

5/May/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Ahead of the Field

It looks like local singer/song writer **Lauren Field** is not only headed into the music world big time but she's going to drag Dunstable along with it. On Sunday she launched her latest single at The Pizza Express Jazz Club in Dean Street London. The title track of the single is a cover of Chris Isaak's "Wicked Game", a cut from her album "Modern Woman" which was released September last year to critical acclaim. The Guardian described it as "it's an instant classic!" and Hello! Magazine said "A worthy follower in the footsteps of female singer - songwriters such as Sade and Norah Jones" and "Lauren's smoky, seductive voice is draped in jazzy blues music, with the occasional flourish of Latin spirit.". But more telling is the praise of Mick Taylor (Rolling Stones) "Lauren has got great songs", Helen Shapiro "She has a big talent both as singer and songwriter" and perhaps most of all Chris Isaak who loves Lauren's version of his massive hit.



Unlike most interchangeable pop singers, Lauren is also a songwriter of some repute with five of the songs on the album being the fruit of her pen - along with collaborators like Randy Bachman (Bachman Turner Overdrive/The Guess Who). She began her professional career starring in a musical revue, that she co-wrote with three others, which toured the provinces and played in London venues including a sell out run at the New End Theatre. From there she began a series of gigs in selected London venues as well as working as a session singer for many well-known artists including; Bonnie Tyler, Cliff Richard, Elvis Costello, Elkie Brookes, Kim Wilde, Petula Clarke, John Farnham and The Who. Recently she's been co-writing on a regular basis with Randy Bachman who visits Dunstable twice a year to work on new material. On his next visit he'll be bringing rock icon Neil Young to add to the mix along with top producer Charles Foscett. The new single will be officially released on Monday (May 10) and will be in the shops later that week. You can find out more information from her label's website at www.shmusicmusic.com/lauren.htm.

Liam from **Reverie** tells me that he is promoting a gig at "The Underworld" in Camden (174 Camden High St. London NW1 0NE) next Wednesday (May 12). The event headliner is **Four Day Hombre** who are the Radio 1 'Unsigned Playlist' finalists, with local Luton band **Bowfinger** and the **The Flygarricks** also on the bill. The audience are in for an explosive night of innovative music featuring three of the hottest bands on current indie scene. Tickets are £5 in advance from www.ticketweb.co.uk and the doors open at 7pm. You can contact Liam for more information at liam.mcmahon@rock.com or on 07734739794.

9/May/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Folk like us

Two of the acoustic music scene's most powerful songwriters are in the area this week. Tomorrow night (Thursday) Jez Lowe is playing down the road at the Cricketers in Redbourn (just off the common). Normally based up north and just back from a world tour, Jez is a powerful singer and a consummate performer of his own material with songs like 'Back In Durham Gaol', 'The Bergen', 'Black Diamond' and 'These Coal Town Days'. His songs have also been covered by scores of artists world-wide by artists such as Fairport Convention, The Dubliners, The Tannahill Weavers, and other artists from as far away as Australia, Canada, and the U.S. His songs have even been taught in school classrooms, not only in here in the UK, but in Canada and the U.S. as well. Tickets cost £6.00 and are available from 01582 452954 or 07850 163241 or you can check out the website at www.redbournfolkclub.org.uk.

If that wasn't enough on Friday (June 11), **Harvey Andrews** is playing just over the border at the St Albans Folk Club in the Duke of Marlborough (110 Holywell Hill, St Albans). Harvey is originally from up the road in Birmingham and since his first gig in October, 1964, has been using his native wit and clear insight to lay bare the English soul. Over the years he has played all over the UK and the world, appeared on radio and TV and recorded no less than twelve albums - most of which are still available. His songs have been covered by the likes of Christy Moore, Mary Hopkins, Ian Machintosh, Max Boyce and even been used as course work for the GCSE English exam. The newspapers don't stint their praise of Harvey with New Musical Express accusing him of "sheer talent" and by Melody Maker of being "a perceptive writer". Why this man is not more famous is a mystery, his songs have the ability to strike right at the core of the matter, with perception and humour. For more information and tickets call 07774 909067.

Also on Friday 13 Promotions are presenting the female fronted **The Barbs** at The Well, 5 High Town Road, Luton. The band has been described as "Pure rock 'n roll" and have even supported The Darkness and the support for the night are local rockers **The Scales**. You can find out more information about the bands from their respective websites - www.thebarbs.co.uk and www.thescales.tk - entrance £4.

On Saturday (June 12) The Thirst Club at Esquires (Greyfriars, Bedford) feature the award winning Luton band **Echelon Blue** at their "Bedford Metal". Other bands on the night are Bedford bands **Cerberus**, **Delicate Children** and **Ape Thread**. Doors open at 8pm and entrance is £5. See www.bedfordmetal.tk for more details.

12/May/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Three for the Road

Phil Jones from Leighton Buzzard based rock band **Thre3** emailed me about their new album 'Stares at the Grey'. He tells me that the band was born out of the desire of three experienced musicians who wanted to create a unique hybrid style that has instant appeal by bringing together influences as diverse as rock, funk and punk. Band members **Phil Jones** (Bass & Vocals) and **Brian Deeley** (Guitar) met in June 2003 in another band and when it broke up they continued to work together. They coalesced into **Thre3** when they were joined by Mick Samsonoff (Drums) in 2004. After writing full album's worth of songs they decided to record the tracks and release them on a CD. According to Phil, the music is a hybrid style of funk bass and melodic rock guitar, fused together by Phil's soulful voice and Mick's laid back style of drumming with the emphasis on groove. The CD is available now, to get a copy just drop them an email thre3@btopenworld.com and they will arrange to send you a copy, price is just £5.00. You can find them on the web at www.thre3.co.uk

I hear that **Lauren Field's** CD launch at The Pizza Express Jazz Club in London last weekend was a great success with people queuing along Dean Street trying to get in. Last week I said that she had written five of the songs on her album ('Modern Woman') but in fact the truth of the matter is that she actually wrote twelve of the tracks on the CD, with five of them being collaborations, which makes my point of her being an accomplished song writer even more apposite.

The next dance in the 2004 season of the Dunstable Tyre Kickers' series of ceilidhs takes place on Friday (May 14) with the electric sound of **MoonDance** with caller **Malcolm North**. A ceilidh (pronounced 'kay-lee') is a kind of supercharged celtic barn dance - in fact the word simply means 'party' - so a good time is guaranteed for all. The dances are organised by a bunch of local bands who have got together to promote a regular series of public ceilidhs to help fill the local dance vacuum and give local e-ceilidh bands a platform to reach a wider audience. Tickets cost £6, £4 concessions and under 12's are free if accompanied by an adult - available from Octave Music in High Street North (Dunstable) or on the door. The dances take place on the second Friday in each month at St Mary's Church Social Club in West Street, Dunstable so be sure to mark it your diary. Future fixtures will feature **Nelsons Arm Band** with **Chris Jewell** (June 18) and Stomp (caller to be confirmed). For more information call 01582-475655, email tkc@roots66.net or check out the website at www.roots66.net/tkc

19/May/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Local festival challenges Glastonbury

If you've missed out on getting Glastonbury tickets this year or don't care to travel halfway across the country to bath in a sea of mud during the inevitable festive downpour - help is at hand on our own doorstep. This year's **Togfest** is Milton Keynes' answer to 'the Somerset concert' looks sure to be the most eclectic line up yet with a mix of nationally known names and the very hottest local talent. The emerging line-up features Blues, Bhangra, Rock, Classical, Funk, Folk, Ska, Indie, Jazz and Soul - virtually every genre in the musical dictionary! And it all takes place just up the road at Bradwell Abbey on Saturday 26th June.

Festival director Ian Rowe tells me that creating this year's programme has been the hardest yet for the Togfest team with over 200 applications from all over the UK, a record for this annual festival. He says "We had hoped to announce the line up before now but were so overwhelmed with the amount of interest and the incredibly high standard". Ian continues, "It's just a real shame we are only a one day festival because we have enough really good music for a week's worth, which was what made the team's job so very difficult."

The bill currently features electric rockers **Del Bromham** and **Stray**, blues duo **Sugarland Slim**, soul divas **Soul Fever**, a huge stage full of classical sounds from **Milton Keynes Symphonia**, **Hedroom** bringing some funk, rap metal, ska and hip hop, pulsing roots from Luton's very own **enQ**, some red hot bhangra rhythms from ten piece **Rangla Punjab** and celtic rock from **Togmor**. And this is only eight of the thirty plus acts that will entertain throughout a music packed day. There will also be a chance to participate in the action as Milton Keynes' Music Service's Rock School will be hosting the Marquee Stage for two hours bringing the very best of young talent to showcase their skills. There is already a demand for tickets which are a bargain at £5 in advance (only £7 on the day) with under 12's getting in for just £1. Contact Togfest on 01908 313413 for tickets, stall hire, or if you'd like to be a part of the team on the day, details of stewarding opportunities.

Tomorrow night (Thursday), local band **Dilate** return to the stage at The Well music venue in Hightown Luton for their first live show since before Christmas. Also on the bill are **The Superb Days in December**, **Days of Grace** and **Bilka** a new project from Stevo of Kabuki Man. **Dilate** tell me that Jay Devlin will be making his live debut on bass as well as being drummer Ant's last live gig with the band so any fans should get down there and give him a good send off. As a result they are looking for a new sticksman/women - anyone interested should call Miller on 07718955566.

26/May/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Happy Holiday

This bank holiday you'll get the chance to hear some great music around Luton. With the start of the good weather, the hard work of the Well Music Venue and the reopening of the Hat Factory, the Luton music scene is broadening out. This weekend gives an idea of the range of the music available if you want to escape the confines of your living room and push the boat out a little. All we need now is a big venue to put Luton back on the national touring circuit.

- on Friday The Hat Factory presents an evening of Gospel music with **Oxygenate** featuring Gersham Brown, Natalie Phillips, Nyasha, Beverley Trotman & DJ Mack. Tickets cost £5 and are available from the box office on 01582 419584.
- also on Friday, **Bluetongue** is appearing at the L&D Hospital Social Club (Calnwood Rd, Luton Hosp, Luton). This new quartet plays a mix of original and Australian music plus a few well known covers. The line-up features members of local bands **enQ** and **MoonDance** along with Paul Francis on bass who has played with Steve Hillage, Midge Ure and Paul Weller to mention a few. Music starts at 9pm. See www.bluetongue.co.uk for more information about the band.
- on Saturday (May 29), the Hat Factory features two up-and-coming singer songwriters; **Bernard Hopkins** and **Donna Mackay** who will be highlighting material from recently released albums. The gig is in the Basement One venue and admission is £5 - doors open at 7.30pm
- on Bank Holiday Sunday (May 30) the twelve piece soul classics cover band **Soul Connection** will be playing at the Cork & Bull (Cumberland St, Luton). Call 01582 729586 if you want any more information.
- on Bank Holiday Monday (May 31) Club Ska presents **Bad Manners** at The Well Music Venue (5 High Town Road, Luton). Doors open at 7.30pm.

If you want to go a little further afield...

- tomorrow night (Thursday) **Sara Grey** is appearing at The Cricketers in Redbourne (just opposite the common) singing traditional songs and ballads from North America and the British Isles and playing some fine old-time banjo. Tickets are £5.00 and are available on the door or from 01582-452954 or 07850-163241(www.redbournfolkclub.org.uk).
- on Saturday (May 29) top local acoustic rockers **The Tempest** are playing over at The Hop Pole, Aylesbury's top music venue. Entrance is £3 and they will be laying on a mini-bus if you want a lift over there, email robbo@the-tempest.com if you want to reserve a seat.
- on Sunday (May 30), **Suntrap** are appearing at Hitchin Folk Club at The Sun Hotel, Sun Street, Hitchin. The four piece band specialises in powerful harmonies of original and traditional songs as well as exciting musical arrangements on mandolin, fiddle, guitars, accordion, bodhran and whistles. Also appearing is the talented young Liverpoolian Shaughnessy. For more information, visit www.hitchinfolkclub.idnet.net or phone Maureen on 01462 812391.

Send gig information to "The Brian Heywood Column", PO Box 649, Dunstable, Beds, LU5 4XD or info@lutonscene.com. A search-able archive of the column is available on the web at <http://www.lutonscene.com>