

3/Aug/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Music Coup for White Swan



The White Swan in High Street South in Dunstable has pulled off something of a musical coup by getting **Shana Morrison** to play a gig there on Saturday. Shana has been exposed to music all her life which not surprising if you consider that her dad is perhaps the world's greatest living rhythm and blues singer. However, being the daughter of Van 'The Man' Morrison is probably something of a mixed blessing for any aspiring musician. On the upside, she spent her youth surrounded by great musicians and listening to some great songs so I guess that it's no great wonder that she's followed on in the family business. The downside is that she has a real job on her hand to step out of her father's shadow.

In fact she's already doing this with stage and studio credits with artists such as Brownie McGee and Charles Brown as well as sharing the bill with the likes of Bonnie Raitt, John Lee Hooker, and Dr. John as well as opening shows for Lyle Lovett, Joe Cocker, and John Hyatt. Her music is described as blues and rock influenced pop spiced up with country, R&B, and jazz. So if you want an evening of soulful, rock/pop performed with Shana's unique and wide-ranging voice then get down to the White Swan on Saturday. Opening the show is local singer songwriter **Graham Robins**. Entry is free but there is limited space in the venue so you'll need to get down there early to ensure that you'll get in.

If your taste veers more towards metal then DTA Promotions are putting on one of their multi-band extravaganzas at the Luton University Students' Union on Saturday. Featured bands are; **Job For A Cowboy** who are an Arizona based metal band with a taste for making songs that sound like the end of the world, **Viatrophy** who pride themselves on their technical ability and brutal mosh parts, **Elements Of Refusal** who pedal a full gamut of metal styles described as "Passionate, Heavy, Mellow, Loud, Quiet, Thought Inducing, Emotional, Dark, Light, Hardcore and Melodic", **Reservations At Dorcia** who are an American Psycho themed metal band featuring former members of Hertsxcore types Eden Maine and Her Words Kill and **Foetus Decimation** who describe their sound as a brutal mix of Death Metal, Hardcore, Grindcore and Gorecore. The doors open at 7.30pm and entry is £6 with a 14+ age limit (ID required if you want to use the bar). Tickets are available from the Students' Union (11am - 6pm daily, up to 2am on a club night), www.wegotickets.com or direct from Dave, Tom and Andy.

And finally, don't forget that **Loz Jones** (ex Crying Blue and ESC) is launching his solo project with a party at the Hat Factory in Bute Street, Luton on Saturday. Tickets for this gig are not available from the venue so to get in you'll need to e-mail Loz at info@lozjones.com or check out his website at www.lozjones.com if you want to go along.

9/Aug/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Do not adjust your sets...



On Friday you can get a chance to hear some music from outside the box when Without Dead Time Records host a night of peculiar rumbles and dark suggestions from **Tomfire**, **Bride of the Atom** and **Garrett** at the Hat Factory in Bute Street, Luton. This is definitely a gig for those who like to cling to the outer edge of popular 'music' and it sounds like this gig will be an ideal way to get up to the next level right at the start of the weekend. Local trio **Garret** will be headlining with their high energy, fast, intelligent and quirky art-punk-noise with support from the self proclaimed noise meisters **Bride of the Atom** and the Sid Barret-esque effects laden rock and/or roll strangeness of **Tomfire** helped by visuals from **Pooh Bear**. Doors open at 7:45 and entry costs just £5. For more information about Without Dead Time Records check them out on the web at www.wdtrecords.co.uk.

On Sunday evening (August 13) you can get a chance to see **Cruel Folk** (www.cruelfolk.com) in The Marquee Suite at The Cock Hotel in Stony Stratford (just off the A5). The duo consists of Sean and Paul Holden from Milton Keynes and Norwich who sing and play an acoustic set of original and traditional material. They have just released a new album called 'Love, Loyalty and Other Lies' and are making quite a name for themselves on the acoustic circuit, appearing at Folk on the Pier and this year's Cambridge Folk Festival. Supporting them will be local singer/songwriter **Terry Emm** (www.emmmusic.co.uk) who is known for his vibrant thoughtful lyrics, combined with beautiful acoustic melodies. Doors open at 7.45pm, and tickets cost £3.50, for more information call 01908-635133 or 07801 735860.

Check out the battle of the bands down at The Horn in Victoria St, St Albans on Tuesday (August 15). This is the start of the second round of their current competition and features **Grief Society** (www.myspace.com/griefsociety) with the vocals and bass of **Angus** (also know as 'Anguish') **Nurse**, the drums of **Ben Milway** and the guitars of **Stefan Prydderch**. The band's music fuses elements of power pop, grunge funk and EMO - often all at the same time. They are currently putting the finishing touches to a new album. Also on the bill are **Ghastly Manoeuvres** (www.ghastlymanoeuvre.co.uk) who play, well... not punk, not pop and not exactly indie ... tell you what, why not just go there and find out for yourself. Final band on the bill are **Prankster** who wish to remain a mystery until the night. The music kicks off at 8pm and you can get more information by calling 01727 844627, emailing adam@thehorn.co.uk or surfing to www.thehorn.co.uk.

Incidentally, I've created the first of a series of PR tips for bands, musicians or singers who want to promote themselves to local press and so on. A lot of the art of getting known is to get the right information to the right people at the right time. You can find the information on the web at www.roots66.net/lutonscene/pr.pdf or as a link from the archive page at www.lutonscene.com.

16/Aug/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Folk Festival Futures

I'm down at Broadstairs Folk Festival (www.broadstairsfolkweek.org.uk) this week, playing and listening to some great music in an amazingly packed programme of music and dance. Looking at the programme, it makes me think that this is a great example of what The Dunstable Festival could become given the time and support to develop. With the new multipurpose Grove Theatre is coming on-line before next year's event, it could easily become the focus of an expanded festival. Just think of what that could do to bring a very wide range of entertainment to the heart of South Bedfordshire, boost local trade all at very little cost and general hassle to the local community. A recent study commissioned by Arts Council England shows that folk events give the best value-for-money and have the widest audience age profile of any kind of music events surveyed.



When the Dunstable Town Council kicked off the folk festival back in 2000, I helped formulate the programming policy that has helped ensure the success of the festival to date. By headlining the main festival concert with an act that has broad popular appeal – this year Chas & Dave - and then concentrating on the more electric / fusion side of the 'folk' music world we get an event that both appeals to a wide cross-section of the local populace and stamps an individual character on our local festival. The proof of the pudding is in the eating and the success of this policy has been demonstrated with packed houses and universal acclaim from the audiences.

Up until now the Dunstable Town Council has shouldered the burden of organising the festival with some help from local performers and promoters. As far as I know, the South Beds District Council have never contributed anything significant to the festival, relying on the town council (and us council tax payers) to make up for the immense hole they left in the local arts/music scene when they sold off the region's only major venue – namely the Queensway Hall - to ASDA.

So from next April the South Beds District Council will have the opportunity to enhance the local arts scene by ensuring that we have a local venue that promotes both high quality and popular music with a real relevance to, and involvement of, the local community. One way of doing this would be to get involved with next year's Folk Festival and help take it up to the next level, building on the hard work of the local council and helping all of us in the South Beds area to reap the benefits. The alternative is for them to use our council tax to finance a loss making 'arts' white elephant with hire charges that place the use of the venue out of reach of local organisations and artists. Your call South Beds Council.



Gig News:

Heavy rock band **Igneous** (www.igneousmusic.co.uk) return to Luton on Friday with a high-energy performance at the Hat Factory in Bute Street. They describe their music as having the power of metal, passion of soul, spirit of rock 'n' roll and the energy of punk, with catchy lyrics and killer riffs. There will be support from two emerging local bands, **Riot Plan** and **Elanor's Tribute**. Doors open at 7pm and tickets are £4 (Box Office - 01582 878100).

23/Aug/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Chas & Dave at Dunstable Folk Festival



The coming bank holiday weekend sees a visit to Dunstable by the almost legendary cockney rockers **Chas & Dave**, performing at Grove House Gardens as part of the Dunstable Folk & Dance Weekend. They first got together in the early 70's and released their first album of cockney Rock 'n' Roll (One Fing 'n' Anuvver) in 1975 and got the backing of legendary BBC DJ John Peel and Charlie Gillett among others. However they really got thrust into the limelight when they were signed up to make TV ads for Courage beer with their song 'Gertcha' going on to become their first Top Twenty chart entry. This was followed by a string of hits including 'Don't Give A Monkey's' and 'Rabbit'. Their latest conquest is the tough USA market, after radio stations over there picked up on their track 'Flying' which led to them to their first North American tour.

Actually I've been surprised by the number of young musicians around the local live music scene that have told me that they're going to be there to hear these dynamic cockneys from 'sarf lunnon'. By staying outside the ephemeral pop music scene the duo have transcended it and stayed true to their roots, influencing a lot of new bands. And it's not limited to the local area either, when The Libertines were asked who they wanted to support them at their London shows in 2003/2004, they asked for **Chas & Dave**. The shows at The Brixton Academy and The Kentish Town Forum were a huge success with the Libertines'; Pete and Carl even joining them on stage for a couple of numbers.

The other acts on the bill at the Saturday night concert are celtic singer **Heather Dale** and my celtic rock outfit **enQ** with special guest **Toni Wood**.

Canadian singer Heather fuses traditional stories with a healthy mix of Celtic folk, blues, jazz and world music influences and is particularly known for her interpretations of ancient legends. She plays a wide array of instruments, including piano, bodhran, dulcimers, alto recorder, bowed psaltery and tin whistle and tours with fellow multi-instrumentalist **Ben Deschamps** on guitar, double bass, Irish flute and



percussion. **enQ** will be opening the show with a mix of original and traditional songs and celtic fusion instrumentals so bring your dancing feet along. Compere will be Dunstable's favourite singer / songwriter **Rick Christian** who will be performing during the changeovers.

Other events over the weekend will be the traditional **MoonDance** opening ceilidh (barn dance) on Friday with **Liam Robinson** calling. This year the event is back at St Mary's Social club on West Street, call 01582-475655 for more information. On Saturday afternoon you can hear jazz in the Priory gardens from **Stolen Moments** and see performance artist **Jon Hicks** in the Quadrant shopping centre painting to music (11-3pm). On Sunday there will be a family fun day in the Grove House Gardens with craft stalls, children's entertainers and music from **Strange Folk**, **Sons of the Soil** and festival favourites **Mas-Y-Mas**.

30/Aug/2006 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Transatlantic Robins



Local singer / songwriter **Graham Robins** seems to be on something of a roll at the moment. After supporting Shana Morrison (Van the man's daughter) on her recent UK Tour, she has invited the Luton based song smith to the US to open selected shows. Graham has a long association with the music of Van Morrison, so it is totally appropriate that he should find himself in collaboration with Shana. In fact, Graham even dueted with Shana on 'Sometimes we cry a song' written by the great man (also a track off her new album) whilst they were performing at London's Borderline during the recent tour. If you don't fancy hopping across the Atlantic to see Mr Robins, then you can catch him performing at The White Swan in High Street South, Dunstable on Saturday. He will be playing with his new band which contains members who have worked alongside Chris Farlowe, Andy Fairweather-Lowe and Bill Wyman's Rhythm Kings. Graham will be highlighting songs from his new album 'Roll back the years' which is to be released via local label 33 Records.

If you want to catch the **Dave Swarbrick** and **Martin Carthy** gig at the Sun Hotel on Sunday (September 3), you'll have to be quick as tickets are selling fast. The almost legendary fiddler Dave Swarbrick – a long standing member of Fairport Convention – achieved notoriety a couple of years ago when a national newspaper accidentally printed his obituary. In fact he did comment that it was "Not the first time I've died in Coventry." Since then he has had a complete lung transplant and is now back on the road again both as a solo artist and with various friends. On Sunday he will be appearing with another folk legend – Martin Carthy. Support on the night will be New Roots finalists **Danansooz** from St. Albans. To find out if there are any tickets left or for information about the gig ring 01462 812391, email goodmusic@hitchinfolkclub.co.uk or see the website at www.hitchinfolkclub.co.uk.

Simon from **Stranger Station** tells me that they are starting a regular monthly residency at the Hat Factory in Bute St, Luton on Monday (September 4). The music is a really chilled out set of instrumentals that reside somewhere in the ambient sound space along with the likes of Brian Eno, Harold Budd, Keith Jarret and Erik Satie. To celebrate the start of the new series the first gig is free entry with the music kicking off at 8:30pm.

Paul from the Luton based heavy rock outfit **Igneous** tells me that their gig the Friday before last at the Hat Factory was a great success with long queues long before doors opened and a sold out venue with fans turned away. They proved that Rock 'n' Roll is not dead with an audience chanting before the two and quarter hour gig. Paul also said that the band have recorded the night's performance and will release it on DVD and Live CD at the end of September. I imagine you'll be able find out how to get a copy from their website - www.igneousmusic.co.uk.

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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>.