



MEET 'THE COUNT' SKYLARKIN

LARKIN' AROUND WITH THE BEST OF THE BEST...

INSIDE: FESTIVAL NEWS, TAMARA, BOSSAPHONIK DJ CHART,
GAPPY TOOTH RECORD COLLECTION, LOCAL RELEASES,
LIVE REVIEWS AND MUCH MORE...

THE BULLINGDON

MAY 2022

GIG & CLUB LISTINGS

Saturday 30th April Simple - Mayday Party Anz & Jensen Interceptor Doors: 10PM Sunday 1st May Kristin Hersh Doors: 7PM Tuesday 3rd May Fluorescent Adolescent Doors: 10PM Wednesday 4th May Brookes Big Night Out DJ Majessty Archie Valentine Orthophonics Moonlight in Blue Mango Backchat The Midnight Suns Doors: 7PM Friday 5th May Noasis Doors: 7PM Friday 6th May Hous Party Summer Solstice Doors: 10PM Saturday 7th May Time Warp! Doors: 10PM Sunday 8th May Whyte Horses Doors: 7PM Tuesday 10th May Adam Rowe: Imperious Doors: 7PM Wednesday 10th May Daze Ben Pilstan Ben Pinches Doors: 7PM Thursday 12th May Stray Vambo Doors: 7PM Thursday 12th May Sammi Detached MPH Burt Cops Doors: 10PM Friday 13th May Geoff Norcott: I Blame the Parents Doors: 7PM Friday 13th May Bangerz and Lash Doors: 10PM	Saturday 14th May Musical Medicine Colleen 'Cosmo' Murphy & Kirollus Doors: 10PM Sunday 15th May Bob Vylan Grove Doors: 7PM Monday 16th May Grace Petrie Janny Owen Youngs Doors: 7PM Tuesday 17th May Josh Berry Doors: 7PM Thursday 19th May Crystal Tides Doors: 7PM Friday 20th May Keston Cobblers Club Nick Edward Harris Doors: 7PM Friday 20th May Soul Sista Doors: 10PM Saturday 21st May Simple Haci Doors: 10PM Sunday 22nd May Lestweforget Arimeo Doors: 7PM Monday 23rd May Romanian Comedy Dan Badea <i>(Invited: Alex Mocanu)</i> Doors: 7PM Wednesday 25th May The Wave Pictures Doors: 7PM Thursday 26th May Peoness Doors: 7PM Friday 27th May King Awesome Doors: 7PM Friday 27th May Saved by the 90s Doors: 10PM Saturday 28th May New Boss Order X Outlook Festival Launch Party Feat. DLR + Many More Doors: 10PM	Sunday 29th May Battle Born Bring to Bear Jokers Parade Doors: 7PM Wednesday 1st June Musical Medicine DJ Paulette Doors: 10PM Friday 3rd June Skyarkin Soundsystem David Rodigan Doors: 10PM Friday 3rd June The Quireboys A Bit of What You Fancy 30th Anniversary Tour Massive Doors: 7PM Friday 10th June Wrest Doors: 7PM Wednesday 16th June William the Conqueror Doors: 7PM Thursday 16th June Jody and the Jermis The Factory Lights Doors: 7PM Friday 17th June The Deadbeat Apostles Doors: 7PM Saturday 18th June Simple Tim Reaper & LCY Doors: 10PM Thursday 23rd June Ulysses Wells Doors: 7PM Friday 24th June Rock of China Don't Laugh Roast Duck Doors: 7PM Wednesday 25th June The Vandoliers Doors: 7PM	Saturday 2nd July Retro 90s Hits Ovaproof & DJ Youlinx DJ Sam DJ Sec & Wonder DJ Majikal Doors: 10PM Thursday 10th July James Oliver Doors: 7PM Friday 22nd July Hurray for the Riff Raff Doors: 7PM Saturday 30th July Terraforms DNB Doors: 10PM Sunday 31st July The Rock Project Oxford Doors: 7PM Saturday 5th August Rowing Trip The Summer of Love Doors: 10PM Saturday 13th June Semi Detached TBA Doors: 10PM Sunday 12th June Wrest Doors: 7PM Friday 18th September Noahfinn Doors: 7PM Friday 18th September DIY Class of 2022 Tour Yard Act English Teacher Lime Garden Doors: 7PM Thursday 22nd September Laurence Jones Doors: 7PM Friday 23rd September The 900 Doors: 7PM Sunday 25th September Joyde Adams: Merry, I Can Save You Doors: 7PM Friday 26th September Katy J Pearson Doors: 7PM Wednesday 1st October Ben Poole Doors: 7PM	Thursday 10th October Jordan Brookes: <i>This is Just What Happens</i> Doors: 7PM Thursday 10th October Semi Detached TBA Doors: 10PM Thursday 20th October Helen Bauer Doors: 7PM Thursday 20th October So Fetch 2000s Party Doors: 10PM Thursday 21st October Mark Simmons: <i>Quip Off the Mark</i> Doors: 7PM Friday 24th October Harriet Kemsley: <i>Honeycuckle Island</i> Doors: 7PM Thursday 10th November Coil Mo Maybo 2010s Party Doors: 10PM Wednesday 16th November Corky Laing Doors: 7PM Monday 21st November World Cup 2022 England V Iran Doors: 10PM Wednesday 23rd November Billy Nomates Doors: 7PM Thursday 24th November Semi Detached TBA Doors: 10PM Friday 25th November World Cup 2022 England V USA Doors: 10PM Tuesday 29th November World Cup 2022 England V TBC Doors: 10PM Wednesday 30th November Kira Mac Doors: 7PM Wednesday 30th November So Fetch Xmas Special Doors: 10PM
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Festival NEWS



West Oxfordshire wakes up for summer and welcomes back the **Witney Music Festival** May 27 - June 11. The Inflatables and Tom Hingley & the Kar-pets and more headline on Friday night on the Leys (June 10 5-11pm) + EMF, Kanadia, 4th Labyrinth, Crowd Control Collective, The Mezz, The Standard, Genevieve Miles, Danny Mellin head up Saturday (June 11, 12pm-11pm, after party *Green Rooms Studios*). Catch an eclectic line up over 2 weeks opening with funk & groove DJ Joe Truby (May 27, Part & Parcel); Studio Se7en at Green Rooms feat Document One, Occula, Rhymeskeemz, Andy Hill (May 28) + Subtheory, Bethany Weimers, Domi, Dolly Mavies & more (1 June); Little Brother Eli (June 8, Blunt Rabbit) and much more, showcasing the town's strong music scene at Fat Lil's, Part & Parcel, Green Rooms, Elm Tree, The Edge, Blunt Rabbit, St Mary's Church, No12 bar, The Griffin, Drummers Bar, Windrush, The Plough, The Fleece, Eagle Tav, the Angel.

OMS mag & Coo co-present the **Witney Music Festival** hijacked **Jubilee** bank holiday with Quatermelon, The Jerichos, Half Decent, The Bobo plus original Trashy

DJs: Tommy Kneecaps & The Lady Flysox. Dress: Fit for a Queen (Fri June 3, Fat Lil's).

Thats not all - boos all round as it was announced **Cowley Road Carnival** won't be happening again this year, as the team behind The biggest event on East Oxford's calendar with 40,000 + visitors annually is pausing for a review. A review is a poor substitute for a carnival in our view, especially after having the last 2 years to think about it? We hope to see it return - bigger and bolder than ever - in 2023.

Good news as **Flo Fest**, and the related evening event **Glo Fest**, the community festival in Florence Park is to return! Flo Fest is the free, family focused event running from 11am to 4.30pm with activities galore, stalls and music stage which promises **The Mighty Redox** with lots more TBA. For the evening ticketed event there's **DJ James Ussher**, live reggae vibes from **Zaia** and widescreen folk / country from **The People Versus** with more TBA. Saturday June 18, for evening tickets visit We Got Tickets.

Cornbury became known famously as 'The Waitrose of Festivals' and was the playground of the Cotswolds set including David 'Brexit is all me' Cameron. It survived being unceremoniously kicked out of its setting and replaced with Wilderness, and thrived in its new home - but this year organiser Hugh Phillimore has decided, sadly, that this will be the last one. The programme is the expected A-Z of superstars of the Radio 2 playlist and is no less for it - **Bryan Adams**, **James Blunt**, **Ronan Keating**, **Jools Holland** and right out of nowhere **Altered Images** - and of course the famous local music stage. Visit cornburyfestival.com for full lineup and tickets.

We do like a tap room at OMS, and what's IN the taps obviously, so gigs at the fine **Loose Cannon Brewery** in Abingdon piqued our interest. The gigs are organised by Make Music and will be once a month at the brewers. The next one is May 19, and **Ben Heaney** - violinist with August List - on June 16. For Loose Cannon events visit lcbears.co.uk/pages/events. **Mia** also have their day of gigs and workshops in the town on June 21. Twitter @MusicAbingdon

OMS47
Not strictly local but a massive red mark on the dance calendar - **Boomtown's** back! After two fallow years - and a cruel false start in '21 - Winchester's finest festy takes place 10 to 14th of August. The lineup of 'Chapter One: The Gathering' (even though it started in 2009) is a secret, but it'll be quality. Expect the best in reggae, jungle, dub, rave & 'alternative'. Check out boomtownfair.co.uk for more.

It's the festival that keeps getting more relevant to the times we live in - rebalancing, simpler lifestyles, the words ringing louder and louder. **Wood** has always been a chance to get down to all these things (and have right good fun too), at least for the weekend. Founder and, ahem, local councillor Robin Bennett spoke to us about what hospitality armageddon was like for festival organisers in the past couple of years and of course about this year's festival - the gap came at a good juncture for him - he told us: "I was elected as a local councillor in May 2019, around the time we last ran Wood. Since then I've been extremely busy learning the ropes of that, and indeed councils have been busier than ever during the pandemic. It's probably only now that I've got the headspace to organise Wood again anyway." And of this year's music on offer? "Looking forward to all the acts, but especially **WEMA**, a brand new world music supergroup, and **Lee Bains III** of **Lee Bains & the Glory Fires**. And as a proud brother, my sister **Katy Rose Bennett** will be performing her great new a cappella album." Wood is at Braziers Park on May 20 - 22. Visit loveheartwood.co.uk/wood-festival-2022 for line up.

OMS Magazine Production Credits
Thanks to Leo Bowder, Hugh Garrety, Kriss Sprules, Chris Monger, Dave Roberts, Cheryl Flynn, Bob Maple, Jason Warner, Geno Naughton, Damon Boughen, Jeff Slade, Tom Chapman, Liam Walsh, Owen Collins
Edited by Stewart Garden
Design by Autumn Neagle
Published by Back & to the Left Publishing
Contact: back2left@gmail.com
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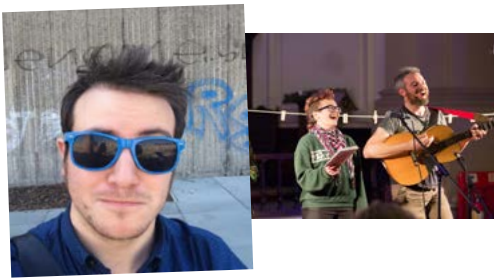
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RANT N ROLL

With Owen Collins

REVIEWS: STOP TRYING TO BE FANTASTIC, BURTON TAYLOR STUDIO

Described as an anti-self help show, Molly Naylor masters metaphor to do for magpies what Edgar Allan Poe did for ravens. That is where the Poe comparisons end, mind, as Naylor's poetry is much freer, less archaic, beautiful sprawling formless recollections of all-night garages, banal TV executives and B-road smashes. Amongst the anecdotes, a fast-paced skewering of the mystifying self care industry stands out, but over the course of a searingly honest hour, Naylor moves from poetry into parable, navigating the vagaries of anxiety and fear towards an open window of acceptance. It's genuinely uplifting – almost liberating, in fact. Despite its title, Stop Trying To Be Fantastic is effortlessly brilliant.

FUNERAL FLOWERS, THE NORTH WALL

"Part-poetry, part play" was how the pre-publicity described Emma Dennis-Edwards' contribution to the Alchymy Festival, although frankly it's a lot more play than poetry, the spoken word element mainly down to Sarel Madziya's solo performance of an admittedly punchy script. But it doesn't matter – Madziya is electric, as at ease wringing laughter out of the audience as she is silencing them during the play's heavier moments. And there are heavy, harrowing moments, in Funeral Flowers, a tale of a young woman dreaming of floristry while stuck in the care system. It's a play about the inevitable traps life sets for us, the almost unjustified persistence of hope within them. It is at times unbearably unflinching. There is no "levelling up" on offer here. Dennis-Edwards' script covers a lot of ground, but you root for Madziya throughout, as she holds the whole of the North Wall in her hands, creating a whole cast with just the drop of a shoulder or the inflection of an eyebrow. It may be a play about the paucity of opportunity, but both writer and actor deserve plenty more. They should go very far.

Owen Collins is a performance poet and playwright from West Oxfordshire; Twitter @OGBCollins

MUGABE, MY DAD AND ME, BURTON TAYLOR

An interestingly dressed set greets you on arrival at the BT, a range of outfits from tasselled military grandee suits to David Seaman's Euro 96 jersey hung from the back of the stage. In front, Munyevu weaves the story of his father's life, interspersed both with his own Soho-drenched introductions to England, and the rise of Robert Mugabe. He describes the latter as an almost-Shakespearean villain, and perhaps treating this story as a straight-up dramatic tragedy would work better than the three spoken word narratives which don't mesh as much as you would expect (despite the quite beautiful glue of Millie Chapanda's mbira.) Maybe I was expecting too much, although I feel uneasy criticising something so deeply personal to the performer. It does offer a rich insight into the modern history of Zimbabwe though, which I'm grateful for, and which feels slightly ironic in a city that still inexplicably celebrates Cecil Rhodes in its crevasses. Perhaps it is too much to ask that it all gels smoothly; this is history, after all, and it's all still happening.

MY CAR PLAYS TAPES, BURTON TAYLOR

John Osborne isn't really your typical poet: for one thing, this is a storytelling show, rather than a selection of his verse, but it's every bit as charming. To spend fifty minutes in his company is like being at the pub with a friend of a friend, where all the tales and jokes have a feeling of familiarity to them, even when new. It's warming and exciting and you can let the time and the tangents go by in blissful contentment. My Car Plays Tapes is an unexpectedly existential wrestle with nostalgia, taking in tapedecks, Tamagotchis, and 'Torn' by Natalie Imbruglia, and the way John tells the tale it feels almost instantly nostalgic itself. There is a wider, nagging, question: What benefit do these vivid memories actually have – or in John's words, "what are we supposed to do with all the things we've achieved with our lives?" You could do a lot worse than recount them as he does, with gentle, humble magnificence.

COMING UP: 3 ACRES AND A COW, OFS

Cast your mind back to April 2015, when the implosion of Britain into internecine Tory heat-death didn't feel quite so inevitable or inescapable; David Cameron was on a walkabout in Alnwick when confronted by a busker singing "Fuck Off Back To Eton" on the ukulele. (Full disclosure: This correspondent later appeared in the music video, hand-jiving in a DC face mask.) That busker, Robin Grey, now brings the same two-fingers singalong spirit to everything from the Norman Conquest and the Peasants' Revolt to the Industrial Revolution and the Climate Crisis. If you think it sounds dry, it isn't: This is nearly a millennium of (literally) grassroots struggle celebrated and reanimated by a talented troupe of poets and musicians. David Cameron would hate it; you should love it. (OFS, May 20)

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COUNT SKYLARKIN - 22 AND COUNTING!

Blessed with both the Gift of the Gab and a Good Ear

Count Aidan Skylarkin has been an Oxford cultural fixture since well before OMS can remember with his hybrid Irish/Lahndanner patter, dapper headgear, threads, and devilish-drink-dispensing sweary ways. Blessed with both the Gift of the Gab and a Good Ear, he always got the very best reggae, dancehall, sound-system and related acts. And he's done this for twenty-two sweaty, high- decibel, high-octane years.

Count Skylarkin - next gig: It seemed fitting to do it on a Jubilee weekend as I'm having a jubilee of sorts. During lockdown, after my whole life was going out and music, and it all seemed so remote, one way to access that was David Rodigan's show on 1xtra. Rodigan's from Oxford originally: he grew up in Kidlington and hasn't played round here in five or more years... we've got a current singer that Rodders has been championing on his show **Aleighcia Scott**: Welsh Jamaican, she lives in Cardiff. It's a hell of a combination if you're a singer! She's got one of the most perfect lovers rock vocals

"I'm plenty good at getting into trouble where I am!"

on the go. She's really starting to blow up and has got her own show on BBC Radio Wales. She's been performing exquisite re-treads on rock steady riddims and just some of the sweetest UK lovers rock that you've heard in ages.

OMS: tell us about the early days!

CS: I remember the first Skylarkin night in 2000. I'd been attending the Wednesday night reggae sessions at the East Oxford Community Centre. I was invited to play one of them by **Natty Mark**. The next thing you knew, someone couldn't make it- Natty rang me up and said: 'Can you

get to the community centre in half an hour?' I put any record I had that could fit into any bag I could find. I didn't even think to bring headphones: I spent the whole night cueing up a record with my ear pressed against the vinyl to hear the tiny sound of the needle in the groove. That was the first Skylarkin night. Then it went to the basement of the Brickworks [now The Library]. Then moved to the Zodiac [now O2 Academy].

Things really began to stick when I had the idea of bringing down an old Bristolian, [the late lamented] **DJ Derek**. From then on, I never looked back. I've thought about him a lot recently: when you reach a milestone, that's when you miss him again. For 12- 13 years I had Derek next to me. I think I owe everything to him almost, because none of it would have happened the way it did. The connection he fostered with audiences made everything easy; I felt confident. We got Derek here every month on a Thursday and it was sold out. I've been lucky to have a lot of people around to inspire me, nice relationships have popped up over the years. I'm very close with **Susan Cadogan**, for instance. And when **Alton Ellis** was alive...People have been very generous with me, particularly older artists. **Earl Gateshead** from Trojan, **Daddy G** from Massive Attack... I've been lucky to make such friends.

OMS: Oxford reggae seems to be going through a bit of a slump; I'm not sure if that's just Covid related?

CS: There's been a circuit breaker; like a rolling stone gathering moss. This applies also to clubs. More leftfield music; there's not been these kind of avenues open and Covid and the loss of venues have a lot to do with that. I can put **Mungos Hi-Fi** or **Rodigan** on, but it's got to be twenty quid a ticket. A kid who doesn't know, isn't gonna find out if he has to seek it out like that. When I started going to East Oxford Community Centre, it was free, so I think there's a few things at play. There's [also] a bit of Covid hesitancy and shyness. When you go to such things, people are buying into the atmosphere. You wanna see those faces at the place. But I've seen things come and go and they tend to come back around.



OMS: Any embarrassing moments? Regrets?

CS: Well, I've fallen on my arse a few times! There are definitely a few regrets. I could have had **Prince Buster** (reggae archetype/originator) in 2006, but another promoter was trying to put on a show at the Zodiac on the same night and wouldn't step aside; that night ended up getting cancelled through lack of ticket sales, as I knew it would. Never putting on **Bob Andy**, and I've come so close to getting **Ken Boothe** so many times... Maybe I still can.

OMS: Now you're a family man!

CS: Having kids and stuff; I have to examine what I have time to do, and do justice to it. For the first 12 months when my son came along I was floundering. I was putting club nights on in Oxford and London and touring all the time - something had to give. It was the loss of that idling: the skylarking time during the week, when you could process what you needed to do. It took two or three years to figure it out, but I've arrived at a happy place with it. I still do 15-20 festivals per summer. These guys [his kids] spend half their summers in tents. It can be done. **Mad Professor** turned up a few years ago to do a gig with me, and there was this gaggle of kids, it was like Musical Youth! My son **Winston** is 6 and has a penchant for **Alton Ellis**. They both like early reggae. Una is 3 and loves 'Fattie Bum Bum'!

OMS: Can you sum up the Skylarkin experience?

CS: It is always good to mix it around a little bit; to have a nose around into the future with a foot in the past. I'm always looking a bit sideways, I'm not too good at looking forward or looking back, but I'm plenty good at getting into trouble where I am!



The Count celebrates at The Bullingdon on Friday June 3 from 11pm – 3am with David Rodigan & Aleighcia Scott on the Truth & Rights Soundsystem

PICTURED - Count Skylarkin, DJ Derek, Dawn Penn & David Rodigan. Words by Leo B.

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AT HOME WITH: OCTAVIA FREUD



A LOOK AT WHAT OUR OXFORD MUSIC STARS GET UP TO OFF-STAGE...

You cannot watch the local electronic maestro, like an acid house Stewart Lee crossed with Banksy if he bought a drum machine, Octavia Freud (and side project Gary) live without a huge grin on your face - expect sumptuous club grooves, while he lays waste to everything and anything he has in his telescopic sights. He already has a string of tongue in cheek...or is it, classics to his bow like 'Rate My Takeaway' - new beat meets post pub nosh, 'What's that Sunshine' - about club bouncers, '50's sideswipe about the harsh reality of doing gigs on a small scale, not to mention 'Boris Can Dance', a danceable punch in the coupon to our blundering buffoon of a PM.

Favourite thing in your house? The glove. It is a very practical item for when I am spring cleaning before the in laws come round and it can also double up as a sexually deviant prop.

Late sleeper or early riser? When I used to go raving in Manchester and London in my younger days I was definitely a late sleeper but as I have got older I have started to wake up around 7am whatever. At least now I can get on with music stuff nice and early. I still go to bed too late but try and get 7 hours' sleep on a good night.

Last person who came round? My mate fat Phil. He came round to do some vocals on our absurdist electronic duo thing called GARY. It is basically a musical based on the abandonment of the left by the working class through the eyes of a carpet salesman from Basingstoke. Phil nailed the vocals then stayed for cheesy chips and a sausage, but sadly no curry sauce. That reminds me he hasn't given me back the glove. Bastard.

Second hand or new? Ooh a bit hard that. My daughter loves vintage clothes and is teaching me the ways of resisting my capitalist false needs but I'm a sucker for the latest shiny new synth gear, even if it's analogue, which is a bit ironic.

Album or playlist while you cook? Another tricky one. I find it is good to start off slow when cooking then build up the BPM's as chaos ensues on the hob before plating up. I always go back to my vinyl copy of Bob Marley's 'Natty Dread', or some stuff by Nick Drake and Arthur Russell then onto some Fela Kuti, Suicide or Can.

Recent binge - watched TV drama? Family Friday pizza and TV night is largely based around the latest episode of Severance. I like the Lynchian vibe and how it captures the pure horror of working in an office. Working in an office is sooooo pre-Covid darling. I enjoyed the last season of Succession too for its cringe factor and no filter dialogue and the minor characters could easily have their own spin off shows.

A song you wrote at home recently? I initially recorded the track 'Hot Nights' about the need to go out and party hard even when there are lingering anxieties about the ongoing pandemic. I wanted to do a banger that played with the audience's expectations and fears. It started off sounding like an ironic Bowie disco track and had some Mick Ronson style guitar licks on it but recently I finished it off. Now it sounds like an old acid house tune down the HAC with my friend Beth on backing vocals and has strangely morphed into a metaphor for trying to revitalise a failing relationship. Weird.

A gardening tip? Ignore nature, build a music studio in your garden and record an album based on your alter ego. Failing that, identify the sunny spots for your pots, use Baby Bio plant food for any dying house plants and use a good horse manure for the roses.

Radio show you always listen to? Get Radio's Melting Pot show & BBC Oxford Introducing show are both good for promoting local DIY artists and have said kind words about my recent releases. The Slav to the Rhythm show is cool for obscure stuff, my mate Timothy Fairplay's Dungeon Module radio sets are full of brilliant cosmic electronic tracks and The Modernist Cat Wee Wee podcasts by The Consignia collective are pure absurdist comedy gold.

Listen/ live dates at octaviafreud.bandcamp.com

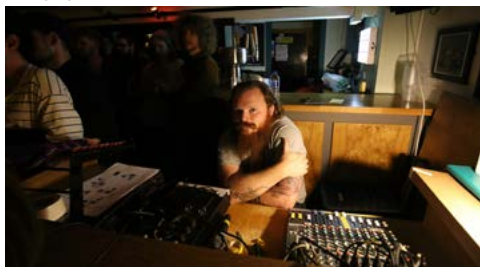
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THE STUDIO & GEAR SPY with CHRIS MONGER SELF HELP

BACK WITH A SETTLED LINEUP, SELF HELP KEEP HITTING TOP BINS WITH THEIR LOVEABLE, MELODIC FUZZ PUNK NUTRI - BULLETS. OMS DROPS IN ON THEM WITH NEXT ALBUM COMING TOGETHER AS LATEST SINGLE 'BAMBOO' DROPS.

Self Help have started the process of recording an album, and with this they've revisited their recording process. "We used to rehearse the songs like mad before going to the studio, partly because that's what we thought bands did but also to try to save some cash. We would record an EP in a few days and that resulted in the tracks sounding very similar to how we played them live" says singer and guitar/bassist Danny. "Like any band we wanted to try new things, and just before lockdown we decided to try spending the same amount of time on a few singles which we did with Jimmy Hetherington called 'Milkshake' and 'All Alone Again'. I think we traded off some of the live playability on those ones but we had so much fun making them and the sound is more exciting to us."

DAUNTING PROSPECT The prospect of recording an album's worth of material is a different matter "It's a lot more daunting! None of us have the time or resources at the moment to go to the studio for two weeks straight to knock out an album, so we've decided to just do one or two evenings a month. Hopefully by the end of the year we'll have the finished package."

COOL GADGETS: For the two new tracks and the upcoming album they have been recording with Niko and Jakes from Upcycled Sounds (previously



seen in issue 39's Studio Spy). "We love those two! We recorded two tracks with them last year, their studio was fantastic. So many cool gadgets and the vibe was 'let's try all of them!'. Niko and Jakes are also really great musicians and their input really helped define the songs." It is also their first recording after a couple of lineup changes "It was the first time we had properly recorded music with Paddy and Jake who were new to the band at the time and that was lovely."

NEW APPROACH: The new approach to recording has also led to a change in the way the songs are looked at in the writing process "Sean came over last night and we wrote a new song while making the demo at the same time. It's made us think way more about where each instrument or noise sits and what needs space etc. The songwriting has become really collaborative and we can't wait for people to hear it, but even if they don't we're having a great time doing it."

Top bit of gear: ZOOM H4 PORTABLE RECORDER "We've been writing and demoing stuff at my house when we aren't at the studio and it removes the need for more wires everywhere but also we can set it to record, jam for hours and not worry about forgetting any of the nuggets! Our set up is pretty janky and that thing always gets a great take." (Pictured).

Self Help play the Jericho Tavern on May 1 with In Flight Movie and Booyah Settlement. Visit youneedselfhelp.bandcamp.com to hear their latest releases.



FESTIVAL FOCUS

WYCHWOOD FESTIVAL GETS READY TO OPEN THEIR GATES ONCE MORE WHILE TOWERSEY GETS SET FOR NEW LOCATION

Wychwood organiser Graeme told us about the early days of the now established event:

"Having been to The Larmer Festival for a few years, I woke up one morning and was walking through the campsite and suddenly thought wouldn't it be great to be able to put on a festival like that in West Oxfordshire. After much research and a lot of planning, we were unable to secure a location over here, but were welcomed with open arms at Cheltenham Racecourse, and so we put our first event on back in 2005."

It's been a barren few years for festivals, how has that been for you? "It's been a tricky time for everyone. We were only months away from putting on the festival in 2020 when Covid hit, and so we did a virtual event instead with our wonderful festival goers setting up their own mini festivals in houses and gardens across the country. In 2021 we were in discussions for months with the DCMS about Wychwood being a test event, but then they wouldn't commit and so we did a hybrid event with live music from a pub in Cheltenham and pre-recorded content which again we broadcast over what would have been our weekend."

To the important stuff - who are you excited about seeing? "Very pleased to have secured Sophie Ellis Bextor and Deacon Blue as headline acts, and very pleased with the depth of programming this year, hopefully something for everyone and some great nights coming up."

And we wondered if there had been more fervour with people due to the gaps - "Ticket take up has been very strong so far - we're hoping to have one of our biggest events ever, our regulars are certainly keen to get out and party again!"

JUNE 3-5 Cheltenham Racecourse - Levellers, Peter Hook & The Light, Sophie Ellis Bextor, Deacon Blue, The Selector, Dreadzone. Visit: wychwoodfestival.com



Towersey Festival, the UK's longest-running independent festival, will take place in the stunning new location of Claydon Estate, Buckinghamshire over the August Bank Holiday weekend headlined by BRIT and Ivor Novello award-winning singer-songwriter, Tom Odell. Across the four-day event, Tom Odell will be joined by Scottish alt-rock legends Del Amitri, Barnsley folk royalty Kate Rusby, acoustic indie trailblazers Turin Brakes, Grammy and Tony Award-winning singer-songwriter Anais Mitchell, comedy legend and Strictly Come Dancing star Bill Bailey, along with 80s pop icon Howard Jones who will be performing a fresh take on his best-known hits as part of the Howard Jones Acoustic Trio.

Other confirmed additions to the music and comedy line-up include Scottish singer-songwriter Eddi Reader, alt-folk artist This is the Kit, folk band and instigators of the Tik Tok sea shanties phenomenon The Longest Johns, Scottish rock band Skerryvore, Celtic folk-punk band Ferocious Dog, comedian Rob Deering, folk band Talisk, the Americana-influenced Police Dog Hogan, contemporary Highlands fiddle band Blazin' Fiddles, folk singer-songwriter Kris Drever, London's Hackney Colliery Band, Peter Knight's Gigspanner Big Band, a mighty comedy-beatbox show from Jarred Christmas & Hobbit The Beatboxer, London-based songwriting duo Ferris & Sylvester, comedian Laura Lexx, English roots band Edward II, festival favourites The Langan Band, 'bloke-folk' band Faustus and over 50 more music and comedy acts across 10 stages and venues.

Full line-up information and tickets available from: towerseyfestival.com.



What's in Your Record Collection?

GAPPY TOOTH

WITH RICHARD CATHERALL FROM GAPPY TOOTH INDUSTRIES
Photo: JOHNNY MOTO

Absolute mainstay of the local music scene is the scarily ardent music mammoth Richard Catherall's Gappy Tooth Industries gig promoters - the sort of guy you want in your corner in a pub quiz front line. GTI are all set to celebrate 20 years of shows... with another show, of course.

In the beforemath, Richard told us about the early days "Our first ever gig was in May 2002. It featured Morph (a local band, not Tony Hart's plasticine pal), a poet named BW Truesdale, and Abel-Jones, a band the GTI organisers were in at the time. And, of course, the bands who went on to 'bigger' things... "Most famous alumni are definitely Stornoway, though we also had the podcaster and rapper Scroobius Pip on about 2 years before he found some fame with Thou Shalt Always Kill. The one that got away is Glass Animals, who were booked to open a gig when they first started, but the slot had to be cancelled, and was never rearranged (gah!)." Here's to 20 more...

What was the first and last record you bought? The first album that wasn't a Now compilation was De La Soul's '3 Feet High & Rising'. I got it after school from Parrot Records in Chelmsford, I calculate I must have been 13. It is still, quite simply, a cracker of a record. I bought 3 CDs from Oxfam two days ago: A John Zorn album, a Noel Coward 4-disc collection, and a production of The Taming of the Shrew.

Favourite sleeve ever and why? I've always loved the huge yawn on Pet Shop Boys' 'Actually', because it's like the erudite pop version of the punk sneer, and the polar opposite of sweaty rawk posturing.

OMS47

Which band do you have absolutely everything of?

There are a bunch, but the act whose records I used to spend a long time looking for is The Fall - I don't have everything, though, there are probably about 5 or 6 live versions or edits of tracks I don't own.

Favourite DJ? I don't know about that, but I feel I must give props to Robert Sandall and Mark Russell on Mixing It, who were as essential as Peel to me when a teenager. Also, in Essex I could pick up Kiss when it was still a pirate, and used to enjoy Collins Faver and Dale playing leftfield techno of an evening.

A record you own that we'd be surprised at?

Depends what your preconceptions are. Some people are shocked that I love JS Bach, others are astonished at the abstract music I lap up at Supernormal Festival, and someone was once even amazed that I like AC/DC, which is mad, because surely everyone likes AC/DC. Probably it's the James Last albums that are almost universally sneered at, though (In Russia is a good one...you'll hate it).

Favourite lyric? The great local promoter and engineer Mac once suggested the best opening lyric ever was The Blue Aeroplanes' "Pick a card, any card. Wrong". Far be it from me to disagree.

First dance at your wedding was?

When we got married we had lunch, then instead of a party everyone went to The Zodiac, so my first dance was something funky played live by James Taylor Quartet. Whilst we signed the register we had 'Popcorn' by Hot Butter, because we thought sitting looking at our backs must feel like being on hold for the audience. The version by V. Mescherin's Orchestra is the cool collectors' choice, though.

Which Oxford bands do you admire? I admire anyone who gets up and performs and puts something on wax, even if I simultaneously think they're rubbish. Current local favourites would include Ally Craig/ Bug Prentice, Lucy Leave, Means of Production, and anything involving Lee Riley, The August List and Moogieman.

Guiltiest pleasure in your collection? Being guilty or embarrassed about art you enjoy is about the most pointless thing anyone can waste their time doing - if I were a life coach I'd just say that. Don't be shy, embrace it, you'll feel happier. Having said that, I sometimes feel a bit grim when I discover what the indecipherable lyrics on a great dancehall or death metal track turn out to be.

You ask the gig DJ to get something on to whip up a crowd? 'Blowing up My Mind' by The Exciters is a highly funky Northern soul track. Anything I might do thereafter would be the epitome of bathos.

GTI's 20th Anniversary gig is at the Port Mahon, St Cements on May 28 with The May, Vetna and So Long, Space Girl

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TAMARA

OMS MEETS ONE OF OXFORD'S FINEST SINGER SONGWRITERS TAMARA PARSONS BAKER ON THE RELEASE OF HER DEBUT SOLO ALBUM 'PAIN IS JUST PAIN'

Those who have been following Tamara's long, storied and tragically underappreciated (by the mainstream, at least) career through her time with both The Martyrs and Death Of The Maiden know that Tamara has always had something very, very special about her.

As Tamara herself explains, "I've always been playing solo, throughout my musical career, and yet I'd never really released solo songs as an album."

Well, now she has. Title track 'Pain Is Just Pain' explores the nature of artistry and the relationships artists have with their work. It's a beautiful, simplistic, and reflective track – which sets the whole tone for this album. It's Tamara, her guitar, her thoughts, and her feelings.

"I just started thinking of myself as an artist, my persona as an artist on my own", she continues, "this collection of songs, it's just a bit more personal, I think it's much more reflective, it's much more about not just romantic relationships, relationships with other people rather than what I've been doing before, which is a bit more of a storytelling narrative."

This album is a departure from Tamara's previous work in many ways; we're getting to see more of the real artist, rather than the carefully crafted stage personas that serve as a vessel for storytelling than we've seen previously.

"I think that's probably been fairly intentional, I think writing music and writing songs has always been a way that I can express a lot of things that maybe I don't find so easy to talk about."

This album is the culmination of two years' work, most of which was recorded prior to lockdown in 2019.

"I wanted to keep it fairly stripped back and really keep it quite simple," she tells me, and it works here better than it would for most people purely because Tamara has the kind of unique talent that can carry such simplicity.

At the time we spoke, Tamara cites 'Fuck Off' as her favourite track on the album. "The main thing you learn as you get older is not that you don't care about things, but you care less about certain things, and you start to give less fucks."

It's a great track, with some real power behind it and actually serves to strike the perfect balance between the angsty storyteller and the new, self-aware Tamara that we're meeting on this album.

"That song in particular is about specifically the sort of a breakup where someone says 'you're too emotional', which I hate... What is too emotional?"

"The person saying it is unable to deal with emotions, and that's stigmatizing the other person and for being human, essentially, and that's kind of fucked up."

'Pain Is Just Pain' is a genuinely great album, with 11 tracks that most listeners are going to fall in love with the honesty of.

Album launch at the Jericho Tavern May 20, that might also feature Tamara's sea shanty side project. You're going to want to be there. And to buy this album as soon as you can. (Kriss Sprules)



DJ BOSSAPHONIK DAN'S JAZZ WORLD DANCE CHART



WARM UP TUNES:

THE JEFF LORBER FUSION - THE SAMBA

Jazz funk-samba tune from 1978, great at creating a groovy club atmosphere from the virtuoso keyboardist. Features a guest Moog solo by Chic Corea.

PAT THOMAS & KWASHIBU AREA BAND - ODO ANKASA

The modern day leaders of Ghanaian highlife music, it was an exquisite treat to have hosted them at Bossaphonik's 15th birthday in 2019. This from second LP 'Obiaa' it has a hauntingly beautiful main brass theme.

KYOTO JAZZ SEXTET - WE ARE ONE

An ascending horn arrangement that crescendos right at the end in this soul-jazz tune with life-affirming vocals stating "humanity is one family, we are one!"

EZRA COLLECTIVE feat. TY - CHAPTER 7

Collaboration between Ezra Collective, one of the leaders of the recent explosion of the London club-jazz sound, with Mercury Prize nominee, rapper TY.

CHIP WICKHAM - SOHO STRUT

Delicate spiritual jazz with the main theme played by flute and vibraphone in unison followed by gorgeous solos. Discovered this listening to my current favourite radio show DIG! Family Favourites on Totally Wired Radio launched by the Acid Jazz label.

PEAK TIME TUNES:

RIOT JAZZ - NAILING THE HARMONY

My favourite UK brass band who played in Oxford this April, this is from second LP 'Incoming' A hip hop intro surprises by doubling up into an explosion of uplifting ska-jazz.

K.O.G & THE ZONGO BRIGADE - MAD UP (VILLAGE CUTS REMIX)

Ferocious energy in this almost techno tempoed remix propelled by a staccato bassy tenor sax line running throughout. K.O.G. aka Kweku of Ghana was the latest live artist at the Bossaphonik club night - he and his band are a whirlwind of ridiculously positive energy.

NEWEN AFROBEAT & SEUN KUTI - ZOMBIE

An exciting new version of Fela's biggest hit, lovingly covered by the Chilean band featuring Fela's son Seun. Love the way the whole brass section play Fela's original solo sax line.

SETENTA - SMELLS LIKE LATIN SPIRIT

Parisian latin-soul act cover the Nirvana hit. It's always fun playing this, an immediately recognisable tune to everyone but played in a completely different floor-filling context.

KALIGOLA DISCO BAZAR - FANFARA TIGRE (DJ STANBUL REMIX)

The Balkan Beats craze may have waned but these guys are some of the finest at balancing the wild live energy with electronica. Here they are given a remix adding some extra fat synth bass to the party.

Bossaphonik is on the third or fourth Friday of every month at Cowley Workers Social Club, Temple Cowley. Host, DJ Bossaphonik Dan spins tunes before and after a live band. Next night is May 20 with Onipa which features K.O.G (K.O.G and the Zongo Brigade) and Tom Excell (Nubian Twist). Visit bossaphonik.com for future dates. You can also catch Dan at Tap Social in Botley every first Friday of the month.

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LIVE

BUZZCOCKS, O2
ACADEMY, OXFORD

Buzzcocks were a baptism of fire. Frun Evans at school made me the tape. A copy of a copy of a copy. So when I got my first job and bought their actual LPs - I wasn't expecting the guitars to be so loud. This is a thing with those cassettes, Pixies were the same. All those hours in your bedroom, listening to 'Singles - Going Steady' on repeat, and then suddenly you're a middle-aged man on the front row, watching your heroes. Remember, albeit briefly, why these melodic pieces of beauty fall into the natural sequence of life. Yeah, Frun had nice hair - she grew up and got married, had kids. But I'm still here, with the romantic dream of Buzzcocks in my head.

DIY culture evolves from the fanzine, and Buzzcocks adapt through how they put themselves out on the 2022 tour. They remain a lighthouse of constant reinvention through the promotion. I am every bit a fan, not just of their records but of their reimagining of what it means to do stuff yourself. I've followed every night of this tour through Instagram. I know what shirts Steve Diggle, guitarist and now singer, wears on stage. I can map his laundry from Cumbria to London. The striped shirt! Or is it the dotty one tonight?! The intense glare as he leans into the microphone, drizzles of sweat appearing as he unleashes possibly the greatest set of bored teenage love songs on an unsuspecting audience. How are Buzzcocks going to pull it off without Pete Shelley? It is called a work ethic. Bounce back. Bounce better! 1234!

Tonight Diggle is wearing a stripey blue and white t-shirt. I am literally six feet away from the worst guitar solo in recorded history. I love it. Diggle is not the kind of guy you'd badger for an autograph. It would be awkward, he's like us. I don't even care if the rest of the line up weren't in the original group. When it comes to the romance of Buzzcocks music these things are irrelevant. I hang off the balcony of chords.

Buzzcocks re-invention is, to me, entirely beautiful. The set isn't a pageant to the past but a living, multitude of trash. They have a new record

coming out - bounce back, bounce better. If you reduce everything you care about into a three minute pop single what else where else do you go? Do you reimagine yourself on the variety circuit? Where do the lines of working class culture and performance clash? On this stage - right here, right now. On the front row, bathed in comedic green light, so that even my one selfie makes me think twice. We grow old. Music as good as Buzzcocks melodies defies the trenches. I don't go to work every day so I can eventually be replaced by an App. I go to work every day so I can buy a ticket to witness a behemoth of the British music scene smash out the songs I love. To be inspired. To be someone. From the pamphlet to the mixtape to the record player to this experience tonight. And in true fashion, I bow out, wait three hours for the bus, and dream of writing melodies such as these. Buzzcocks rule. (BM)

NICK MASON'S
SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS,
NEW THEATRE

Let us be clear, this isn't a Pink Floyd concert! Nick Mason might be Floyd's drummer and the set drawn from the band's 1967 to 1972 period, but Saucerful of Secrets are not Pink Floyd! Nick Mason, the only original Floyd member, has clearly grown tired of the elongated instrumentals of the last forty years and so has assembled a noteworthy band (don't knock Gary Kemp singing Syd Barret until you've seen him), to bring back to life the more 'psychedelic' side of Pink Floyd.

Opening with Meddle's 'One of these days', fans are treated to two-hours plus of tracks ranging from debut single, 'Arnold Layne' to 1971's 'Echoes', thankfully slimmed down from its original 23 minutes to a more listenable 10, via early singles and even b-sides. Accompanying many of the 22 songs are psychedelic visuals from the Floyd archive and short anecdotes from Mason. Whilst longer tracks like 'Atom Heart Mother' have been shed of their grandiosity, what we are left with is a constant 1-2 of much loved, but long-ignored, tracks performed with an energy and humour, not generally associated with Pink Floyd shows.

Whilst Mason keeps time at the back, he allows his four band members space in each of the songs to take the audience on the journey with them. Whilst most eyes, and ears, may be on

Spandau Ballet's Gary Kemp, Guy Pratt, bass player with Pink Floyd since 1987, shares vocals and laughs with Kemp throughout.

Closing with Gary Kemp, admirably, singing Syd Barret's fabulous, and slightly ludicrous, 'Bike', Mason reminds us that the songs, and some of the musicians, might be more than 50 years old but they still pack a punch and as a live show can't be dismissed quite yet. (DR)

THE WEDDING PRESENT, O2
ACADEMY, OXFORD

It strikes me that perhaps The Wedding Present haven't come far since I first saw them at a community festival on Blackbird Leys in 1988. Here we are, all of two miles down the Cowley Road and they've long traded on an 'all the songs sound the same' moniker. A trusty formula of quiet - she doesn't love me, to loud - she loves that idiot instead, rushing guitar crescendo as conclusion is revealed has served them well. And repeat, for thirty five years.

Tonight we're here to celebrate their sonic left turn. Whilst the subject matter remains break up driven, Seamonsters was a Steve Albini - produced distorted departure. It divided critics, confused fans and arrested commercial breakthrough. I adored it, and for many, it was their masterpiece.

Tonight they conjure an unflinching intensity from the jealous explosion of 'Dalliance' through to the epic delicacy of album closer 'Octopussy', before greeting us "good evening". Live, these songs breathe with a depth and reach which captivates and connects with the room. David Gedge teases his way through the second half, joking with the latest version of his bandmates about their navy blue boiler suits. There are new songs, and old songs but of course they all sound the same anyway. There's the exultant blast of tonight's outstanding 'Kennedy' and there isn't the new single 'Monochrome'.

We're thirty something years on as a blistering 'Bewitched' closes the set, and what strikes me now is how far the band have come and I wonder how long their intense purpose may yet endure. (LW)

MUNGO'S HI FI, THE
BULLINGDON

Once again the Blessed St Mungo descends from the Highlands to join His most faithful and receptive disciples here in the lowly 'Shire. Patron saint of sound systems (and Glasgow), this time the visitation is embodied by Tom: the first Person of the Trinity (last time was Doug, and the time before, Craig). We must have no doubts about this particular Thomas, however, being the bankable, creative mind behind the modern re-treads of classic dance hall/roots productions that have made Mungos HiFi unstoppable over the last two decades. Talking of biblical names, he is joined by Eva Lazurus (always very much alive) on the mic; her fiery soul vocals lending yet more sparkle to these thundering riddims. However, it must be admitted, things took a while to kick in thusly.

The likewise dependable DJ Wrongtom's (pictured above) opening set was denied the full System- level treatment, due to...er... local early noise-level concerns. Things get going with Myki Tuff's set, and especially his crowd-pleasing anti-Covid anthem - 'I Will Survive Corona' (yep; a reggaefied version of Gloria Gaynor). Then the full Mungo's/Lazarus Drop: all concrete crackin' bass and wicked skanks, with classics from various chapters of the Holy Book of Mungo. Lord 'a' mercy! (LB)

We're looking for enthusiastic music and culture-lovin' writers to bolster our established team and mix things up a little. You can review local gigs, new releases and interview your favourite bands. This is an excellent way to get involved with your local music scene, or to take your first steps towards a writing path by getting your work published. You don't need experience, just a strong interest in music, whatever style or genre - and something to say! If you're interested in writing for OMS, drop us a line at back2left@gmail.com.



PANDAPOCALYPSE - THE LIBRARY, OXFORD

The Library was packed with Friday night's revellers swaying to the sax-lead, electronica-infused sounds of Pandapocalypse. There was a wonderfully appealing DIY quality to the outfit's setup which featured a rhythmic backing track with the three-piece laying down live saxophone, guitar and vocals on top. Flickers of XTC, Hot Chip and Helen Love were briefly audible during the night's blue-haired antics but that's not to say Clare, Rachel and Stu weren't sounding original as they got the room simultaneously hooked and planning ahead to the next show.

Some may have regarded the set as too silly or gimmicky as it launched into versions of 'Tequila' and the 'Ghost Busters' theme, however, for those with a sense of humour, it was non-stop fun and shape-throwing in our favourite crowded basement. (GN)

MELT BANANA, SHAKE CHAIN, THE BULLINGDON

A fellow audience member is suffering facedown on the floor in distress. Someone needs to help, otherwise this post-punky three-piece's show is ruined. Hang on a minute! That's Shake Chain's Kate Mahony on the floor crawling towards a set of primal angst conveyed through dissonant wailing as rock is reduced to its underlying feelings of unrest. Avant-garde pantomime now steps unavoidably across the fourth wall and it's perhaps the boldest thing The Bullingdon has witnessed in a while.

Headliners Melt Banana are back in Oxford for some ear-blistering, mosh-inducing sonic mayhem guaranteed to blast crowds into transcendental realms. Brace yourselves as even early My Bloody Valentine shows are about to sound like the Bodleian Library. Towards the end, there's the slight tease of a foot-tapping crowd-pleaser but no, it swiftly descends into what the duo do best: chaos. (GN)

WHITE LIES, O2 ACADEMY, OXFORD

What can't be denied is how much their fans LOVE this group. They punch the air at random! Someone in the front row waves a Primark jumper! The light show is spectacular. Grumpy old men like us, towards the back, pick out references from 80s dance tracks, no doubt intentionally plucked by the group. We muse on how the group would sound if the lights, drums, bass and vocals took centre stage, and the guitars took a break. Magnificent, we reckon.

It's a great fun, great energy gig from a group who clearly inspire loyalty from Radio 2 listeners. There are people who know all the lyrics. There are people who pretend they know all the lyrics when they're clearly contemplating the most convenient petrol pump at 7.30 on a frosty morning. And there are smiles wreathed around. White Lies have everything a loyal audience craves. And that, for these folk, makes this gig a tremendous hit. (BM)

RIOT JAZZ BRASS BAND, O2 ACADEMY, OXFORD

Jazz has rarely felt more accessible with these slick and punchy trumpet-leads and fluid grooves from the rhythm section. The Mancunian nine-piece took to the Oxford O2 stage with graceful virtuosity. Frontman MC Chunky carried the group with his raw coolness while tastefully bridging Riot Jazz's sound with the world of hip-hop through conscious lyricism. Highlights included the effortlessly singable 'Deet Darh' at the start and

'I've Got a Sousaphone' at the end as the big-blasting unsung man-of-the-hour sousaphone player was finally introduced.

Anyone fearing that Riot Jazz were just a brass covers band was gladly corrected tonight. However, when the odd cover was unleashed, such as Britney Spears' 'Toxic', these Kings of the North were guaranteed to bring the noise. (GN)



SHAVEN PRIMATES, WHO KILLED NANCY JOHNSON, PLAGUE ARISH, PORT MAHON

The splendidly behatted Plague Arish takes the stage for what we gather is his first ever gig. Ploughing a techno/industrial furrow with keyboard and laptop, the stated intentions are to make some noise and tell some jokes. The first of these is achieved admirably, the second not so much (although a rim shot sample would have helped). More noise diplomacy than noise terrorism, maybe, but none the worse for that.

Up next is Who Killed Nancy Johnson? with a high energy set of contemporary punk. Billed as visceral and political, they are certainly the former, although their showstopper 'Communist' leaves their precise take on Marxist-Leninist theory rather unclear, at least to my ears. Vocalist Stefan Ball bestrides the stage and environs with a panache befitting a far larger venue, drummer Mark Wren anchors the mayhem while not altogether disguising a musicality that perhaps exceeds his brief. With an onstage verve and confidence well-honed from live work, WKNJ are definitely a band worth seeking out in the wild.

Headliners Shaven Primates (pictured left) take to a stage crowded with equipment in exemplary prog-rock fashion. Playing long songs with complex narratives, this is obviously not a band afraid of a suite. Or of theatricality; front man Mark prances around in school uniform and hospital gown as to the manor born. The wholly endearing overall effect is that of a Carry On film produced and scored by an early line-up of Genesis. Another highlight was guitarist Tom sitting down amid his huge array of pedals to play one of the finest heavily amplified lap-steel solos I have heard. Special mention to drummer Jarod, not only for holding things together with considerable aplomb from behind his kit, but also for educating a rapt public about the night's unexpected transit of the International Space Station. All in all, Shaven Primates are something of an undiscovered Oxford treasure. (HG). (Photo Jeff Slade).

LOCAL RELEASES

theboywhochosethesea - the seas beyond the stars

Eight tracks of otherworldly wonderment. A full year still hasn't passed since the synth wizard's first Bandcamp release, yet already experimental evolution is apparent in these piano-led dreamscapes. The opener is a first waltz of sorts, igniting a voyage of heartfelt spacey keys floating in ostinatos of oblivion. Echoing percussion and white-noise are used masterfully to underpin harmonies that could have been plucked from Sigur Ros' 'Valtari' while the centrally-placed title track wakes us from an illusory trance with blinding clarity.

Closing track 'Epilogue (in C Minor)' firmly avoids any kind of sentimental or euphoric goodbye and instead stays true to the album's spirit by leaning towards the ghostly and eerie side of the ambient genre as the listener is marched to the exit. (GN)

BRUNO MUERTE - MONODRONE

Following last year's dark and brooding EP Projections, electronic duo Bruno Muerte have opted to explore some slightly lighter territory with a big injection of funk on their new single 'Monodrone' and it's all the better for it, certainly more accessible.

This four minute instrumental is delightfully 80s influenced, channeling the likes of New Order, OMD and The Cure with its retro synthesizers, driving drum machines, and strangely danceable guitar melodies - one to spark up the dancefloor. (TC)

BBC INTRODUCING IN OXFORD

with SHOW PRODUCER Liz Green

BACK OUTDOORS! This is the time of year that we start preparing for the festival season. It feels great to be back planning live music in fields across the country. As a team, we have the amazing privilege of suggesting bands and artists for some of the biggest events in the summer calendar. Glastonbury, Reading & Leeds, Latitude and Radio 1's Big Weekend will all see BBC Introducing artists take to the stage, and we're so happy that some of the talent Oxfordshire has to offer will be performing, including Oxford native Artemas.

TRUCK The BBC Introducing in Oxfordshire show will also be back at Oxfordshire's Truck Festival. Taking place from the July 21 - 24 we'll be hosting a stage on the Friday and broadcasting our Saturday show live from the site. The Truck Festival Band App has now closed so we'll be making our line-up selection soon.

LOW ISLAND In April we invited our first guest back into the studio. Carlos from Low Island popped by to see Dave to tell him about their new EP - 'Just Another Dreamer', and their tour. You can listen back by subscribing to the podcast - just search for 'BBC Introducing in Oxfordshire'.

NEW ARTISTS We also introduced some artists to the BBC Introducing in Oxfordshire family. We spoke to 16 year old Emily Jeffri from Oxford and played her track 'SCREAM!' on the radio for the first ever time, and Katie and Tom from pop-metal band - VALOR.

If you've got new music that you'd like to hear on the radio, you can upload your music to us at bbc.co.uk/introducing.



ERBZ TOP 10 HIP HOP TRACKS

The official Rhymeskeemz DJ with his all time hop hop favourites - Erbz has also played as part of Roots Manuva's band and supported Pete Rock, once with De la Soul, once with CL Smooth - "we hit a little back to back mix before bringing CL Smooth out" Erbz remembers.

NAS - NAS IS LIKE When 2 of the best in their respected fields come together!... Nas' lyrics with DJ Premier on production - one of the greatest hip hop producers of all time.

MOP feat BUSTA RHYMES, TEFLON & REMI MARTIN - ANTE UP Bound sure to make any party bounce! One track when I've played this live you can literally see the energy in the room hit 100.

MOBB DEEP - SHOOK ONES PT II From time you hear them hats and the snare! The infamous hailing from Queens bridge NY - another party standard.

NOTORIOUS B.I.G - HYPNOTIZE I've played this at pretty much every party I've played at! Another banger to turn the party up!

DR DRE & SNOOP DOGG - NEXT EPISODE Two of the best from the west! Everyone knows this track! Another one guaranteed to turn the party up!

MOS DEF - MATHEMATICS Produced by DJ Premier - another hip hop hit!

GANG STARR & JADAKISS - RITE WHERE YOU STAND Gang Starr, DJ Premier & Guru with Jadakiss on the track! One of my favourite all time tracks!

JAY Z & NOTORIOUS B.I.G - BROOKLYN'S FINEST Real hip hop heads know whats up with this one! Vibes for years!!!

WUTANG CLAN - AIN'T NUTTIN' TO FUCK WIT Straight classic!... bangs from start to finish.

ROYCE DA 5'9 feat. DJ PREMIER - HIP HOP Another classic banger produced by DJ Premier - bound sure to make any party bang!

Keep an eye out for forthcoming Erbz dates on Instagram at ErbzTTK

SELF HELP - BE MORE EVIL / BAMBOO

I do enjoy a good Self Help track, and 'Be More Evil' drives at a fast pace from the country-esque opening to the stellar, speedy pseudo-punk that carries the urgent vocal. A blues organ joins the middle eight in just the right way - no room for error here, because it could easily have sounded gimmicky done wrong (it isn't). The bass gives this power, the drumming is on point, the whole band is on point.

The second release of this month, 'Bamboo', offers a (slightly) more laid-back vibe with a lot more of a retro vibe - it would be easy to find influences in this one from Queen to Pulp to Arctic Monkeys - and it works perfectly either way. Self Help might have the best rhythm section of any local band, and the addition of almost surf-like guitar and a vocal that demands attention whilst being personable and relatable just tops it all off. For most bands, this would be their peak. I'm not entirely certain that Self Help isn't just getting started. (KS)

FOAM HEADS - RAIN

The last release 'Mass Extinction' from Oxford's Foam Heads was described in these pages as 'a fun little track with some strong 80s synth pop influences' and was actually pretty decent in a Super Furry Friends way. This light guitar pop jingle jangle through the peculiarities of love and the weather has some nice touches but there's something naggingly obvious that they are better than this. On and on indeed. (LW)

JADA PEARL - UNRAVEL ME

Oxford's Jada Pearl is back with Unravel Me, a dotting r'n'b outcry dripping with soulful melody and a lusciously bassy and smooth production that would have D'Angelo himself smiling. The full version and the radio edit are both essential listening. (GN)

LOCAL RELEASES



PANDAPOPALYPSE - BRAIN FREEZE

Pandapocalypse is a three-piece based in Oxford who, despite only being formed in 2018 are already two EPs deep, and have just launched a new single. Made up of Clare Heaviside, Rachel Ruscombe-King and Stu Wigby, their single Brain Freeze certainly shares a certain amount of musical DNA with Stu's and Claire's former band Balkan Warriors, and that's no bad thing. Driven by a driving, grimy synth, Brain Freeze is a single that like Balkan Warriors' previous work will be best heard live and will be sure to get the crowds moving at a summer festival. Put this track on your headphones, and enjoy 3 minutes and 42 seconds of joy that will put a smile on your face. (DB)

HE DIDN'T - ASCENSION EPY

The latest offering from He Didn't opens with the beautiful, simplistic, and quite earthy tones of 'King' before a relaxed, assured vocal helps to mask the incoming massive guitar riffs that follow. 'March of the Econowives' offers a more driven guitar that feels very Pink Floyd-inspired. 'Trouble Every Day' is a 7-minute epic that offers simple guitars and vocals that give way to a slower, darker, distortion-heavy sound that offers a minimalist rock opera of sorts. The title track, 'Ascension', sees the floaty guitars return, and conveys a lot through very little. A decent EP, for sure, but I have

my doubts that it would hold up to repeated listens. Well worth listening to once, though. (KS)

TREV WILLIAMS - BROWN RIVER

This is protest music at its most direct. A voice and a piano getting straight to the heart of the matter: excrement is killing the Thames! Williams goes straight for the jugulars of the CEOs and their by-any-means drive to profiteer while side-stepping the reality of just how polluted our rivers have become. We're all up Shit Creek if we don't take heed. (GN)

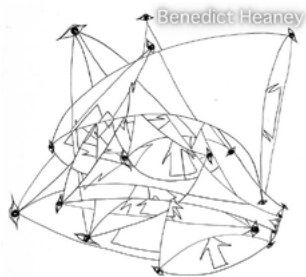
THE MAY - ABBEY ROAD LIVE EP

The May are one of those acts you would namedrop in abundance, had anyone else heard of them. They should have (*they might if they knew Vienna Ditto - Facts Ed*), because this EP brims with razor sharp electronic beeps and blues, with futuristic musical shouting. At one point The May sample a voice who spits out of the speakers like a beatbox mother-in-law, telling you to grow up. "Put down that synthesizer" she seems to say, "and get a real job." Thankfully The May's job IS to make records as good as their Abbey Road EP. Were the Library of Congress to select one release in 2022 to celebrate the culture of music conceived in the garden shed, this is the release they should choose. (BM)

WE REVIEW LOCAL
SINGLES, EPS AND
ALBUMS.

TO PUT YOUR NEW
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PICTURES, SLEEVE AND
BIOG TO:
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LOCAL RELEASES



Everything & Inbetween

BENEDICT HEANEY - EVERYTHING & INBETWEEN

Electric violinist Benedict Heaney (The August List, Great Western Tears) indulges listeners with ambitious and expansive soundscapes on his new album. Self-described as a "most personal collection of songs and instrumentals", Everything & Inbetween is Heaney's raw attempt at processing the death of his mother.

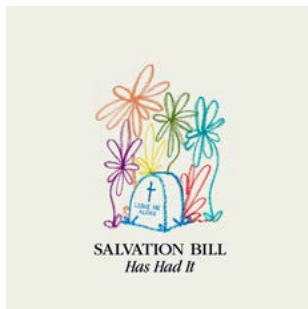
While it is diverse, a haunting, yet beautiful melancholy underpins this record, at times bearing similarities to Nick Cave's fragile masterpiece 'Skeleton Tree'.

The record veers between comforting ambient pieces, wild and alienating experimental instrumentals and songs that fuse a traditional folk feel with Eno influenced ambience, making for a compelling listen. Truly an album to get lost in. (TC)

THE BOBO - ONE BY ONE

Down at OMS towers we would like to point out that we liked The BoBo first. Way before anyone else. OK? Good. The reason we are claiming this is so we can bank some cool points when she gets big. And she will if her latest single is anything to go by. A beautifully produced

electro-acoustic lament that showcases The BoBo's wonderfully elegant voice. The track, a collaboration with bandmate Felix Meyer, is based on a composition that The Bobo wrote with her dad (AKA The DoDo?) and is delivered with warm, delicate emotion. Seek this record out as soon as possible and remember, we were here first, right? (CF)



SALVATION BILL - HAS HAD IT

Salvation Bill main man Ollie Thomas' themes are those of death, love, loss, money problems and non-specific tales of woe, apparently. Not two minutes into the opening track 'Well Wishers' comes a heartfelt plea to "Bury me under a tree..." Well, maybe do a couple more numbers first, Ollie, and then we'll see. Very much at the folkier extremity of the singer-songwriter's oeuvre, Has Had It displays an impressive variety of lyrical and musical tone, from the beguilingly tender to the challengingly abrasive. The charmingly Ivor Cutler-ish title of 'A Husband and his Mouse' belies a harrowing journey into domestic abuse. 'Baby Bird' is a tender ballad of young love and lust with arrestingly earthy (indeed, perhaps over-informative) lyrics.

"I was being chased by the chief of police" Ollie intones on 'Slow Wave', a propos of what is unclear. Then again, on 'Worst Laid Plans' we learn of "ants crawling, scum forming..."

so clearly some sort of official action was called for. This is a set of well-realised, musically detailed and lyrically surprising songs that repays close listening and bodes well for the future of Salvation Bill. (HG)

SEB REYNOLDS - ATHLETICS EP

A six track electronica based EP from Sebastian Reynolds, who has garnered an encouraging reputation through collaborations and more recently, his solo work. His previous releases have received glowing reviews so I'm intrigued to hear this running-inspired collection. It clocks in within 13 minutes, so won't get any of us around our local parkrun.

That said, I take a deep breath and grab my trainers. The lead track 'Cheptegei' is an ode to the legendary Ugandan 5000m champion, but I guess you knew that already. It's a magnificent celebratory saxophone driven rush with echoes of Public Service Broadcasting but as I'm getting into my stride it's over too soon.

The other single 'Four-Minute Mile' will be released on May 6, the anniversary of Sir Roger Bannister's world record at Iffley Road, Oxford. It's an altogether calmer, more delicate take. Whilst the order of the other tracks may confuse my run: the frantic distorted burst of 'Final Push' is sequenced before the mellow ambient drone of 'Start Line' for example, the intent is to be less literal and provide calm interlude. I like that. As a whole then, it leaves me further intrigued and positively dizzy as I hang my trainers back up. (LW)



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