

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

The Brian Heywood Column

Unofficially Blondie

Top local guitarist **Rik Taylor** phoned last week to chat about his new Blondie Tribute Band which is going out under the name of '**Blondee the Tribute**'. The Luton based five piece band is fronted by local singer **Debbie Bonomini**, whose voice sounds remarkably like the original band's lead singer Debbie Harry. This may not be particularly surprising as the blond bombshell from New York was our Debbie B's first influence and the reason she started singing in the first place. As well as Rik, the rest the band - Matt King (Guitars), Dave 'Bluesy' Brown (Bass) and Dave Ashcroft (Drums) - are all seasoned professionals and aim to recreate the energy of Blondie on stage.



The band's gigs are very likely to be mainly private corporate events both here and across the channel but they will be playing a local gig on Sunday (Dec 11) at Hightown Social Club in Oxen Road (Luton). Tickets will cost £3.00 and there will also be a limited number of the band's three track demo CD available for free at the gig. Doors open at 7.30pm and the band will hit the stage at about 9pm. Full bar facilities are available at very reasonable prices but get there early as numbers are limited. See them on the web at www.blondee.org

Local promoter PDM are putting on a gig with three local bands - **Dead Girl On Pavement**, **Claret Sky** and **Third Law** - at the Hat Factory in Bute Street, Luton on Tuesday (Dec 13). The first band on the night will be **Third Law** who is a three piece playing spiky New Wave Rock and will be releasing their latest studio single (Let Me Be Me) which will be available for free on the night. An early review of the single accuses the band of being "guilty of writing catchy-as-hell songs". The band is made up of Paul, Marc and Dave who are also the brains behind PDMmusic, find out more at www.thirdlawmusic.com

Dead Girl On Pavement (or DGOP for short) have been described as a "band that is capable of mixing downbeat morose vocals with effects-driven guitars" (www.deadgironpavement.com). While **The Claret Sky**, who has only been going since February, play in an Indie Rock and Goth style with a progressive feel (www.claretsky.com). Anyway the doors open 8pm and admission is only £3. The next PDMmusic event at the Exchange in Luton is on Sunday week (Dec 18) and features **Elements of Refusal**, **Summerfall** and one other band, see www.pdmusic.com for more details.

Has anyone noticed the "explosion of live music" that the government promised since the new pub/club licensing was introduced last month? I've heard of a number of venues shutting down because of the loss of the "two in a bar" exception but nothing good to balance this (so far). E-mail me at news@lutonscene.com with any stories of new live music venues starting up, old ones turning off the lights or any other anecdotes about the effect the new law.

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

The Brian Heywood Column

Pedal to the Metal

Metal fans should get themselves over to the next PDMmusic event at the Exchange in Luton on Sunday (Dec 18) where they'll be seeing out the year with a metal and hardcore mix night. Headlining on the night will be Luton's **Elements Of Refusal** (www.elementsofrefusal.com) who describe themselves as "Passionate, Heavy, Mellow, Loud, Quiet, Thought Inducing, Emotional, Dark, Light, Hardcore and Melodic" and are gaining a reputation as one of the most energetic and hard working bands on the Luton scene.



Piggy in the middle at Sunday's gig are **Summerfall** from Bedford, who burst onto the scene in 2003 by bagging second place at the prestigious Battle of the Bands competition organised by Esquires. They tell me that they aim to produce alternative harmony based rock that is progressive while still being catchy and melodic. Opening the night will be Watford based **Purgatory** who has been picked as a band to watch by respected hard rock journalist Malcolm Dome. Admission £4 or £3 with fliers available from the bands, the pub or www.pdmmusic.com and the doors open at 8. Note that the Exchange is an over 18's only venue.

Finally, Paul, Marc and Dave from PDMmusic have told me that they'd like to thank everyone who has supported the 13 gigs they've promoted throughout this year and give everyone their best wishes for the festive season. They tell me that they've got even bigger plans for next year's programme, watch this space.

If you're wondering what you're going to do as we slide inexorably towards the festive break then help is at hand. Tomorrow week (Dec 22) the Cork and Bull pub in Cumberland Street, Luton is hosting a "Class of 1978-1988 Reunion" with three bands, guest personalities and a large screen viewing of the seminal Goth band **UK Decay** performing at the Luton Carnival in 1982. The Cork and Bull used to be known as the 'Grapevine' in the early 80's and was the focus for the Luton Punk scene. Providing the nights entertainment will be one of Hertfordshire's top 'Post-Punk / Gothic' bands **Mojag**, Iggy Pop tribute **Thee Dirty Stooges** from Leicester and Luton's **Dead Girl On The Pavement**. At least two ex-members of UK Decay are expected to attend although there is no danger of them reforming for this event. To reserve a ticket email werewolf@ukdecay.co.uk or surf to www.ukdecay.co.uk

The following evening (Dec 23) Dunstable based heavy rockers **The Hustlers** are playing a special one-off Christmas gig down at the Wheatsheaf in High Street North, Dunstable. The six piece band play songs from the likes of Metallica, AC/DC and Black Sabbath, along with various other artists. They say that the band's unique style and sound along with their reworking of these classic songs "are enough to get your granny out of bed and dancing on the table." For more details call AJ at the Wheatsheaf on 01582-753245.

As we approach the end of the year I'm starting to think about my annual roundup of the local band scene. So if you think your favourite band (or you!) should be mentioned then don't delay, email me details at news@lutonscene.com

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

The Brian Heywood Column

Christmas Cheers!

As a special seasonal present to their fans, local band **Imicus** is giving away the download version of their "Resolution" album throughout the holiday period. They tell me that the album has been well received since its release and key tracks such as "Demise of an Angel" and "Shadows" have been selected for numerous compilation albums. In fact Keith Pickering (Bedfordmetal) has described it as having an "Epic Sound, gorgeous guitar work and powerfully sung." To download the album or find out more details about **Imicus**, you should point your web browser at www.imicusband.com



If you want to hear the real thing then they will be playing at the DTA promotions / Basick Records night at the Hightown Club in Oxon Road, Luton along with **Enter Shikari** and **Fell Silent**. Doors open at 7pm, but this gig is expected to sell out, so you should get tickets in advance from www.wegotickets.com or turn up early on the night (tickets £5 on the door). Directions and a map to the venue are available on www.dtapromo.co.uk

Another nice Christmas pressie goes to local rockers **Imperial Vipers**. Their second single 'Promised Land' became the highest new entry in the BBC Radio 1 rock chart, reaching number nine on the first week of sales. This is even more remarkable since the single was only released as limited edition etched 7 inch single and as a download. The band tells me that they would like to say a massive "thank you" to everyone who bought it. It seems that nearly all the copies that were available in HMV and Virgin record stores have now been sold but the track is still available on download via the band's website at www.imperial-vipers.com

Don't forget that the tomorrow night (Thursday) you can join the "Class of 1978-1988 Reunion" at the Cork and Bull pub in Cumberland Street, Luton. As well as three bands (**Mojag**, **Thee Dirty Stooges** and **Dead Girl On The Pavement**), there will be guest personalities and a large screen viewing of the seminal Goth band **UK Decay** performing at the Luton Carnival in 1982. To reserve a ticket email werewolf@ukdecay.co.uk or surf to www.ukdecay.co.uk

Also on Friday (Dec 23) you can catch Dunstable based heavy rockers **The Hustlers** who'll be playing songs from the likes of Metallica, AC/DC and Black Sabbath at the Wheatsheaf in High Street North, Dunstable. For more details call AJ at the Wheatsheaf on 01582-753245.

If you're looking for something next week then on Tuesday (Dec 27) local ska-punk-rock favourites **Pirate Radio** are appearing at the Cork and Bull, Park Street, Luton. This will be their final gig of a highly successful year. Support comes from **The Scales** who are playing a rare gig since half the band disappeared off to University along with **Mora**, an acoustic set from Harpenden favourite emo-rockers **FirstBorn** and local acoustic artist **Emma Carroll**. Tickets are £5 on the door for this DTA Promotions seasonal special. You can get more information from their website at www.dtapromo.co.uk

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

The Brian Heywood Column

A Headstart for the New Year

I popped down to the Headstart Jam Night at the basement venue at the Hat Factory in Luton's Bute Street the week before last. Although I've mentioned this regular fortnightly Wednesday night event in previous columns, this was actually the first time I'd managed to get down there myself. I've played in this venue a couple of times and seen a number of other acts and I think it has a great, intimate atmosphere which is fantastic for getting to know a performer. Last Wednesday there were about 30 people, both performers and audience, who had come along to join the fun and anyone who walked through the door was actively – and continuously – encouraged to get up on stage and participate. Despite not planning to do anything myself, towards the end of the evening they even managed to get me up on stage, where **Spiros** on percussion jammed along with me strumming through some of my songs on a lovely old Epiphone semi-acoustic lent to me by Bill from the Headstart project.



The range of experience of the performers varied from seasoned professionals trying out new material to folk who were getting up on stage for the first time. Highlights of the night for me were a set of original songs from **Pamela Moody**, a solo acoustic set from **Nick Gylanders** and a frenetic Bollywood extravaganza from **Raj**. Headstart supplies the PA and sound engineer (hi Spon) and there is a drum kit, backline amplification and various guitars available if you need something to play. You can even supply your own backing track, which they'll play through the PA. I've been to a few 'open-mic' nights but this one is the most supportive I've seen and they'll even sort out a band to jam along if you want. The Hat Factory basement venue has a licensed bar area, is accessible for disabled users and, best of all, it's completely free!

If you want to take part, either as part of the audience or as a performer, you can book a place online from the Jam Night section of the Headstart website (www.headstartproject.org) or call James on 01582-417-878. If you want a taster then there are a bunch of video clips from previous jam nights on the website as well. The next Jam Night is on January 18 and fortnightly thereafter.

Local duo **Life & Times** which consists of Barry Goodman and Graham Meek will be playing over at the Baldock & Letchworth Folk Club at The Orange Tree on Norton Road in Baldock next Wednesday (Jan 4). Graham and Barry perform songs about life in Bedfordshire life accompanied by guitar and melodeon with lots of humour and local tales thrown in as well. They will be supported on the night by **Steve Last**. The music starts at 8.30pm and tickets are £6 (members), £5 (concessions) and £7 (non-members) with accompanied children free (2 per adult). For more information contact Alan Hewson on 0845 123 2656 or email alan@madnanny.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>.

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