

5/Jan/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Keep it Live in 2005...

Things are still a bit quiet on the local live music circuit - no doubt due to people getting over the excesses of the festive season. As the music scene picks up over January I'll do my annual run down of the local live music scene, so I'd appreciate any bands out there sending me updates by emailing them to (news@lutonscene.com).

On Sunday (Jan 9) **Pete Morton** and **WoodworX** are appearing at the Sun Hotel (in Sun Street, Hitchin). Pete is one of the jewels in the crown of the current crop of British singer / songwriters and has that rare talent of being a great performer as well as a perceptive observer of the human condition. His songs, and his slightly warped sense of humour, show the world we live in a new light, whether it be something as serious as the Middle East situations (Two Brothers) to the people that might meet down at our local pub (The Battle of Waterloo). A definite 'must see'.

WoodworX will be playing songs from their new CD "Two Short PlanX" which was released simultaneously in the UK and Australia last year. The music is a globe spanning mixture of Australian and British contemporary and traditional songs and range from traditional songs, through settings of poems by Henry Lawson and Robert Burns, to contemporary original material. Stylistically the material has a very wide dynamic; from the spookily sparse setting of Robert Burns 'Gloomy December' to the up-beat, up-tempo rendition for Melanie Safka's 'Lay Down' that brings the CD - and the live set - to a rousing final chorus. In between there is a relaxed, good humoured series of songs dealing with topics as diverse as love in the streets of Glasgow to the trials and tribulations of farming in the outback. The critics seem to like it with comments like "... essential listening, and possibly the best thing you'll hear all year" (FiddleOn Magazine) and "WoodworX's particular brand of contemporary folk-pop should appeal to a wide cross-section of listeners" (www.NetRhythms.co.uk).



The Hitchin Folk Club is one of the longest running and most respected folk clubs in the country and takes place at The Sun Hotel, Sun Street, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1AF. Contact Maureen Jones for tickets and more information on 01462 812391, hitchinfofolkclub@onetel.com or check out the web site at www.hitchinfofolkclub.idnet.net

Incidentally, one of the best electronic resources for local gig information is the 'Live Circuit' electronic newsletter. The weekly email gives details of gigs as well as news and release information about local live music in all non-mainstream music styles. Email roger@livecircuit.net to join the mailing list and receive regular copies of the definitive local weekly gig guide.

12/Jan/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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Bop until you Drop..

Ceilidh Dance fans have got a great month ahead of them with a stack of great events taking place throughout the remainder of January.

The 2005 Dunstable Tyre Kickers' Ceilidh season kicks off on Friday (January 14) with the electric sound of **MoonDance** with caller **Chris Shaw**. MoonDance are a local eclectic electric five piece outfit led from the front by fiddle, accordion and electric guitar with a solid rhythm section of bass and drums. MoonDance is described by BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards website as one of the "more high-profile festival dance bands". The venue is St Mary's Social Club, 82, West St, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, LU6 1NY. Tickets are available from Octave Music in High Street North, Dunstable and you can get more information from 01582-475655 or check out the website (www.roots66.net/tkc). If you can't make it on Friday then MoonDance are also appearing at a charity ceilidh in Harpenden on Saturday (Jan 15), call Barbara Mackintosh on 01582-767017 for more details.



On Sunday (Jan 16) you can see Milton-Keynes based **Asha** doing a combined concert/ceilidh set at the Stables in Wavendon (near Milton Keynes). The band's line-up features Pete Lockwood (Cock and Bull Band) on synthesiser, sax, Jackie Allen (Token Women, Kitchen Girls) on fiddle, Peter Lubbock on guitar and the calling talents of Bob Adams. The music is based around funky rhythms overlaid with soaring melodies and lush harmonies and infused with blues, soul, jazz and Latin influences merging traditional and original influences to give very danceable sound. For more information and tickets call the box office on 01908 280800, via email at stables@stables.org or check out the website - www.stables.org.

On Saturday week (January 22) contradance band **Fiddling Around** are appearing at The Forster Institute in Linslade (near Leighton Buzzard). This gig is a fund-raising event for a local community organisation called **LetsBuzz**. The caller for the evening is the well-respected local caller **Malcolm North** and the dancing starts at 7.30pm. Entry is £8 and food is provided. Tickets are available from Sheila Day on 01525 374947 or Andrew King on 01525 371248.

On a different tack, Andrew McLean tells me that Quietly Loud Records are looking for tracks from unsigned bands for a new compilation CD. The label is looking for mellow, acoustic sounds and is hoping to get radio air-play when it is complete. This is the second compilation for the Rushden based record label; the first being a charity rock compilation to raise money for a four year old with Leukaemia. If you are interested in taking part in this project then you can email Andrew at isnakebite@hotmail.com

19/Jan/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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Best of Breed 77

Luton's metal favourites **Dilate** return to live action this week with a high profile support slot with **Breed 77** on their UK tour on Friday (January 21). Metal fans will need to trek up to Esquires's in Bedford since neither Luton nor Dunstable appears to have a music venue on the current independent – or indeed any – touring circuit. The gig should be packed out after the Breed's top 40 single 'the river' and a main stage slot at last year's Donington Festival. There is some local metal on the menu though, as **Dilate** will be topping the bill at a Tsunami charity gig at the Luton Student Union next Saturday (January 29) with the cream of the Luton rock scene including **Phonic Rapture**, **Novacaine** and **Alpha High**. For more information email dilateuk@yahoo.co.uk or check out their website at www.dilate.org.uk.

On a more acoustic note, singer **Mary Humphreys** and multi-instrumentalist **Anahata** will be performing their traditional song arrangements and lively tunes at the Redbourn Folk Club tomorrow night (Thursday). Mary and Anahata, who appeared at the Dunstable Folk & Dance festival in 2003, are gaining a reputation for their performances at folk festivals and clubs all over the country. Mary is noted for her powerful and passionate singing and Anahata for his instrumental expertise. As well as traditional English songs there'll be a few in Mary's native Welsh, and the accompaniments and tunes will include concertinas, banjo, cello and melodeons. The club is at "The Cricketers" pub and the music starts at 8.15pm with entry £5. Contact Jan Strapp on 01582 452954 for further information.

It looks like some the lads from local band **Loose Thread** are trying something new. Kev and Dave from the award winning Luton band are playing over at the Arena Tavern in Letchworth tomorrow night (Thursday). Billed as **Bloody Rufus** the duo will be playing "as much rock as two acoustic guitars can make". Entrance is free and the pub is an 18+ venue.

One problem with any kind of new or non-mainstream music is that you never hear it on the radio. Both commercial and BBC local and national radio have 'locked out' local music by having a very limited (but safe) play-list. However, one way to sidestep the corporate stranglehold on the UK airwaves is to use the internet. Hitchin's "Live Circuit" crew are starting up a new internet radio show in conjunction with Get Hooked that will be broadcast every Thursday live from Club 85. They plan to use the show to promote local bands, so if you want some exposure e-mail chris@livecircuit.net or leon@livecircuit.net. So either tune in to www.get-hooked.tk or catch the show live tomorrow night at 8pm at Club 85 in Hitchin.

26/Jan/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

UK Unsigned hits Luton

Christy at SABA – the Society for Advancement of British Arts – tells me that the next Luton heat of the UK Unsigned Talent Quest takes place at the Library Theatre on Saturday week (Feb 5). While music competitions aren't ideal in my opinion, this one does attract interest of the major record labels with a number of artists who been through the mill getting to the top of the charts. A winner at last Luton heat in October was **Marilyn Tyler Moore** who qualified for the semi-finals for the third year in a row. Marilyn, who was the clear winner in her category, possesses a voice that transcends across gospel and jazz, and is certain to be a hot contender for the top spot in the Finals at the Hackney Empire next summer. So if you want to take a shot at the £5,000 top prize and get a chance to showcase to the A&R departments of some top record companies then you can get more information and an application form from SABA on 0208-696-7003 or from www.gigsonline.co.uk

On Sunday (January 30) the foremost family of folk are appearing at the Hitchin Folk Club when **Norma Waterson** and **Martin Carthy** appear at south-east England's premiere folk club which takes place at the Sun Hotel in Sun Street, Hitchin. Individually and collectively they are acknowledged to be an enormously important part of our folk heritage with Martin being awarded an MBE for his services to folk music and Norma being a short listed for the coveted Mercury Music awards. You can find out more about this amazing musical family from their website at www.watersoncarthy.com and more details about the club by visiting www.hitchinfolkclub.idnet.net or phoning Maureen on 01462 812391.

On Saturday (January 29) ceilidh and barn dance addicts should get down to the Alban Arena in the Civic Centre (St Peters Street) in St Albans for a dance featuring one of the top bands on the e-ceilidh circuit - **The Committee Band**. The band is not only has a big reputation for danceable music, it is probably one of the most populous line-ups on the scene with up to a dozen musicians on stage making a big joyous noise. The caller on the night will be Nick Walden with the dance action starting at 8:00pm. Tickets cost a mere £8 (£6 for under 18's) Alan Reimer on 01707-336632 or from the Alban Arena Box Office on 01727-844488.

Tonight (Wednesday) you can catch a songwriter's special down at the Horn featuring **John Beeson** from Headrush along with **Graham Robins** and **Pete White**. This part of a series featuring well known singer / songwriters and entry costs £4, more information from 01727 853143 or www.thehorn.co.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 searchable archive of the column is available on the web at <http://www.lutonscene.com>