lost in my flat. Davey - Special powers? Does autism count? Other than music, I'm an avid cook. I love it. In a way it's similar to music. Chucking stuff together or being calculated. The goal is to create harmony. I like juggling plates.

Which of your songs do you most like to play live?

Oliver - 'Comfort' probably. The newer ones are fun too because they're new.

Any other Manchester bands you recommend? Oliver - Westside Cowboy, Autocamper, DEAFDEAFDEAF, Holly Head, Tesni.

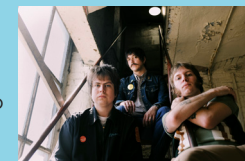
Some records that have influenced you?

Oliver - 'XTRMNT' by Primal Scream (their best album) is a rare case of an album that I can apply directly to Yaang. It can be difficult to write songs for Yaang as it relies on us three all being together and Davey having made a start on a beat but this is an album that whenever I listen to I get ideas that I can apply to Yaang songs without having to wait until we're together in the practice room.

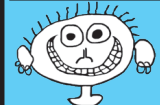
Ben - Supergrass 'I Should Coco'. It has such a great energy and tone that never dips. Even in the slower moments you're still immersed in the world they've created.

Davey - My mum would always blast UK rave/hardcore while she cleaned in the morning. So I always crave a driving beat. I need energy regardless of genre.

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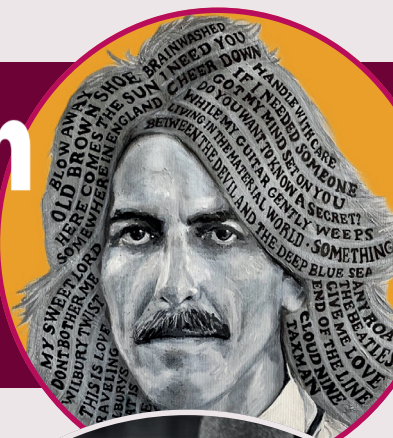
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OMS69

LIVE REVIEWS



HOLY HOLY - O2 ACADEMY, OXFORD

Billed as Holy Holy's final tour, this may genuinely be the end: Tony Visconti is now in his early 80s and Woody Woodmansey in his 70's. Yet the pleasure the band take in performing suggests they could happily continue. Their show is a heartfelt, musician-led celebration of David Bowie, led by Woody Woodmansey, the last surviving member of the classic Spiders From Mars rhythm section, and Visconti, Bowie's legendary producer and collaborator.

Holy Holy are much more than those two names. The eight-piece includes Heaven 17's Glen Gregory on vocals, Visconti's daughter Jessica Lee Morgan on guitar and saxophone, and guitarist James Stevenson. Woodmansey brings an insider's authority to material from Bowie's early-70s peak, having played on, amongst others, 'Hunky Dory' and 'The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust...' Visconti's connection reaches from 'The Man Who Sold the World' to 'Blackstar'.

Despite the sweltering O2 Academy Oxford, they deliver a compelling set, beginning with the unmistakable drum introduction to 'Five Years', before plunging into the shifting rhythms of 'The Width of a Circle'. The rest is a crowd-pleasing journey largely rooted in Bowie's early 70s work, from 'Space Oddity' to 'Rebel Rebel', with 'Ashes to Ashes' and 'Where Are We Now?' the notable later departures. Watching Woodmansey in particular, his affection for both the songs and Bowie is unmistakable.

Gregory is an excellent frontman, but wisely never attempts a Bowie impersonation. He does not mimic Bowie's voice or mannerisms; instead, he sings with warmth, respect and obvious gratitude for the opportunity.

Later on, Woodmansey and Visconti share memories of their Bowie years, underlining that this is no ordinary tribute act: they were there. Woodmansey recalls Oxford Town Hall in 1972, when Mick Rock took the notorious photograph of Bowie and Mick Ronson. (DR) Photo by Dave Roberts

YOUTHMOVIES - THE BULLINGDON

Classic Oxford sceneheads were treated to a gloriously nostalgic surprise as 2000s favourites Youthmovies returned to the Bullingdon stage for the first time in eight years. Frontman Andrew Mears himself joked it was their "fourth or fifth reunion", and whether or not this one will last, or if it was a one-night-stand with an old flame, every glimpse we're flashed of their O.G. math rock brilliance should be considered a treat. As they rattled, jangled and contorted their way through often 10 minute long cuts from 2008's 'Good Nature' and their much sought-after scattering of EPs, it's clear the band haven't played together for a while, in the most joyful sense. Any micro-mistakes were unnoticeable, and there wasn't a hint of rust in the hinges - the five of them simply seemed to be revelling in the experience of collaborating again. There were distinct expressions in faces seeming to say "Oh yeah- this bit of this tune is great!" as they communicated non-verbally across the stage, a phenomenon inclusive to the 200-odd strong crowd. After recurring chanted requests through the set, Youthmovies ended with fan favourite '...Spooks the Horse'. In a haze of distortion, Mears flicked his fringe and declared he was "leaving the stage dramatically". It's all so endearingly 2000s. We hope to see you again sometime soon. (CB)



STRUMMERFEST - APOTHECARY TAP, BANBURY

Spank Hair open Strummer Room's music weekend, presenting as a singing-guitar and drumkit duo from Milton Keynes and Didcot. Is it just me or are groups getting smaller? They don't seem to lack a bassist sonically, but like many incredible shrinking bands things seems off-kilter with the stage-presence. Nevertheless their Ridgeway-filtered noughties emo-loggy sounds great, blending filigree guitar, deft drumming and soulsearching vocals. During a tuning-break they reveal Hannah the bassist is unwell and can't attend, so balance is somewhat restored.

The subsequent trio, **Barrelhaus**, (pictured) are at least one-greater in the membership department but still bassist-free. This doesn't stop them conjuring sounds from twin guitars, drums and vocals that are so deep they ought to be wearing waders. At times their QOTSA-style riffola borders on doom, but the singing is sweeter and there's an energy rebounding off the plushly upholstered drums like the ropes and pads of a boxing ring.

Friday headliners **Dilemma** have a singing bassist, but we're back to duo-class with a Macbook bringing the beats and a guitarist with vocals playing keyboards. Describing themselves as post-punk-neo-psych, perhaps "Banbury's Happy Mondays" is more appropriate? Sure there's no Bez, but the tautological lyrical delightfulness, demure stagecraft and sheer jouissance of their longform playing recall the bashful daftness of the second Summer of Love.

A Friday night out with no covers and no tributes, just little bands making big sounds. Sometimes less is more. (FB)

HYPOXIC ANGELS - THE BELL, BICESTER

Having The Molotovs in your corner, when championed by The Cut and Jennie Matthias of 80s chart botherers The Belle Stars, is no mean feat for a fledgling band (only formed in January). With a rapidly increasing social media following, a debut album incoming and overseas dates penned in for Sweden – these Angels got wings. The onstage neon 'Girls, Girls, Girls' sign and their self-declaration as 'the ultimate expression of female power in the punk scene' screams Aylesbury's **Hypoxic Angels'** feminist ideals loud and proud.

Singer guitarist Layla: "Georgie, pick up the phone!" Reaching behind her kit, drummer, vocalist Georgie: "Hello, is this The Bell in Bicester!" From there on in the humour and youthful (mid-teens) exuberance present throughout their social media posts bleed into the lyrics, banter and live performance. Sassy, with punk ideals, they ooze confidence while sitting comfortably between: Babes In Toyland, Bikini Kill, The Donnas, L7 and Nova Twins. The humorous 'Noah' kicks things off before leading into the government-bashing single 'Vote For Cornflakes'; clever, catchy and amusing, with biting lyrics, it has future hit written through its core. A cover of Lesley Gore's feminist anthem 'You Don't Own Me' is ripped through, as is the self-penned ferociously epic set highlight 'Come And Get It!' A heavenly half hour indeed. (GD)

BIG FEASTIVAL, KINGHAM

Set on **Alex James'** Oxfordshire farm, Big Festival's appeal lies in its relaxed, inclusive atmosphere: it caters to committed music fans and food lovers alike and has become a staple for high-end festival glampers. The lineup ranges across indie, pop, dance, soul and nostalgia-driven crowd-pleasers. There is nothing cutting-edge but headliners **Basement Jaxx**, **The Streets** and **Bastille** anchor a varied weekend that also includes the likes of **Rudimental**, **Perrie**, **Mimi Webb**, **Doves**, **The Coral** and **Nubian Twist**.

Friday night sees **Basement Jaxx** deliver a killer set of familiar tunes and offer a visual treat as well whilst Saturday's The Streets' performance of 'A Grand Don't Come for Free' album is a particular draw and sees singer Mike Skinner deface a bus-stop with Blur lyrics - nice touch! Sunday seems to be more of an indie-day (whatever that means any more) with **Bastille**,



(pictured above), despite vocal and technical problems, delivering an impressive festival closing set. Many of the bands are on the 20th anniversary circuit, which works well for the festival's older demographic, but all the young-uns seem to know every word to the headline bands as well.

Food is not treated as an add-on but as one of the event's defining attractions. Big Festival combines street-food stalls, local produce, chef appearances and more elevated dining experiences, allowing visitors to build a weekend around eating as readily as around watching bands. Its farm setting reinforces that food-and-drink identity, while keeping the experience informal rather than overly polished. Big Festival succeeds because its variety is curated rather than chaotic. It is a friendly, accessible festival with enough musical weight and culinary ambition to satisfy adults, while remaining one of the UK's most convincing family-focused live events, plus Alex James being around the site and DJ'ing is an added draw for many.

(DR) Bastille photo by Dave Roberts

WOODSTOCK LIVE

Woodstock Live celebrated its 20th anniversary on the last day of 2026's record breaking heatwave, stepping off the bus and walking to the town square the heavens opened, and I arrived drenched for Saturday's afternoon of great music. After seeking sanctuary in the Bear Hotel's rather lovely and cosy bar, the rain held up just in time for the appropriately named **The Autumn Saints** to hit the stage. Promoting their most recent EP 'Just Might Be Thunder' (spoiler alert: despite the rain there wasn't any), their Anglo-American blend of Gothic Americana was the perfect antidote to the damp atmosphere.

After a quick change-over it was time for **Mary's Garden** to continue the goth vibe (albeit with more of an indie rock approach) and this talented six-piece certainly delivered. It might have been my first time experiencing this likeable local group

of misfits, but it certainly won't be the last, and with a new album in the pipeline everything is looking rosy in Mary's Garden. From new friends to old ones as next up was **Boneyard Jukebox**, who I reviewed in this very publication a couple of years ago, with their fabulous fusion of rock 'n' roll, rockabilly and swing. Highlights were a double whammy of faithful versions of Louis Jordan's 'Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens' and 'Is You Is Or Is You Ain't (My Baby)' both of which got the crowd up and jiving (with varying degrees of ability). Lastly, a special mention must go to the Woodstock Live organisers themselves, with great sound, quick turnarounds, clean toilets and low-key security, this is how you put on a street festival. (AT)

RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL, CHARLBURY [SATURDAY]

Riverside Festival celebrates its thirtieth in style with a gleaming array of OMS's favourite acts. **Sebastian Reynolds** laid down a phenomenal set of his inventive and next-level works. It's great to finally put a face to someone who is often the invisible producer and mixer. The set was made to make you think, perhaps more than dance but it certainly didn't disappoint. He assured us at the end of the set: 'everything is going to be alright' in a comically anxious tone: a fitting sentiment for tracks that don't flinch from grit and edge.

Emma Hunter was back at Riverside and playing another blinder that chose not to rest on the laurels of recent triumph 'Yolanda' and instead brought out a varied range of her songbook, showing an artist who's on to the next thing but of course, keeping a few of the untouchable 'Yolanda' tracks in the set. Next up, **The Exact Opposite** were blasting hard-and-fast pop punk Oxford style which was raucous and fun throughout and true to the genre in every way. **Wilderness States** seemed completely in their element as they gave shoutouts to all the family and friends who had turned up in full force. During a sound malfunction, blaring noise punched the crowd, but the singer just riffed on it by joking: "we're not that heavy!" to the crowd's amusement. Throughout, it was a polished and well-rehearsed set that always sounded together as they navigated expertly between anthems like 'Split', 'The Capture' and 'Black White Red'.

There really aren't many free festivals like this that champion really well-crafted outsider sounds like this while simultaneously being a haven for family fun, picnic blankets, strollers and all age ranges enjoying the noise. (GN)

WILDERNESS FESTIVAL, CHARLBURY



Wilderness is a festival that transcends the usual formula. After 15 years it knows its audience: people who want their music served with silliness, lake swims at dawn, and escapism neatly boxed in Cotswold charm. Yet it never lets the music become an afterthought. The 2026 line-up – **Scissor Sisters**, **Carl Cox**, **The Last Dinner Party** amongst others – delivered the headline punch, but the weekend's soul lived in the details.

The House of Sublime, an adults-only tent, staged a riotous two-person reimaging of Lily Allen's 'West End Girls' as risqué theatre, whilst **Son Mieux** filled the atrium with sun-drenched European anthems, and **Slag** brought punk energy to the Dive stage. But it was the big names that got the crowds.

Scissor Sisters opened with a maximalist spectacle: outrageous costumes, a flamboyant set design, and dance-floor Pink Floyd covers. But for many, the weekend highlight was **Professor Green**'s secret Saturday set, which felt less like a gimmick and more like a reward for the faithful.

Sunday's orchestral Beatles session, featuring, amongst others, **Camille O'Sullivan**'s combustible interpretation of 'I Want You (She's So Heavy)', offered a rare moment of collective calm. But the emotional centre belonged to a rare performance from **Annie Lennox** over on the main stage. Curating a show in support of her charity, The Circle, she handed the main stage to a clutch of powerful female voices including **Riaghnaigh Connolly**, **Becky Sikasa**, and **Jessie Ware** before delivering her own half-hour masterclass in vocal power. A piano-led 'Here Comes the Rain Again' hushed the crowd; 'There Must Be An Angel' with Ware lifted it. The finale – an all-star 'Sisters Are Doin' It' and a spine-tingling 'Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)' – literally left strangers wiping tears from their eyes. Following this would be hard but

The Last Dinner Party closed with an abundance of their own theatrical decadence, anchored by plenty of soul. By Sunday night, it had proved once again that a festival can be expansive, mischievous, and moving all at once. (DR)

Scissor Sisters photo by Dave Roberts

ORAL HABIT, DOUBLE YELLOW LINES, THE BOROUGH - TRUCK STORE

It's a Sunday night at Truck Store and what the venue lacks in space, it makes up for in crowd spirit. **The Borough** bring out their minor-key surf rock and it's like being inside the Pulp Fiction soundtrack but with some truly out-there lyrics about Baghdad and increasing surveillance. One song has a particularly poignant spoken-word shout section, declaring a desire to leave everything behind and become a fisherman in a distant place. Agreed! They launch into an unexpected grungy cover of Buffalo Springfield's protest anthem 'For What It's Worth' and without the iconic chiming two-note lead part, they create something new.

Double Yellow Lines catapult the room into intense sudden shock...and that's just the first note! Conrad Cunningham's stage chat and mad antics are second-to-none as the singer improvises, stands on chairs, falls to the floor and starts to freak out while getting a dance going. Should we be watching or helping? There's raucous trumpeting and the brushed Tibetan singing bowls come out for some unfalteringly ambitious numbers. The vocals growl fiercely and often channel that Johnny Rotten howl. To look at DYL, you'd instantly expect a 70s psychedelic rock sound but what we get is something far more varied and challenging to pin down. Whatever they are, the DYL sound is a rarely sighted animal, charging furiously with its five heads at the Truck Store china shop of onlookers who get some offbeat ska and some jazz metal. "This one's a western" declares the singer before launching off into something not remotely cowboy, as if to troll us...or maybe it was meant in an abstract way.

Brighton's **Oral Habit** finish the job with some exquisite hard-rock that borders on metal virtuosity at times. Charlie Hales plays a white coffin-shaped Vox 12-string, a 60s design you either love or hate! What comes out of that strange Vox, however, is outstanding and suggests a band who've been shredding together for a while. The set jumped around genres in a King Gizzard fashion but hit on an absolute gem towards the middle with 'The Coast', their tribute to Brighton. The moshers of the front row are ready for the heavier stuff though as they thrash around in an area far too claustrophobic for the saner (and duller!) crowd members. The rhythm section give us solid finger-style basslines and fills-galore on a minimal kit setup, keeping up perfectly with and guiding bangers like 'I'm Free'. Afterwards the crowd can finally take their eyes off of the spectacle of the acts and catch sight of Truck's wondrous vinyl, enough to get lost in and never fully return! (GN)



TRUCK FESTIVAL, STEVENTON

Truck Festival 2026 delivered precisely what its loyal following had hoped for: a sun-drenched celebration of British indie culture, balancing established favourites with a healthy crop of newer names. Thursday saw **CMAT**, promoted from last year's shortened mid-afternoon appearance to a full headline slot, and she delivered an assured, crowd-pleasing set drawing on her current Euro-Country album and taking requests from the crowd. Earlier, Faroese anarchists **Joe and the Shitboys** rattled through a brilliantly chaotic punk performance in which no song outstayed its welcome. **The Crips** brought raw energy and a stack of irresistible hooks, although 45 minutes felt frustratingly brief. They warmed the crowd perfectly for **Primal Scream**, who offered a rather reticent set lacking their usual killer punch despite the inclusion of hits like 'Country Girl' and 'Rocks'. **The Maccabees** made their long-awaited Truck debut following their reunion, their anthems landing exactly as expected, with a set heavily weighted towards 'Colour It In' – precisely what the audience had waited years to hear.

Ireland's **Florence Road** offered a striking set blending indie rock and shoegaze, whilst Manchester's **Lottery Winners** won over the crowd with a set of original material from their chart-topping albums, including a storming 'You Again', and dependable covers including a vast sing-a-long, if you can bear it, to 'Hey Jude'. **Adult DVD**, surely heading somewhere big in the near future, **Long Island**, **Friendly Fires** and **The Vaccines** all provided further highlights across the weekend, with the Vaccines tearing through much of their debut album with Ramones-like efficiency, prompting a field-wide singalong.

The Neil Young Allstars Tribute offered a genuine highlight opposite **Two Door Cinema Club**. Led by Truck founders Robin and Joe Bennett, the band delivered faithful versions of tracks including 'Harvest Moon' and 'Like a Hurricane', finishing with an extended 'Rockin' in the Free World'. Sunday's Rizzle Kicks offered a true arms in the air set whilst Robin Bennett offered a gentler reminder of Truck's roots, drawing on Goldrush and

Dreaming Spires tracks. **The Libertines** followed with 75 minutes of glorious disorder, from 'The Delaney' to 'What a Waster' and 'Can't Stand Me Now'. Finally, **The Wombats** closed the festival with songs from across their six-album career, ending with 'Let's Dance to Joy Division' and fireworks. Truck 2026 proved that while new names are essential, its biggest crowds still belong to the familiar guitar bands that have made the festival an essential fixture in the indie calendar.

(DR) Photo by Dave Roberts

A PLACE TO BURY STRANGERS - THE BULLINGDON

Wallingford duo **Everything Else** play a glittering, Slowdive-adjacent set, all laid-back guitar lines and woozy walls of sound. A clear homage to bands like The Cure, it's an accomplished, cinematic half hour that would benefit from a heavier breakdown or two. Describing themselves as "SPAGHETTI WESTERN SYNTH PUNK" on their Instagram, **Die Anstalt** greet us with pulsing synths and ominous bass wobbles, jolting a busy Bully back room out of its shoegaze-induced stupor with a joyous, glitchy mix of driving bass, spiky vocals and 80s industrial drumbeats. At the end, singer Carmen Redeker is literally hanging from the rafters, yelling in the faces of punters, and prancing across the bartop - the perfect end to a raucous, life-affirming journey through post-punk and protest music.

Equal parts noise rock, performance art and light show, **APTBS** are a freewheeling assault on the senses. At one point, their frontman jerkily wheels a trolley into the middle of the crowd, yelling dirge-like incantations into the mic as we circle him like cult members, moshing gleefully to spacey guitar lines until the house lights come up. It's heavy, atmospheric, and near enough a religious experience. That random Wednesday night, we knew we'd witnessed something special.

(RM) Photo by Ian Hanham



LOCAL RELEASES



STORNOWAY – BEYONDER



The latest album from alt-folk trio Stornoway explores connections between humans and the natural world. Inspired by frontman Brian Briggs' experience as a volunteer on the remote archipelago of St Kilda, this self-produced release, mixed by multi-Grammy-winner Oli Jacobs, is considered one of the band's most ambitious to date.

There is much to love about this album. The first of the eleven tracks, 'River of Voices', is bold and uplifting, with an anthemic quality that builds with the backing choir. Then comes the energetic driving force of the album's first single, 'Marco Polo', which channels a spirit of adventure to faraway places, while also offering a deeper insight into the emotional journeys that shape our lives.

Further on, 'The Honeyeater's Song', featuring Ladysmith Black Mambazo, is an upbeat, multi-layered track about hope, and 'The Book Of Time' shines a spotlight on Derek Biggs' (Brian's father) work as a palaeontologist. 'Mariana' - my personal favourite - takes listeners on a cinematic oceanic journey, while 'Wild Geese' features some expressive slide guitar, plus haunting vocals from Daisy Chute. The lingering violin playout on the final track, a reboot of local peers The Epstein's 'Leave Your Light On', lives on long after the song has ended.

This is an album featuring lovely key changes, stunning arrangements and crowd-pleasing singalong moments. An expansive work that leaves a lasting impression. (CS)

PREMIUM LEISURE – BUSINESS

The latest release from Oxford-based indie-psych collective Premium Leisure, Willie J Healey cohort Chris Barker's own band, showcases, as you would expect, sophisticated guitar play, unexpected rhythmic shifts, and more than a trace of Bolan on vocals. Lyrically, 'Business' casts a cynical eye over the hard-edged corporate world and its unwritten rules. A finale of edgy, soaring guitar ensures maximum satisfaction. (CS)

WILLIE J HEALEY – 143 EP

This new EP from Willie J Healey mixes four-track home recordings and recent New York sessions with producer Loren Humphrey. In contrast to the polished Indie-pop of some of WJH's recent recordings, there is an understated, slightly ramshackle feel to proceedings, which is all to the good. Opening track 'Ditch' is an energetic, soulful work-out with authentically vintage slide guitar and intriguing lyrics; "And if your daddy's home, just tell him I'm your gay friend". I might have further questions. 'S'all Good' nicely channels 'Cripple Creek Ferry' era Neil Young. '143' is low-key, conversational, the title being pager code for I Love You, apparently. The stately chord sequence of 'True Misery' underpins a tale of yearning and devotion. Closing track 'Bottle Rocket' returns to the theme of weird family interaction; "I want to meet your mother and show her all my teeth". Once again, questions, as in "are you sure your boyfriend's ok, darling? I know a good therapist". (HG)

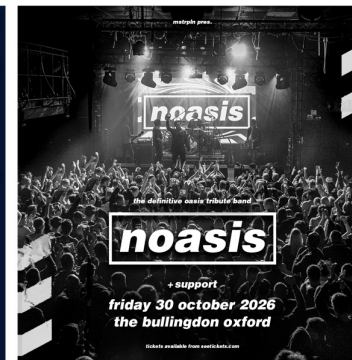
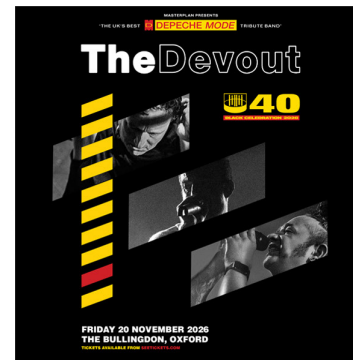
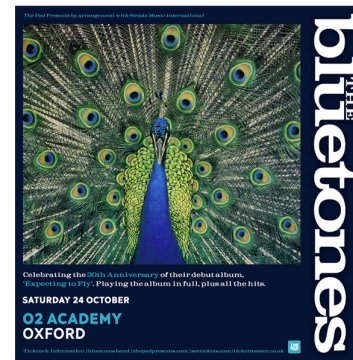
THE THERMS - SYNCOPATOR



The Therms debut track is all rhythmic indie pop - it's got the darkness but has a heart of pop at the centre. It's an intriguing track as the vocals start to draw you in and hit you square in the face. Musically it's got a fuzzy Libertines vibe about it and rumbles along at great speed. It's produced by Gordon Raphael - producer of the platinum seller, The Strokes' 'Is This It?', and now living in West Yorkshire, he adds that rawness and edginess to the production. The lyrics become a bit repetitive but a totally impressive debut single. Looking forward to hearing more from them. (KR)

KARVARA - BUT IT'S YOU / ON HER OWN

Debut releases from a band that clearly needs another year or two in the oven/rehearsal room. With some loose performances instrumentally and lyrics that don't make a particularly strong case for AI never being able to replicate human creativity, they do however showcase fine production, melody and songwriting, as well as a fairly strong vibe. A bit trashy with loud guitar riffs like an early Blondie demo, 'On Her Own' is the better of the two here. 'But It's You', although having the more attention (on Spotify) has a certain Tracy Thorn quality that with a little imagination could be okay but how it's delivered here makes it sound quite dreary and may be one of those songs that calls you to the bar or to go and catch your bus if you watched them playing it. (NG)



THE PAD PRESENTS

LISTINGS:

24/10/26
THE BLUETONES
O2 ACADEMY
6:30PM

30/10/26
NOASIS
THE BULLINGDON
7:00PM

06/11/26
THE MEN THEY COULDN'T HANG
THE BULLINGDON
7:00PM

20/11/26
CORTO ALTO
O2 ACADEMY 2
7:00PM

20/11/26
THE DEVOUT
THE BULLINGDON
7:30PM

03/12/26
THE SKIDS & THEATRE OF HATE
THE BULLINGDON
7:00PM

05/12/26
THE WILDHEARTS
O2 ACADEMY
6:30PM

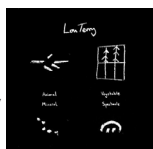
02/04/27
DINOSAUR PILE-UP
THE BULLINGDON
7:00PM

See TICKETS

LOCAL RELEASES



LOU TERRY - ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, MINERAL, SPECTACLE



Latest release on Divine Schism following the latest Lucy Leave album which caused much stir in these parts, Lou Terry's second album expresses contemporary challenges of life and overcoming them, channeling his own experiences into the album. The album consistently delivers powerful and emotive lyrics about life's challenges, allowing the audience to resonate with many themes in the album.

Throughout, there are powerful chord changes in the choruses with big dynamic shifts from the verses, to emphasise important lyrics in each song, making each song engaging and memorable. Songs such as 'Bridge by the River', 'Familiar Place' and 'Being Human' are Bob Dylan-esque, utilising minimal instruments, allowing the lyrics to take the lead role, resulting in better understanding of the important themes portrayed throughout. This album shows impressive versatility, acting as an anthem for relatability and perseverance through hard times in life. (TW)

SUSPIRE - GARDEN OF LIFE

Suspire's new single is well produced and performed, with a nice groove change and instrumental textures, (piano, acoustic guitar) in the chorus, as well as a ringing hook to

open the song. Overall, despite them obviously not intending to stray too far from the template Oasis set out for modern rock over 30 years ago, they've made a competent, intelligently produced, drifting pop tune with some real depth. Another to add to their growing canon of standouts in their live set. (NG)

VIOLET OSCILLATION - IT HAS BECOME CLEAR TO ME...

'Veil' is a beautiful but challenging overload of intense textures that wash together serenely and the vocals channel Deftones' Chino Moreno. A great deal has changed since 2022's 'A Nation of Pilots' and we're now hearing more harshness and wistful dissonance coming through in the noise, but the dreamworld that Abstract in Sound were always so good at moulding has only got bigger and braver.

The greatest works on the EP are the two tracks that feature Abstract in Sound who are major contributors and friends of Luca's Pedal Partners channel. 'Ethereal' even teases us by seemingly breaking into a new and wonderful track right at the end, only to disappear, making way for 'visual snow', a bizarre but enticing minute of warm alien conversation. If you like shoegaze that leans a bit closer to the conventions of the pop song then 'It Has Become Clear...' might not be for you, but collaborators Abstract in Sound have just the thing! 'Reminiscer' pushes the guitar to the limits of what you thought it could do while ethereal vocals

soar high above it in the heavens as a steady trip-hop beat plays. It holds together in a cloud of fantastical awe before spilling out into foaming sound breakers in its last seconds. (GN)

SEBASTIAN REYNOLDS ft. JONAS TORRANCE [and SPIDER J] - GLOWBALL



There is something so cosmic and mystical about 'Glowball'. It's rare to hear psychedelic tropes mixing so stunningly well with huge reggae vocals. The lyrics really get at something primordial: "they gave us gills and fins and spines" and Reynolds' synth layers further this feeling of a cosmic world, found far away.

As for the 'Dubwiser version' of 'Glowball', Jonas and Sebastian are now joined by Spider J who brings a completely new dimension to the tune and reimagines it as some smooth and steady 70s dub. Whereas the other version was built around guitar and bass riffs, this reinterpretation with Spider makes it all about the offbeat and turns the deep bass to the max. Give both a spin and pick a favourite. (GN)

THE WIFE & KIDS - PUBL0

Tom and Simon from Killer Kowalski join forces with Ruarai from Baby Maker for this dark trip to the New Cross Inn. It's a match made in heaven as some of the scene's best lyricists and edgiest storytellers unite. We get some Spanish minor-key riffing coming through a surf setting on the amp while another guitar plays offbeat stabs. We see

familiar sights from Baby Maker's songbook and this includes urban decay, entrapment and dodgy characters, but this time they are conveyed in a higher and far more growly punk voice, giving the new recording project, The Wife & Kids, a freshness and a cutting intensity. It's an instant new favourite with hints of The Fall and King Krule. (GN)

ANDY BELL & MASAL - COMMON PRIMITIVES LP



'Common Primitives' is a second collaboration between Mr Bell and Essex duo Masal, comprising Özlem Şimşek and Alastair Johnson. Veering, in their own description, from kosmiche to astral jazz, It's a work of

meditative, improvisatory music conceptually (though not necessarily audibly) inspired by saxophonist Pharoah Sanders' 1977 eponymous recording. You probably won't come away feeling you've heard it all before.

Opening track 'After Kâtibim' features a haunting vocal melody derived from Turkish folk song; the rest of the album is entirely instrumental. Particularly impressive for me are the appropriately layered soundscape of 'Tower of Babylon' and the stunning looped guitars of 'The Morning of the Trip', the latter once again demonstrating the pervasive influence of Durutti Column's Vini Reilly.

Andy Bell and Masal deserve great credit for producing brave, experimental music that rewards repeated listening. (HG)

THE SAMURAI SEVEN - MAKE IT REAL EP

The Samurai Seven are back! Originally formed in 1997 in Oxford, the band release a brand new EP featuring their trademark indie sound. It's got Beach Boy surf harmonies crossed with Elvis Costello spikiness. 'Duck and Cover' opens the EP but it's the much stronger, politically charged, second track 'Punching Down' that really sparks the interest. With strong Teenage Fan Club influences it really does make you look up! It's the track on the EP that I return to first. 'Make It Real' is also a lovely slice of indie. The last track 'You Love Me Too Much' returns to similar and slightly less impressive form of their opening track, although with a slightly more blues feel to it. (KR)

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LOCAL RELEASES



BIG FEAR - TIDE OF THE EVENING

The latest single from Big Fear – made up of former The People Versus frontwoman Alice Edwards, multi-instrumentalist Jack Wilkinson and synthesist Ben Crone – is a beautiful, modern and anthemic take on synth pop. A treatise on the anxieties of modern life and bringing a lyrical vulnerability, with a masterful lyrical couplet in 'I'm terrified of more time/I don't want to watch it leave me' thrown in just to really set the tone. This song is magical, an instant classic. Playlist it and listen to it regularly. (AS)

MOOGIEMAN - LIBELLULA

Moogiemann shimmers back into our most appreciative view with the bloopy, jerky synth delight of 'Libellula' released on All Will Be Well Records. If I could remember the 1980s this is what I'd hope those memories would twinkle like: a fuzzy geek pop oddness bouncing into our orbit to personally deliver smiles into all who come within reach. That it's delivered in deadpan Italian adds further sparkliness, Shan Sriharan is a star to behold. (LW)

MARTHA ROOKE - WHEN DAYLIGHT COMES

If you want to sell me on a singer immediately, tell me she's a fellow Wantage girl. 'A Long Way from Rome' opens this five-track offering and it's immediately up my street – a very British take on country-pop with hints of

KT Tunstall and Kate Nash all at once. 'The Night Of The Storm' follows and changes the tone immediately into a more sombre one, a piano and vocal showcase of immense quality. 'When Daylight Comes', the next track, and this feels like good, old-fashioned kitchen sink pop, but with some indie rock sensibilities thrown in, before getting a little heavier in the middle-eight. This has been a thoroughly impressive showcase EP thus far. 'Go Around' starts with simple, stripped back, almost Britpop guitar – with a very country vocal on top – and this one is a demonstration of some truly fantastic lyricism. I'm yet to be even remotely disappointed. We wrap up with 'The Rolling Stone', and we've got a beautiful sampling of more country-esque indie rock, and this has been a truly wonderful discovery in my inbox. Proof that you can do a break-up album without being miserable.

Wantage has never been a musical hotbed, but older survivors of The 'Tage will understand when I say this: We haven't produced an artist of this calibre since Centre Negative. And I'm not even sure they were this good. This is a star of the future. (AS)

THE CURSE OF KHAN - JUST WOW

Oh, this is interesting. It opens like a track from a new Blues Brothers movie. Then it goes full on rock. Not quite metal but Limp Bizkit type of rock. The chorus brings the wow factor. It then settles into a full rock/metal vibe which I can imagine is great fun played live. It goes slightly off piste towards

the end as the tempo increases. The single never quite matches the interest of the opening 45 seconds but a great tune nonetheless. (KR)

JOELY JUNE - MY LOVE HAS NO END

Formerly known mononymously as just Joely, we've got a four-track offering that opens with 'River' and, to my joy, some slide guitar. The vocals on this are beautiful, clean and airy and there's a real art to communicating this evocatively with just tone. It's a great track, but one I'd recommend anyone who fancies themselves a singer check it out. There's magic here. 'Freddy' has more beautiful slide, and it's dawning on me that I'm actually listening to a true country-pop release, something that has been truly lacking on the local scene for a long, long time. And those who know me will tell you, I am a sucker for good country-pop. This is great country-pop. 'Your Dog' is an interesting offering – I don't think I've ever heard a love song to a dog before. It's not as weird as it sounds; it's about getting out of a relationship with someone and missing their dog – perhaps more than the human – and the anxiety that comes with the fear of attachment in future relationships. It's actually quite brilliant and relatable. This one lands, as so many EPs do, with the title track. 'My Love Has No End' is a thoughtful introspective take on the almost intangible nature of love. Not a big declaration, no need for anything dramatic, just a sweet, beautiful hit of emotion. I think I might be in love with this EP. (AS)

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