

1/May/2002 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

In the Lime-light

Last week's Battle of the Band's at Jumping Jak's in Dunstable produced a clear winner when local jazz funk outfit **Lime** walked off with the honours in the third heat of this prestigious competition organised by Dunstable Town Council. Despite spirited performances from covers band **Intastellar** and neo-punk three piece **Deluded Swinger**, **Lime's** infectiously crunchy Latin/jazz dance grooves won over both audience and judges as they finished off the evening. After a slightly shaky start the band settled into the groove with a set of original arrangements of songs and instrumentals featuring Dave Hallam's guitar work and the suppressed power of vocalist Anna Abrahams, all underpinned by the percussion of Elim Gobbit, who also shared the lead vocals in the last number - a stunning rendition of "I feel Good". With **Audio Justice** and **Too Far Gone** already in the running it looks like we're going to have a great final on June 3 at the outdoor performance area in Grove House Gardens.



I had a call from Bluejuice Music who's the record company handling Milton Keynes based **The Markus Band**. Apparently they've been spending the last six months re-inventing with a new line up and a fresh new set. And it seems to be working if a recent warm up gig at The Sun in Harlington is anything to go by, people seem to like what they have to offer. Ben Markus still fronts the band, with his distinctive, gritty vocals and raunchy guitar style with second rhythm and lead guitar coming from the very accomplished Steve Woodward (Woody) from Bedford. Steve's known Ben since his school days and over the years has played with **The Markus Band** and features on several past recordings. The back line is provided by regular Markus Band bass player Rob Butterfield who is joined by Karl Randall to provide a rock solid back line.

With regular appearances from guest sax players on the cards, the combo should produce a pretty big sound. Rob also tells me that the set's all new as well, dominated by classic rock n' roll covers such as Jailhouse Rock, Whole Lotta Shakin', White Lightning and Great Balls of Fire - but they're all done in what can only be described as 'sleazy' rock/blues style with a smattering of original numbers dropped in for good measure. If you want to check out the new look Markus Band then put Saturday 20th June when they are due to perform live at The Angel Inn, Toddington. So if you like your rock n' roll sleazy, pop along and see them, they'll be on stage about 9.00pm.

8/May/2002 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Kindred Spirits

Local band **Kindred** walked away with the honours at last Wednesday's heat of the Dunstable Battle of the Bands at Jumping Jak's at the Quadrant. The three piece punk rock outfit impressed both the audience and the judges with a tight set of original numbers influenced by Blink 182 and Green Day. The band's high standard of musicianship shone through, especially drummer Kirk Brandom from Luton, ably supporting bass player Robert Letting and guitarist Paul Thompson. Indie Rockers **Longshore Drift** put on a good show as well but the mysterious **Mr Pink** didn't put in an appearance.

The Tempest are playing at The Temple in Luton (was Venue 27) this Thursday (May 9) along with **Toy Drum** and **Over Easy** - music starts at 8:30pm. The renamed venue plans to host band nights as a regular feature on Thursday's. Indeed - at the end of the month (May 30) there will be a five band extravaganza with talent from all over the Luton performing there. Next Monday (May 13) also sees **The Tempest** playing Luton University Student's Union along with **Canned Applause**. The Student's Union is opening the doors to everyone with free entry for NUS members and a 50p cover charge to non-NUS members and there will be a drinks promotion on the night with Carling on offer at £1 a pint so it should be a good night. The music starts at 9pm, should be a good night. Email amanda.hunt@luton.ac.uk if you want to get onto the Luton University Student's Union music mailing list. Visit <http://www.the-tempest.com> for more gig information on **The Tempest**.



The much-acclaimed Jazz ensemble **Cold Cherry Soup** band launches its first ever UK tour later this month - bringing its exhilarating style and inventive sounds direct to Bedfordshire jazz audiences. Described as "Stunning" by Jazz UK and "Beautiful, powerful, passionately elegiac" by Ian Carr in BBC Music Magazine, **Cold Cherry Soup** combines the talents of exceptional Leighton Buzzard based Arnie Somogyi on bass, world-renowned Hungarian saxophonist Tony Lakatos, brilliant British pianist Liam Noble, US Berklee-graduate guitarist Zsolt Bende and much in demand London-based drummer Winston Clifford. The outfit will be appearing at Bedford Jazz which is held at the Shed, Gordon Arms, Bedford on May 24. For advance bookings call 01234-409297.

Celtic influenced roots fusion band **enQ** is playing over at the Sportsman in Fore Street, Hertford on Saturday (May 11) as part of the Hertford Arts Festival. The band has been described as "The Corrs meets the Doors . . ." by Harlow Music Festival and went down a storm at the Dunstable Folk Day last year and has been wowing audiences around the country in the intervening months. Check out the enQ web site at <http://www.enq.org.uk> for more sound clips, photos, maps and information about future gigs.

15/May/2002 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

SureFire Success

Local five piece indie rock outfit **SureFire** are going from strength to strength with genuine industry interest from Warner, Sony and Island Records and from the management companies of Republica and Space. To help the process along they are using their up and coming gig at Bedford Esquires on Saturday week (May 25) with The Jeevas (Crispian Mills new band) as an industry showcase. The band has been together about a year and the line-up consists of **James Black** (lead singer and guitar) **Paul Mead** (lead guitar and songwriter) **Matt Smart** (rhythm guitar backing vocal and keyboard) **Steve Dunne** (drums and backing vocal) and **Darren Loczy** (bass). They only have a handful of tickets left for the Esquires gig, so if you want to see one of the area's hottest new bands you should phone Paul on 07762 746797 or to email the band on surefiregroup@btopenworld.com. To find out more about the band and access free music downloads check out their web site at www.surefiregroup.uksingers.com



I hear that Battle of the Bands contenders **Audio Justice** have now finished recording their new CD. They did the sessions at Luton based Koolworld studios and the forthcoming disc contains the tracks Snakes and Ladders, Peanut Blues, Happy Ending and Time. I understand that the guys are really pleased with the finished result and have received positive feedback so far from all who have heard it, including Kerrang magazine. If you want to be amongst the first to know when it goes on release then you can join the band's mailing list by surfing to www.audiojustice.f2s.com/free.html. If you want to see the band live then you can see them at the semi-finals of the Dunstable Town Council Battle of the Bands at Jumpin Jaks in Dunstable on next Wednesday (May). If you want contact **Audio Justice** then you can email them at info@audiojustice.net.

22/May/2002 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Over Easily . . .

This week's Battle of the Bands at Jumping Jaks saw **Over*Easy** romp away with the heat after an amazingly professional performance of soul/funk influenced original material. **Day Janutus** and **Lovesick Dragon** both put on convincing musical performances but were entirely outclassed by the slick professionalism of the winner's stage act. The dramatic presentation and stage craft of Los Angelian lead singer **Brett Aaron** (now based in St Albans) was underpinned by a dynamic funk/soul groove led by the guitar work of local lad **Matt Lawrence** giving a 'funk meets



Jazz/Rock' with heavy soul influences kind of sound. In fact the music shows very diverse influences which made for a very interesting set, including some great instrumental tracks penned by the guitarist. Any bands that want to see what it really means to 'perform on stage' should try and get down to see **Over*Easy** at the second semi-final next week. Make sure you catch tonight's episode at Jumping Jaks in Dunstable of the competition when three of the area's top bands vie for a slot at the Jubilee weekend performance and a shot at the title.



My roots fusion band **enQ** played a couple of fantastic gigs over at the Sportsman Hertford this month as part of the Hertford Arts Festival. On the Sunday (May 26) we're at the 'All Day Chill' at Crouch Hill Community Centre, Crouch Hill in North London. This is a very popular kid-friendly live original music event that kicks off at 1pm and runs till late. **enQ** opens the festival and other bands include **Naked Angel**, **3.D Echo**, **Morpheus**, **Cookie**, **The Ru Horne Band**, **Dr Dickie's Big Band**, **Boo Long**, **Joe Quillin**, **Erica**, **2 Dark Crew**

and Crouch End 's very own **Pete Brown**. Other attractions are fair rides, stalls, trampolines, face painters (tickets £3 or £2 conc, kids 50p). The event is a charity fund-raiser for the Crouch Hill Community Centre.

Check out the enQ web site at www.enq.org.uk for a map link as well as sound/video clips and photos.

The suppression of live music in England and Wales is an issue that should concern both music fans and players alike. Official censorship through the Public Entertainment Licensing laws make it a criminal offence for a band to play to an audience in 95% of licensed premises - i.e. pubs and clubs - while the broadcast media concentrate on travesties like Pop Idols which have a music content approximating to zero. If you want to register your protest against the current situation by electronically signing the petition on the GoBB (Give our Band Back) web site at <http://www.gobb.org.uk>. Their aim is to raise awareness of what "band" actually means and will use the petition in a campaign to raise awareness of the current structural problems in the music industry. They currently have around 1,000 signatures but are looking to double this before they start their campaign.

29/May/2002 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

TooFarGone Gone

There was a surprise waiting for us at last week's Battle of the Bands when the **Dandyions** had to step into the breach left by **TooFarGone**. The well regarded local band had to pull out of the competition due to the loss of a band member. I haven't heard the full story behind this yet so if anyone wants let me know what the score is they can email me details at news@lutonscene.com. The **Dandyions** put on an excellent showing with their somewhat gothic grunge and displayed a good rock dynamic with the amazing bouncing bass of Nicola Stewart and Donna Cooper on drums pinning down the crunchy guitar work of Craig Gordon-Baker.

Despite a good response from the somewhat sparse audience at Jumping Jaks they were up against two really professional bands; **Audio Justice** and **Lime** who will go on through to the final on June 3 in Grove House Gardens. To be honest it's a bit feeble of the Dunstable/Luton live music audience not get out and see the best of local talent playing for free in an excellent local venue. If you don't use it, you'll lose it! If you want to encourage local live music then go down to Jumping Jaks tonight and support it.

On a brighter note, Sunday week (June 9) sees Hitchin Folk celebrating thirty five years of hard work from **Maureen Jones** to make the club one of the best, as well as longest running, folk clubs. In what is essentially a one day festival, some of the brightest stars in the UK folk and acoustic music scene will be performing at the Sun Hotel in Hitchin, the home of the club. Headlining the day will be **Kate Rusby** who has been topping the folk and roots charts world-wide and has been described by the Daily Telegraph as "The brightest light in English folk music". Also appearing will be **Mike Silver**, **Derek Brimstone**, **Keith Pearson** with his band **Coup de Grass** and Hitchin's latest local star **Emily Slade**.

The day kicks off at 1pm with a sing-a-round session hosted by local musicians **Barry Goodman** and **Theo Thomas** followed by a display of dance. This will be followed by a three hour afternoon concert, a buffet tea and a three hour evening concert. The music throughout will be a blend of traditional, contemporary, blues, gospel, country and bluegrass music plus lots of good humour from a wide ranging selection of musicians who have close associations with the folk club. The tickets cost £25 - which includes the buffet tea and are available from Maureen on 01462-711164. So get in quick as Kate Rusby has a reputation of selling out events. For more information you can email goodmusic@hitchinfockclub.org.uk or check out their web site at www.hitchinfockclub.org.uk/.

Send gig information to "The Brian Heywood Column", PO Box 649, Dunstable, Beds, LU5 4XD and you can also email details of gigs, gossip, web sites or anything else to info@lutonscene.com. A search-able archive of the column is available on the web at <http://www.lutonscene.com>.