



# Let's be charitable about vinyl

Arctic Monkeys have released their new single exclusively through Oxfam shops. Dedicated charity shop scouter **ROB GARRATT** took a £5 note down Magdalen Street to see what other gems he could unearth.

Aside from providing pre-loved clothes, books and household goods at knock-down prices, Oxfam has also been dealing music to the masses since it was founded in 1942. Now the charity's chain of shops has been chosen by the Arctic Monkeys to exclusively sell their new single. Crying Lightning, the first time Oxfam has sold a new release single since Band Aid in 1984. Most music lovers have at one time been tempted in to rifle through the piles of cast-off LPs in the hope of finding a few cheap gems or forgotten masterpieces.

As a self-confessed vinyl junkie, I've tied the causes of my infatuation down to three distinct camps. I started buying record young, before I even owned a turntable, for the simple reason they look cool. What hits you first is the sheer size of an LP, and I became enthralled by the huge, monotheistic slabs of cardboard, which seem to be a testament to the artist and the music held inside.

In my late teens I realised something everyone says but few believe – they simply sound better. And I'm not talking about the characteristic crackle – there is something about the sensitivity of the stylus that gives the music a greater depth, an organic, rounded sound.

The older the music the bigger the difference – albums from the 1970s and before were recorded and mastered on analogue equipment, for analogue equipment, and as a result are always going to sound better on an analogue turntable.

The third and final strength hit me later when, as a cash-strapped student, I realised I could pick up some of the cornerstones of

musical history for little more than the price of a stick of gum. By spending hours trawling charity shops and dilapidated second hand stores, I amassed a collection of more than 500 records, always making sure I adhered to one simple rule – never buy an LP for more than you can get it on CD for.

One morning this week, I went for a stroll through the plethora of charity shops on Magdalen Street to see what gems I could pick up for a fiver.

The first stop was Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind – where a little too enthusiastically I snapped up the following titles for just 25p a pop – Julian Bream and John Williams' Together. Hits of Hawaii. Nashville Stars On Tour and soundtracks to Doctor Zhivago, The Sound of Music and The Glenn Miller Story – 33s which are unlikely to hit my turntable with alarming regularity, but at that price are worth a hearty punt.

Further down the road Daisy International

was a similar story at just 40p an LP, and I picked up an obligatory Jim Reeves Golden Records, along with two dubious-looking compilations entitled Tijuana and Cha Cha Cha – which while likely to be garbage, could just be that perfect, quirky party LP.

So far I'd spent £2.70, more than half my budget, and there was nothing I was dying to rush home, slam on, and crank up the volume.

Pact Animal Sanctuary, on Anglia Square, saw a uniform price leap to £1 an LP. Hot picks included the classic Tracey Chapman debut, which I already had, and a range of Nat King Cole LPs I could live without.

Also on the square, Barnardo's proved to be a rock n' rollers paradise. For fifty pence a pop you could pick up best of LPs by classic artists Buddy Holly, the Everly Brothers, Roy Orbison, The Shadows and Diana Ross and the Supremes – all of which already grace my shelves. I did however leave with a double The World of Johnny Cash collection (50p) that had enough unfamiliar material to enthrall,

taking my total to £3.20. Tightening the purse strings, I left Sense empty-handed. However for a quid you could pick up The Mamas and the Papas and Bill Haley and His Comets compilations – again staples I already owned – while they had an OK collection of '70s and '80s pop priced between £1 and £3 – Pet Shop Boys, Genesis, Status Quo, etc.

The Salvation Army had a large collection of classical LPs at 50p each, but by this stage in the budget I wasn't taking any chances. The best thing on offer in Save The Children was more Diana Ross (£1), and a diverting look jazz 10inch compilation, which wasn't quite enticing enough for the £3 price tag.

Last up was the big daddy – Oxfam. Having a cursory flick through my record collection the morning before I left on this jaunt, I recognised titles by greats like Marvin Gaye, BB King and Paul Simon all picked up at Oxfam branches around the country.

The first thing I saw when I walked in the Magdalen Street store was two iconic record sleeves starring straight at me – Bob Dylan's Blood On The Tracks (£2.99), and David Bowie's Aladdin Sane (£2.49) – while LPs that I already own, it immediately raised the bar. I felt a knot in my stomach at the thought of the lucky kid who is going to experimentally buy those records and blow his mind.

Scouring the shop's small but well-organised collection, I immediately stumbled upon two titles I just had to buy – and the budget went out the window. They were a double live album by one of my favourite bluesmen, John Lee Hooker, entitled Alone (£2.99), and a Sidney Bechet record called The Blue Bechet (£1.99). I'd now spent £8.18 and was in a severe risk of being late for work.

The vinyl record will always enthrall for its unique appearance, nostalgia and cool-factor. And there will always be purist DJs who realise there is simply no sound like it in the world. But what I love most about LPs is that I can take little more than a half-hour out of my day, and pick up a dozen records for less than the price of a pub round. It's the buzz of finding a bargain, something you were never looking for, but that could turn your world upside-down.



down to buy the single." Oxfam shops in Norwich were this week doing steady trade in selling the single, and indeed several purchases had brought in unwanted albums.

■ **Crying Lightning is on sale now at the following Oxfam shops: 9-11 Bedford Street, Norwich; 8/10 Magdalen Street, Norwich; 19 St Giles Street, Norwich; 16 Market Hill, Diss; 1 Bevan Street, Lowestoft. www.oxfam.org.uk/arcticmonkeys**

## sounds in the city

**August 21**  
**YT/Ragga Twins** (reggae/jungle) — Po Na Na  
**Pain Penitentiary** (metal) — B2  
**Tendahoooks** (rock) — Brickmakers  
**Juke Box Memories: feat. Abbaqueens** (50s-70s/charity) — The Talk  
**Clickshaft** (indie/funk) — Marquee  
**Luna Ghost** (rock) — King Edward VII  
**Slide** (rock/indie) — Blueberry  
**Pete 'Kiwi' Keegan** (skiffle) — The Nelson  
**ABC Blues Band** (tribute) — Trowel & Hammer  
**Against The Grain** (blues) — Reindeer  
**Split Whiskers** (blues) — Walnut Tree Shades  
**Judi** (60s) — Windmill

**August 22**  
**Tilting Sky Summer Party: feat. The Kabeedies** (indie) — Arts Centre  
**The Vibrators** (punk) — King Edward VII  
**Ska-Ta-Brain** (ska) — Blueberry  
**Murphy's Lore** (Irish) — Cider Shed  
**In Rapture** (rock) — Club Sanctuary  
**Beyond Duplication** ( — Reindeer  
**Hotwired Punk Band** (punk) — The Eddie  
**Flying South** (rock'n'roll/blues) — Lakenham Cok  
**NMS Promo Night** — Marquee  
**Just Floyd** (tribute) — Brickmakers  
**Skinny Jim & The Leopard Trio** (rock'n'roll) — Boundary  
**Satta Sounds** (agge/jungle) — The Regal

**August 23**  
**Floating Greyhounds** ( — Boundary  
**Vic Salter** (country/rock) — King Edward VII  
**Lee Vasey Big Band** (12pm) — Brickmakers

**August 24**  
**Session: feat. Emmetic + more** (open mic) — Brickmakers  
**Jazz Jam** (jazz/open mic) — Blueberry  
**Rampant Horse Collective** (roots/folk) — Rumsey Wells

**August 25**  
**Bill Callahan** (alternative) — Arts Centre  
**Overdrive** (rock) — Brickmakers  
**Acoustic Showcase** (local) — B2

**August 26**  
**Little Comets** (indie/pop) — Arts Centre  
**Conner Manning** (acoustic) — B2  
**The Session** (Irish) — Cider Shed  
**Pure Acoustic** (acoustic/open mic) — Brickmakers  
**Blues/Rock Jam** (open mic) — Blueberry

**August 27**  
**Sleeping States** (folk/experimental) — Arts Centre  
**Spiffire** (pop-punk) — B2  
**F-UK/Doomsday Hour/Cut The Reins** (punk) — Cricketers Rest  
**Milkbar Promo Night** (indie) — Marquee  
**Keno Kings** (blues) — Walnut Tree Shades  
**Rum Keg Jump** (ska) — Blueberry  
**Angry Beaver** (rock) — Brickmakers  
**Cruisin' For A Bluesin'** (blues) — Rose Tavern  
**Navi** (Michael Jackson tribute) — Chicago Rock Café

## 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)

## Live previews: Some sunny sounds for summer

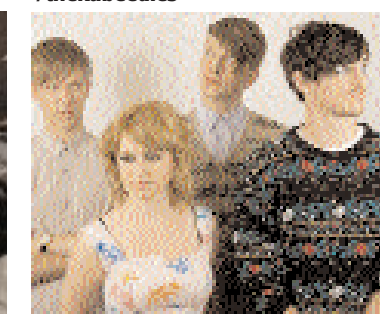
**YT/Ragga Twins**  
**Norwich Arts Centre, August 21**  
 Ipswich dancehall star YT's latest album is called Born Inna Babylon, which couldn't sound more Jamaican if it tried, but in fact he is one of a group of UK dancehall stars forging a sound inspired by, but not emulating, the sound of JA. Like Italian dancehall hot property Alborosie, German artist Gentleman and even Sheffield's whizz kid producer Toddla T, he is inspired by Jamaican music rather than taking directly from it. Born Inna Babylon includes collaborations with the legendary Daddy Freddy, dub icon Zion Train and UK hip hop star Skinnyman, has just been released. This visit to Norwich sees him doing a guest spot at the latest Roots N Culture night at Norwich's Po Na Na, alongside jungle legends The Ragga Twins who began their careers as separate MCs for North London's legendary Unity reggae sound system. The duo have recently been enjoying a new lease of life with young grime, UK garage and dubstep artists and producers citing them as major influences.

■ **Further listening:** [www.myspace.com/ytreggae](http://www.myspace.com/ytreggae)



**Tilting Sky: The Kabeedies**  
**Norwich Arts Centre, August 22**  
 Tilting Sky, those ever reliable promoters of local good vibrations, present a hot and steamy summer party cocktail of sounds and colours. Their sunny delight will include a mixture of full band performances, acoustic shenanigans, collaborations – and covers of some classic summer hits – from the likes of The Kabeedies, the Uh Ohs, Vanilla Kick, Violet Violet and The Loyal Few. There will be a good number of special guests too. There will be plenty of celebrated with it having been a good summer for most of the bands. The Kabeedies have made some serious waves, sending festival crowds into a frenzy at both Glastonbury and Latitude and at the Sumer Sundae event. Vanilla Kick launched a new EP, and Violet Violet, now with a new slim-line two-piece line-up, recently released their much anticipated album, The City is Full of Beasts, on Norwich's own NROne label. Tickets are just £3 – a bargain for a whole evening's entertainment – in advance, but they'll go quick so be quick or you'll miss out.

■ **Further listening:** [www.myspace.com/thekabeedies](http://www.myspace.com/thekabeedies)



**Bill Callahan**  
**Norwich Arts Centre, August 25**  
 After almost 20 years of using the alias Smog for his music, Bill Callahan nowadays prefers performing under his given nom-de-plume. He switched after 2005's A River Ain't Too Much to Love and the follow-up Woke on a Whaleheart, both of which mixed the intimate, reflective, largely acoustic sound of later Smog albums with gospel, soul, and pop elements, and boasted arrangements by former Royal Trux mastermind Neil Hagerty. For his new album, Sometimes I Wish We Were an Eagle, Callahan has returned to the more intimate, acoustic-based sound of latter-era Smog albums, featuring string and brass arrangements by Brian Beattie. It's his tenderest reflection on love and loving since the Smog back-to-back classics Red Apple Falls and Knock Knock and includes sections of violins and French horns. Support comes from Sophia Knapp, best known as a member of the Brooklyn art-folk Lights. Here she plays a solo show of gauzy, soft-focus folk.

■ **Further listening:** [www.myspace.com/whaleheart](http://www.myspace.com/whaleheart)



**Little Comets**  
**Norwich Arts Centre, August 26**  
 Tipped by the likes of Zane Lowe and Huw Stephens, this emerging Newcastle indie-pop four-piece are busting with ace melodies and lyrics and are ones to watch. Right from their debut single, One Night In October, its obvious they make sunny-hearted music that counters economic doom and gloom. It makes you want to jump with glee, while grinning at the lyric's comic observations. Even the single's cover art advertises the tune's happy-go-lucky ebullience: "We were entirely unsupervised when we made this, can you tell?" Eschewing the usual rock and punk pioneers, the band cite literary figures such as Jonathan Safran Foer, Seamus Heaney and Roald Dahl as their inspiration. Such highbrow inclinations bring to mind bookish bands such as Bloc Party and Vampire Weekend. But forget twee and staid, they still have the energy and vigour of a garage band.

■ **Further listening:** [www.myspace.com/littlecometsmusic](http://www.myspace.com/littlecometsmusic)



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## music notes with Kingsley Harris

Last Saturday I headed off back to London, a drive that is now embedded in my brain, because these days that's where most of my Saturdays are spent.

Booked for a private party by the Artrockier publication, I put on a shirt and even polished my shoes. Not being a party person, I was really worried that I might have to hold a wine glass with my little finger sticking out and put on a false laugh at every boring sentence, as people name dropped and tried to shock me with their tales of rock and roll.

How wrong could I be, it turned out to be the best party I've ever been to. People were just screaming to have everything turned up and really got into the whole spirit of things. Set up in what was essentially a small warehouse with offices dotted about. Boxes of old electronic components littered the halls and the walls were adorned with screen prints of white skulls. THE BROWNIES kicked off at about 9.30pm and within the first number were told to turn everything up and then subsequently again at the end of each song.

Headlining the night was actor/comedian Paul Kaye – aka MIKE STRUTTER, a New York



Lawyer who settles all his debts with violence and hates being called a 'nana'. I was a bit dubious of what he could produce in the way of a band performance, as comedians with bands tend to be just that and do not mix well other than in cabaret.

the Waterfront, NAC, or even Glastonbury, which had been their previous gig, because it involves Paul being completely outrageous while in character and integrating with the audience. For those who remember local front man Dave Smith and BOYS WILL BE BOYS, you'll know the sort of act I'm talking about.

The show isn't something you could get into on a permanent basis as it's foundation is based on shock-tactics and you can only be shocked so many times.

His backing band of industry pros reminded me of Dr Feelgood in looks and sound. It was 30 minutes of loud high adrenaline fun. Their version of The Kinks, All Day And All Of The Night is one of the best I've heard, they made it so much their own without changing a thing, that's pretty impressive.

His ability to spout witty one liners mid sentence when singing was hilarious and I can see why he only does 30 minutes as a gym regime like this would keep anyone fit. Be warned though, if you go to see him live make sure you wear old clothes as being sugar plays a big part in the act. You'll come away offended or assaulted – take your pick. [www.myspace.com/mikestrutter](http://www.myspace.com/mikestrutter)