

7/Sept/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

A Feast of Folk

Last weekend saw loads of excellent folk and world music, along with some fantastic weather, at the sixth annual Dunstable Folk and Dance Festival. The high point of the weekend for me was a great set from **Jez Lowe and the Bad Pennies** who topped the bill at the Saturday night concert in Grove House Gardens. Jez and the band entranced a capacity audience and got even them on their feet for the second encore. Another high point was the steel band – **Tropical Heatwave** – who had passing shoppers literally dancing in the street during the afternoon concert in the Quadrant shopping centre. In all it was another successful festival and big round of applause is due to Dunstable Town Council for organising the event.



Back to the future;

On Friday (Sept 9) you have a second chance to see the new line-up of **enQ** who will be playing over at the Dukes Head in Leighton Road, Heath and Reach. The band - which features rising star Thomas Fairbairn on electric fiddle (Whapweasal, MoonDance, Pigeon English) went down very well indeed at the Dunstable Festival Sunday concert. See www.enq.org.uk for more details and sound clips.

If you're after a more folky fiddle experience then you can see one of the finest young fiddlers out of the US when **Bruce Molsky** plays over at the The Orange Tree in Norton Road, Baldock. He is also a brilliant guitarist, banjoist and great singer, see www.brucemolsky.com for more information.

The Imperial Vipers tell me that you can now view the video for their debut single 'Kick A Hole' online at their official band website at www.imperialvipers.com. Just go to the 'Listen' page and click on the movie icon. They'd like to hear your opinion through the message page on the website. The single is being officially released on Monday (Sept 12).

Also on Monday, aspiring jazz musicians can sign on for the next South Luton Jazz Course at the Strathmore Church Hall in Luton - 8pm to 9.30pm. For more information contact Ray Batson at ray@nostab.freeserve.co.uk

I hear that local band **Reverie** is recording a new single at Fortress Studios down in London at the moment. The new CD is due to be released by the Luton based label Latent Lemon records. Keep an eye on the web at www.reverieuk.com for details about the release date.

Back to the festival theme, the Indie music festival at The Luton Hoo Estate 'Hoo 05' the end of August was a great success. This is the first time an event like this has been put on in the Luton area and the organisers – Justin, Ben and Andy – are already planning next year's festival. The organisers would like to thank everyone for making it such a successful first festival. Check out www.latentlemon.co.uk for pictures and maybe even a live recording or two.

14/Sep/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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PDM Rise to the Occasion

Luton based Indie music promoter PDM Music are at it again, on Sunday (September 18) they've brought together another three bands to play at The Exchange, King St. Luton. The night will feature local favourites **The Occasion**, **The Nines** from Milton Keynes and **Diskordian**, who I first saw in 1999 when they played at the Dunstable Battle of the Bands. I wrote at the time; "I was especially impressed with the sound and material of Luton based **Diskordian** and if these guys keep at it then they will certainly be a band to watch." Obviously PDM thinks so since this is not the first time they've booked the band (www.diskordian.co.uk).

The Nines are also making their second visit to the Exchange to play their well crafted, grown up rock with a raft of influences including 60s pop, 80s and 90's Indie and post grunge rock (www.thenines.co.uk). **The Occasion** will be bringing their new line up to the gig in pursuit of their ultimate goal – total world domination. According to a recent review their music is "very soulful rock powered by passion, defiance and emotional lyrics." On Sunday the doors open at 8pm with the first band hitting the stage at 8:30pm. PDM are introducing a new flat pricing structure for this gig with admission costing £3 with fliers (available from the Exchange, PDM website, bands etc) or £4 without.

PDM are going from strength to strength with bands coming from further a field as word spreads throughout the alternative music circuit. Next month they're promoting a Punk Night (October 2) with **The Most**, **Rogue**, **Blumunki** and **Penny Red** (from Ipswich). Later in the month (October 23) they are pairing up **Phonic Rapture** and **Red Star Rebels** (ex-Surefire) to see who the hard rock kings of Luton are. They are also working with The Edge nightclub and promoters 'Vandalism Begins at Home' to put on a special gig as part of John Peel Day on October 13th. For more details about current or future gigs you can call 07949 602273, email Info@pdmusic.com, or just keep tuning in here.

I see that work has started on the new Grove Theatre, the replacement for the Queensway Hall. Due for completion in 2007, the new multipurpose venue will be essentially 'bolted on' to the existing leisure centre. The specification looks impressive, including as it does a 750 seat multi purpose theatre and a bunch of bars and restaurants. This could bring a wider range of entertainment back into the heart of Dunstable which is great, but let's hope that the people running the place don't forget that a venue is more than just bricks and mortar. You could argue that downfall of the Queensway Hall was not the problems with the noise and layout of the place but the lack of commitment from the local authority in Bedford to have a wide ranging entertainment programme. The time to start organising this is now, not when they cut the opening ribbon - let's see if they can get right this time.

21/Sep/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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New Gig Series for Luton

Andy O'Hara from DTA Promotions tells me that they are working with the Student Union Rock Society to bring a new live rock night to Luton. The gigs will generally be on alternate Saturday nights, with the first few months aimed at establishing the night with lots of local bands spiced up with larger acts from out of town. In the New Year, when they are fully established, they hope to bring nationally-known acts to the town. The first gig of the series will feature **ENTER SHIKARI**, **Imicus**, **Novacaine**, **Summerfall** along with **Fist Fights & Brake Lights**. Doors open at 7.30pm and entry is £5 - or £3 with a Luton NUS card. See the website at www.myspace.com/dtapromotions for all the latest up-to-date information. DTA also organises the music down at The Park in Park Street Luton which is celebrating its first anniversary on Sunday with music from **Akiva** supported by **Afterglow** and **A Blue Girl**. The music kicks off at 8pm and entry is free entry (18 or over only).

Also on Saturday, Luton based acoustic rockers The Tempest will be kicking off their return to gigging at Esquires in Bedford (60a Bromham Rd). This gig will be new drummer Mark Cann's first gig for Tempest and the lads tell me that they can't wait to get back into performing after a break for holidays. The evening opens with **The Tease** followed by Luton lads **Reverie** and **Tempest** as main support bands. The headline act is **The Rifles** who have received airplay on major radio stations such as Radio 1 and XFM. Tickets will cost £6 and transport can be arranged either by email (jamesingy@yahoo.co.uk) or phoning 07838 22 32 66.

On a completely different tack; anyone interested in some good time, foot-stomping, sweaty Cajun, Zydeco, Swamp pop and Mayhem from the **Bon Temps Playboys** should get on down to the Kings Langley Services Club on Saturday (Sept 24). The venue, which is on the A4251 or Hempstead Road/High Street (next to the junction with Vicarage Lane), apparently has a good dance floor, cheap beer and admission is only £4 with the music starting at 8.30 pm. Call 01923 260930 for more information.

The lads from **Imperial Vipers** seem to be doing quite well with their new single "Kick a Hole". Apparently the HMV on-line store sold out of the single which meant that the distributors (Pinnacle) made it available directly from their website (www.pinnacle-entertainment.co.uk). To buy on-line just type "Imperial Vipers" in the "Search Artists" field to get a chance to purchase the single. Those of you who have a more traditional approach to buying records can pick up a copy of the single from Woolworths in Dunstable or from HMV in Luton – who apparently sold out of the single four days in a row last week. You can also download the MP3 version of the single for 79p from www.pinnacle-digital.co.uk/eminence

28/Sept/2005 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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Hoo's Next

Following up on the success of the Hoo'05 open air festival, Shoot the Sun Promotions are pushing out the boundaries of the local resurgence of Indie music with a four band extravaganza on Friday (Sept 30). The Luton based promoters have been consistently bringing the very best of breaking new bands to play in the town. For instance **My Luminaries** who played at their Summer Bandfest have now been signed by Virgin and **Killing Moon** have now changed their name to **The Battle** and are NME darlings supporting the likes of **Bloc Party**. On Friday they continue the revolution by bringing top Southampton band **Dead!Dead!Dead!** to one of Luton's top music venues -



The Well on Hightown Road, Luton. Described in the music press (The Mag) as "So enthralling is their vast sound and original style, that it's a challenge concentrating on anything else while you're listening to them". Sharing the bill will be Hitchin's favourite band **Fruition**, who have been compared to **Razorlight** and **The Kaiser Chiefs**, and Luton darlings **Bowfinger** and **Stranger** who will kicking off the event at 9pm. For more information check out the web at www.shootthesun.com

On Sunday (Oct 2) another local promoter – PDM Music – are having a punk party at The Exchange in King St, Luton) – and everyone is invited. The event is to celebrate Paul from PDM's birthday and will feature no less than four Punk outfits - **The Most**, **Rogue**, **Blumunki** and **Penny Red**. Opening the show will be Ipswich band **Penny Red** who have a reputation as a live act with an aggressive punch - 'fast, hard rock with that punk edge much like **The Wildhearts**, **3 Colours Red** and **The Almighty**' (www.pennyred.f9.co.uk). **Blumunki** are a new Luton band who is picking up a strong local following whenever they play (www.freewebs.com/blumunki) and **Rogue** who were featured on the Vandalism Begins @ Home CD and have been described as 'raw, noisy, chaotic and lawless' (<http://wearerogue.tripod.com>). Topping the bill are **The Most** who have been tagged as 'the best new punk band you've heard in ages' and are now signed to Chromium/E3 records (Liverpool) and are featured on the compilation album Preview 2005 (<http://itsmyrocknroll.tripod.com>). The doors open at 8pm and admission is £4 or £3 with a flier available from www.pdmmusic.com or The Exchange.

On Friday **Laughing Gravy** are playing for this month's regular Unicorn Ceilidh. The band's style is firmly rooted in the English tradition with influences from French, Scottish, Welsh and American roots music. The dancing will be led by the vastly experienced caller **Hugh Rippon** with a full evening of reels, jigs, hornpipes and step-hop dances is guaranteed, with enough guidance to ensure that even the rawest beginner is not left on the sidelines. Interval entertainment will be provided by **Baldock Midnight Morris**, whose energetic style and unusual dances combine traditional and more recently created dances that provide a visual and aural spectacle of England's finest dance tradition. Tickets cost £7 for adults and £4 for under 14s and there is a Real Ale Bar and the venue is Hitchin Town Hall in Brand Street, Hitchin. For more information call 01582 733113 / 724261.

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>