

## Live previews: Revel in jazz rock



### Get The Blessing

**Norwich Arts Centre, tonight**  
Comprising musicians who've worked with everyone from Hawkwind to Super Furry Animals, Robert Plant to Roni Size these Bristol-based post-jazz rockers revel in a diverse array of influences.

Formed by drummer Clive Deamer and bassist Jim Barr — who've both played with tip-hop superstars Portishead — they've brought together musicians, including trumpeter Pete Judge and saxophonist Jake McMurchie, with a shared fascination with improvised music.

They've steadily begun to make music of their own, artfully welding riffs and rhythms from rock and dance music on to fearlessly inventive improvisation.

Their approach, which saw them triumph at the BBC Jazz Awards, winning Best Album, has much in common with the current crop of 'postjazz' trailblazers — such as EST, Polar Bear and Acoustic Ladyland. But it also draws from influences as diverse as the Kings of Leon, Tortoise, Elvis Costello, The Ramones, Red Snapper and Albert Ayler.

Their live shows are a fantastic high energy mix of incredible instrumental skill and pure enjoyment to give both your brain and eardrums a serious workout.

Further listening:  
[www.myspace.com/thisistheblessing](http://www.myspace.com/thisistheblessing)



### The Levellers

**UEA, Sunday**  
Unfashionably outspoken, The Levellers can still command huge audiences with their mix of folk, punk and politics.

Formed in the mid-80s, and named after a radical section of Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army from the 17th century, the band earned themselves a great reputation for playing thunderous live shows.

They won more fans after they released their second album, *Levelling The Land*, in 1991.

And they got bigger as the 90s went on, and by the time the aptly named fourth album *Zeitgeist* was released in 1995, the band had a number one album and single on their hands.

Fashions change but the critical acclaim for their sixth album, *Letters From The Underground*, released earlier this year, proves that while the band may have disappeared from the limelight, they aren't any less active or passionate than they once were.

They remain as outspoken as ever, as the track *Burn America, Burn* proves.

Singer and co-founder of the band Mark Chadwick says: "We'd never shy away from political statements or controversy. What's the point? The world isn't getting any better is it, let's face it, so there should be more people out there talking about what's going on."

Further listening:  
[www.levellers.co.uk](http://www.levellers.co.uk)



### Ocean Colour Scene

**UEA, Monday**  
In the late-90s, around the time they were supporting Oasis at Knebworth, Ocean Colour Scene were briefly in fashion. Times move on and somehow down the years their name has become a by-word for the much derided term, dad-rock.

Along the way they've transformed from Breton-shirt wearing disciples of The Stone Roses (debut single *Sway*) to million selling Britpop superstars (*Marchin' Already* bumped Oasis' *Be Here Now* from the top spot in 1997, to long-term touring allies with Paul Weller).

Still, though they may no longer command the respect they deserve or sell like they used to — their last album *On The Leyline* only managed to reach number 37, OCS — now a nucleus of Simon Fowler (vocals/guitar), Steve Cradock (guitar/vocals) and Oscar Harrison (drums) — remain popular with fans of well crafted soul-rock and top notch musicianship.

Support comes from Steve Pilgrim, who for a day job beats the skins for the likes of The Stands, John Power and, currently, Paul Weller, but who has also successfully transformed himself into a successful acoustic guitar singer-songwriter, whose debut album, *Lover, Love Her*, has won acclaim.

Further listening:  
[www.oceancolourscene.com](http://www.oceancolourscene.com)



### Abram Wilson & The Delta Blues Trio

**Norwich Arts Centre, Thursday**  
Trumpeter and vocalist Abram Wilson was born in Arkansas and raised in Louisiana, where — like Wynton Marsalis and Harry Connick Jr before him — he attended the famed New Orleans Center for the Performing Arts.

After appearing with Roy Hargrove and blues legend Ruth Brown, Wilson made a surprising move to London in 2002. But he has since become an essential part of the roster of Dune Records, alongside fellow young jazz pioneers, Soweto Kinch, Denys Baptiste and Jazz Jamaica.

Last year Wilson won a BBC Jazz Award for his highly acclaimed album *Ride!* Ferris Wheel To The Modern Day Delta.

The album, which interestingly was commissioned by Cheltenham Jazz Festival under the Jerwood Rising Stars Programme, was a bluesy travelogue of an imaginary musician who tries the high life but returns to his roots, with Wilson's explosive Delta Blues Trio, playing everything from brass-band jazz and delta blues to acoustic hip-hop.

Despite now living over here, Wilson's bright and agile trumpet-playing still reflects his New Orleans roots. He is a natural musical communicator and the playing crackles with life.

Further listening:  
[www.myspace.com/abramwilson](http://www.myspace.com/abramwilson)

## Former Rolling Stones man relishes exploring new territory

### Mick Taylor & His Band Waterfront, Wednesday



"It was an unhappy time for me, and probably for the rest of the band as well," says Mick Taylor of the reasons for his famous departure from The Rolling Stones.

At the time of his departure the band was at the height of their fame and without him they went on to sell out stadiums around the world. At the time it was reported he walked out after five years after joining as the replacement for Brian Jones, saying he "saw the group as not going anywhere".

"In the period when I left, the band was in one of their down times," adds the quiet guitarist, who now lives in Norfolk.

"It was just after the release of *It's Only Rock 'n' Roll*, the last of the six albums I did with them. It is probably publicly known that Keith Richards and Mick Jagger had fallings out from time to time and this was one of those, really. Me and Bill Wyman talked about it. He got very frustrated at that time but he stayed.

"In a way, that sort of friction and chaos can produce great music, but it was getting harder and harder. Around that time we were either in the recording

studio or living in the south of France. From being just an ordinary musician making £50 a week, I suddenly for no good reason had to become a tax exile. It wasn't that I had tax problems, but they did.

"I have no regrets about leaving when I did. I do not wallow in nostalgia. I have lots of regrets about other things, but then what musician or anybody approaching their 60th birthday doesn't have regrets?"

Taylor is still on good terms with his former band-mates, especially Bill Wyman, but he is more focused on his new band who play the Waterfront next week.

The group includes guitarist Denny Newman, acclaimed keyboard player Max Middleton, bassist Kuma Harada and drummer Jeff Allen.

"We do some original songs and a few cover songs and we sometimes even play a couple of the Rolling Stones songs that I am associated with," said Taylor. "I don't think I have ever played in Norwich before, so I am really looking forward to it."

Their college-roots make them an inspiration to students at our own our similar Community Music East, but guitarist Ross Millard says the city is lucky to have it.

"As far as the north east was concerned it was a one off. There are a few others in the country and it's not enough. There's a lot of facilities geared towards UK hip-hop but there's not really any kind of meeting point for guitarists and drummers. The more the government puts into this kind of thing the better — it worked a treat for us. Music is a self-sufficient hobby — you need less encouragement to pick up a guitar and get going — but there needs to be some network in place, and these projects are not always where they need to be."

After gigging around Sunderland in their teens and twenties, they got signed to an indie label and put out a couple of EPs, before being snapped up by a major label for their eponymous debut in 2004.

"You almost don't notice because you have such short-term ambitions at the beginning — you want to play a few gigs, and then you want to play outside the city, and suddenly someone wants to make a record," says Millard.

But making a record is something that blessed and cursed the band. Shooting to stardom with a Top-10 cover of Kate Bush's *Hounds of Love*, they have worn the song round their necks ever since. And whilst it made them flavour of the month and shifted thousands of copies of their debut — the scene had changed by the time of its follow-up and the band were dropped by their label in late 2006.

The band have said they were close to splitting at the time, but instead they dusted themselves off and became an inspiration to wannabes once again when they founded their own record label for the release of their third record *This Is Not The World* earlier in the year.

"Splitting up's a difficult thing to quantify,

Tickets £12.50 call 01603 508050. Further listening:  
[www.micktaylor.net](http://www.micktaylor.net)

## Return sets venue buzzing



### music notes with Kingsley Harris

It was the long awaited return of **The Quireboys** to the Brickmakers this week that had Norwich buzzing.

The band has built up quite a rapport with the venue and it's an ideal backdrop for their sleazy balls to the wall (their description not mine) stage show.

If you like your rock'n'roll untempered with then this is where you were or should have been.

Support came by way of local outfit **Pure Passion**, band of landlady Charley South who now mainly concentrates with mum Pam on providing the city with the much-needed hi-spec venue. The oddball choice of interlude music seemed courtesy of an early NOW album and pushed the gig in a dodgy 80s direction, so I took the opportunity to sneak a quick peek next door in B2 and I'm glad I did.

I managed to catch London

based rock band **Via Negativa** performing an absolutely brilliant version of The Beatles, *I Want You*. Now I'm not a fan of covers but this is one of my favourite tracks regardless, and the guys did it real justice.

I returned just in time to see the Quireboys take the stage. Even after 22-years the band still ooze sex appeal and anticipation wafted over the audience like the Bisto cloud. Arrhhhhhh Quireboys... It's no secret the band's bread and butter for all those years has been blues rock, a UK take on USA R&B ala The Rolling Stones, The Animals, and The Faces, all being part of its make-up and heritage, quite literally a blend of black and white music.

So what sticks in your head to make this band memorable, first it's lead singer Spike's gravel laced voice, akin to Rod Stewart, sadly a nemesis-in-law down to the popularisation of Rod. However, anything beyond the Faces, Spike certainly has the edge on material. The saturation of bending strings from guitarist Guy Griffin, who's never in a hurry to drop a note or slide off a chord and finally the subtle under current of Hammond organ, once again you have to think Ian McLagan,



The Quireboys



Pure Passion

## Band bites back with third album

The Futureheads flew to stardom with their catchy brand of punk-pop, only be unceremoniously dropped by their record label after the flop of their second album. Now they're back with their own record label, a new album, and a gig in Norwich.

ROB GARRATT spoke to guitarist Ross Millard.



The Futureheads are a band with perseverance. After shooting to fame in early 2005 they enjoyed 18-months at the top when they were dropped suddenly by their record label. But instead of throwing the towel in and biting the dust, the band ruffled their feathers and burst back onto the scene, founding their own record label and releasing their third album earlier this year.

That perseverance is based on a long history of playing together. Meeting when they were still teenagers, they congregated at Sunderland's City Detached Youth Project, a place for young musicians to meet and rehearse.

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"Splitting up's a difficult thing to quantify,

we saw past that, we were so confused about what we wanted to do next. We felt the only future was to get our own label and be in control. With Warner Bros it was like the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing and you get to the stage where you need a little bit of enthusiasm behind you."

"We just went back to the initial idea of the band and had a heart to heart, we had to rekindle our love for doing it rather than thinking of it as a job or business."

And after investing their own hopes and dreams in the label, they could not have been more lucky with the Top 20 hit single *The Beginning of the Twist*, and the band have kept up the pace with this tour being their fourth of the year.

"We were totally prepared for it to collapse, we didn't expect it to be a hit. We've got a loyal following, you're asking a lot of fans to expect them to come out and see you four times a year. But this will be our last tour for a long time — we're not planning any more gigs until autumn next year."

"On this tour we've got a long set list to pick songs from, we like to change the set list for every show because we've got enough songs to do that. We like to stick in requests. There's a couple of slower tracks of the second album we don't want to play, because we're wanting to keep it fast and energetic."

But whilst Millard seems doubtful the band's luck will last forever, he seems to be embracing wherever the industry is going next.

"To an extent I'm not sure if there's a right way or a wrong way to release music. In this country we have it so a band doesn't get a look in after it's first record. We're very fortunate to keep going to three records."

"Bands used to make money from selling records and going on tours, then people stopped buying music and bands made money from just the shows. Now there's a recession they'll stop going to shows — the levee's got to break at some stage."

"The era of rock bands getting rich for doing very little is over. This will force out great art — you don't see much great art coming out of rich bands — and I'm looking forward to what comes out of this."

"There's ideas in place for a new album — it will be more complex than the last one — the fourth record has to be our classic album, for our own sakes. We don't want to feel we're going back on ourselves."

"We can't decide how long we'll be doing this. Our drummer's having a kid and our bassist is getting married next year, we'll do this as long as we feel we've got the songs. And the general public decides — if no one buys a gig ticket then its time to give up."

Further listening:  
[www.thefutureheads.co.uk](http://www.thefutureheads.co.uk)

## sounds in the city

### December 5

**From The Jam** (rock) — UEA  
**Get The Blessing** (nu-jazz) — Arts Centre  
**Tin Man** (indie/rock) — B2  
**David Celia Band** (pop/folk) — Cider Shed  
**Streetlight Manifesto** (rock/ska) — Queen Charlotte  
**Liza Wolfe Band** (pop/rock/soul) — King Edward VII  
**Dr Misfit** (Dr Feelgood tribute) — Brickmakers  
**The Planks** — Blueberry  
**The Dirty Trix** (rock/blues) — Marquee  
**4D James** (blues) — Walnut Tree Shades

### December 6

**i Like Trains** (indie) — Arts Centre  
**Spot/Thick Trick** (pop/rock) — B2  
**Monkey Spanner** (ska/reggae) — Brickmakers  
**Smokin' Hogs** (blues/rock) — King Edward VII  
**The Collectors** (alternative/indie) — Marquee  
**Icarus Vision** (rock) — Cricketers Rest  
**Vic Salter** (rock) — The Gatehouse  
**Dr Misfit** (Dr Feelgood tribute) — Blueberry  
**Voodoo Bones** (psychobilly) — The Stanley

### December 7

**The Levellers** (folk/rock) — UEA  
**The Futureheads** (indie) — Waterfront  
**Brooke Sharkey** (acoustic/folk) — Cider Shed  
**Lee Vasey Big Band** (12pm) — Brickmakers

### December 8

**Ocean Colour Scene** (rock) — UEA  
**Flamboyant Bella** (indie) — Arts Centre

### December 9

**Lee Bradley: Spirit of Pavarotti** (opera) — Playhouse  
**Lick The Dice** (rock) — Brickmakers  
**Dying Breeds** (pop-punk) — B2

### December 10

**The Rascals** (indie) — Arts Centre  
**Mick Taylor** (blues/rock) — Waterfront  
**Deaf Havana** (screamo) — Queen Charlotte  
**Ten Ten Tackles** (electro-pop) — B2

### December 11

**The Damned** (punk) — Waterfront  
**Abram Wilson & The Delta Blues Trio** (jazz/blues) — Arts Centre  
**Black Gold** (indie/rock) — Queen Charlotte  
**Luna Ghost** (rock) — Brickmakers  
**Dirty Havana** (rock) — B2  
**The Slippers** (1930s/swing) — Take 5  
**Cruisin For A Bruisin** (blues) — Rose Tavern

## Your band in the spotlight

If you want some FREE publicity for your band, email your details with jpeg images to [simon.parkin@archant.co.uk](mailto:simon.parkin@archant.co.uk) and email your up and coming gig list to [goingout@archant.co.uk](mailto:goingout@archant.co.uk)

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