

3/Jan/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Local Band Scene Rundown

Last week I mentioned how the live music scene was very healthy in the local area so this week I will continue with a rundown of some of the bands and solo performers who have been gigging in the area over the last year. The list is by no means complete but should give a flavour of the sheer diversity of the local music scene. If you think I've missed out someone important then email me on news@lutonscene.com and I'll include details in future columns.



- Imperial Vipers** In their own words - "the one thing that unites us really we are unashamed to say that we play no frills rock n roll" (www.imperial-vipers.com).
- Imicus** Dark, moody and heavy original music with more melodic songs that other types of emotion inspire (www.imicusband.com).
- The Occasion** "...The Occasion could pretty much be The Who re-invented, their music is fresh and natural, raw and enjoyable..." (www.myspace.com/theoccasionband).
- Reverie** Dreamo (Dreamy Emo) music with dark sonic textures and a razor sharp edge (www.reverieuk.com).
- The Suspects** An up and coming local band that play a mix of covers and original material (www.myspace.com/thesuspects06).
- Attika** Deliver classics from the like of Metallica and Nirvana along side an ever growing set of original material (www.attika-uk.tk).
- Dead on Scene** Great indie rock from a young trio (www.myspace.com/deadonscenerock).
- The Chevrons** Play a powerful blend of rock and rhythm and blues and the band specialises in doing extended sets (www.thechevrons.com).
- The Culture** Play a set of literate punk/pop with a line in urban commentary and other sordid tales (www.myspace.com/THECULTURE).
- enQ** "... a high energy vortex which combines elements of Celtic, folk, rock, and hauntingly fugue like melodies ...". Also features a local music journalist on guitar and vocals (www.enq.org.uk).
- The Ruby Shoes** Combine pounding beats with seductive guitars and glam melodies (www.myspace.com/therubysshoes).
- Phonic Rapture** Have been described as "local down-and-dirty rock-gods" (www.phonic-rapture.co.uk).
- Graham Robins** The area's premiere singer/songwriter with a twist of soul (www.myspace.com/grahamrobins).
- Blue Rinse** Play a mixture of 70s, 80s 90s, and 00s funk, disco, rock and pop (www.thebluerinse.co.uk).
- Sons of the Soil** Powerful acoustic Americana with a dash of strange humour. Definitely no Australians involved.
- Grief Society** Another blast from the past playing a mix of hard edged Funk/rock originals featuring the bass and voice of Angus Nurse (www.myspace.com/griefsociety).
- Presidents of Park Street** Have been described as having a Talking Heads kind of groove with the odd Led Zeppelin harmony (www.myspace.com/presidentsofparkstreet).
- Sleeping Dogz** A unique mix of English, Cajun, Celtic and Moorish influences with a large helping of lunacy from Wild Willy Barrat (www.sleepingdogz.co.uk).
- The Blue Teeth** Play original acoustic based indie rock (www.myspace.com/theblueteeth).

10/Jan/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Dance in the New Year



On

Friday you can catch the **Stömp**, one of the UK's top electric e-ceilidh (electric Barn Dance) bands in the country when they play down at St Mary's Social Club in West Street Dunstable. Not to be confused with the bin lid bashing percussion group with a similar name, the band takes its name from the old English word for dance. The band's music is primarily to the traditions of England with influences from elsewhere in British Isles as well as from across the water from place like Scandinavia, Europe and North America. The front-line consists of concertina, flute, mandolin and fiddle which weave an intricate and imaginative mix of melody over the solid foundation of a muscular electric rhythm section. The caller on Friday will be **Jackie Allen** who as well as being a fiddle player of some repute (Asha, Token Women and The Kitchen Girls), is an excellent caller who will help you through the dances.

If you've never been to an e-ceilidh (pronounced 'ee-kay-lee'), it's just a new spin on traditional barn dance, a way to bop on the dance floor to infectious 'world' rhythms with dances which are suitable for all ages and simple enough so that you don't need any previous experience and. Friday night's event is part of a regular series of dances and was formerly known as 'Tyre Kickers' but has now changed its name to Chiltern Ceilidhs to reflect the location. All the events are self promoted by the bands would are trying to bring some family entertainment back into the centre of Dunstable. The ticket prices are kept low so that the entire family can afford to go with adults paying £6 each, students and other concessions £3 and under 12's free. The doors open at 8pm and tickets are available on the door (bar available). For more information call 01582-862643, 01582-475655 or see the web site at www.chilternceilidhs.info.

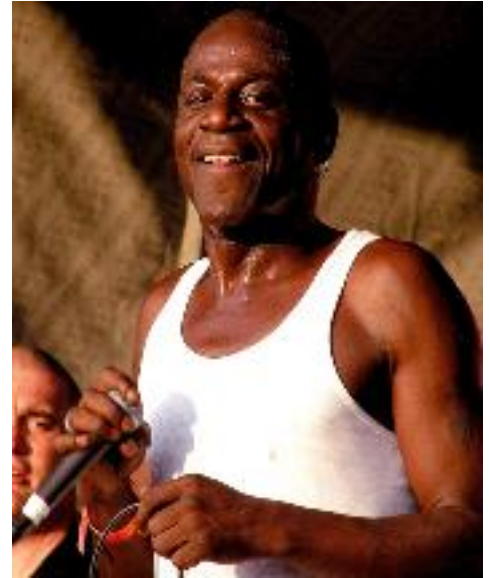
On Saturday this month's **Metal City** event will be helping the New Year get off to a very loud start to help blast away those post-festive cobwebs. The bill features **Rogue**, alongside the emerging talents of **Knievel Genius** and **Valen Tone**. The current line-up of **Rogue** has been together since 2006 and has a reputation for aggressive punk and has been compared to the likes of Motorhead, and Queens of the Stone Age. Their sound is abrasive, hard-hitting, lyrically explicit and set out to challenge modern ideas about music, politics, censorship and mass-media. **Knievel Genius** fuse nerve shredding riffs, huge melodies and unpredictable knife-edge song writing all nailed down by a one-man rhythm powerhouse combining industrial beats and powerhouse rhythms. **Valen Tone** delivers pure rock music with influences such as Metallica, Guns 'n' Roses, Blink 182 and the Red Hot Chili Peppers. The club takes place at The Roman Way in Tomlinson Avenue (Luton) and entry is just £3 with the action kicking off at 7pm and last admission is at 10:30pm with music carrying on till half past midnight. For information on how to get there and for further details of the night check out www.metalcity.co.uk.

17/Jan/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

A Specials Event

On Friday you can see **The Neville Staple Band** when they perform at The Horn in Victoria St, St Albans. Neville's music career started in Coventry in 1977 with a band called 'The Automatics' which later changed its name **The Specials**. In October 1979 they released 'A Message To You, Rudy' which, along with the music of Madness and The Selecter, was instrumental in putting Two Tone on the musical map. Since then Neville's projects read like a who's who of rock; working with legends such as Elvis Costello, The Specials and David Byrne to name just a few. On Friday Neville and his band will be performing classics including Rat Race, Ghost Town, Rudy along with many more Specials classics. Tickets are £7 on the door or you can order on the Horn web site at www.thehorn.co.uk and you can find out more about the band at www.myspace.com/nevillestaplefromthespecials.



On Sunday **The Dead Sea Sound** are playing some classy indie rock over at The Park in Park St, Luton. The band has been gigging in Luton, London and the surrounding area for around a year now and their sound ranges from subtle, fragile-sounding and almost ambient, atmospheres to a much harder (and louder) rock style. The band members are all originally from Luton and the line-up is Sam Pheasant (guitar), Richard Latimer (bass), Nick Latimer (keyboards) and Mark Rutherford (drums). You can get more information and listen to sound clips at www.myspace.com/thedeadseasound or www.thedeadseasound.co.uk.

David Crowder dropped me a line about the jamming session that used to be held on Monday nights at the Greyhound in Dunstable. Unfortunately the pub had to close at the end of September last year due to trading difficulties and this put an end to the sessions. The jams were hosted by Tim Laws who got pretty sharp 'house band' together to support any musicians or singers who turned up and played anything from free form jams to blues standards and even standards like 'Stand by Me' when the barmaids got up to sing. Anyway, the sessions may be gone but are not forgotten as parts of the last two were recorded. Anyone wanting copies (3 CDs worth) should call Dave on 077 333 200 43.

However the story doesn't end there. It seems that the band got on so well together that they've decided to carry on and are going out under the name – **Swing the Cat** – playing a wide range of swing, soul and rock music which Dave describes as "The Rat Pack meets The Blues Brothers in cabaret". The band's line-up has an age range of 16 to 57 and consists of Tim Laws (vocals, keyboards), Ben Scrivener (guitar), Chris Maddock (sax, keyboards), Phil James (drums) and Dave Crowder (bass and occasional guitar). The band has already appeared at the Talk of the Town in Milton Keynes and a few smaller venues and is now targeting weddings, functions and cabaret clubs, where a party atmosphere is required. If you interested in some well presented and fun music from the new show band they can be contacted through Dave (da.crowder@ntlworld.com) or Tim (07738 73 6116).

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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 search-able archive of the column is available on the web at www.lutonscene.com and Brian can be found on MySpace under the moniker of enqk.

24/Jan/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Comic Book Heroes



Niki Edwards emailed me about an acoustic collaboration between him and Stephen Whiley which is gigging out under the name **Comic Boy**. Based in Luton, the acoustic duo has just finished their debut EP and is now looking for bookings. Niki and Stephen originally linked up September last year and have been showcasing their songs around the area with **Niki** on vocals, guitar and keyboards, **Stephen** providing additional vocals and guitar and **Ellen Marie Farrar** helping out on violin. The music is all original with the songs being written and arranged by Niki. Currently the EP tracks can be heard on their MySpace area (comicboyuk) and they are discussing a date for the CD release and release party. Other future plans include the release of their first music video thanks to the help of Sarah Lacy (www.landofpaintedsky.com) who is working on a 2D animation of their track 'Walk On' which should be available via their MySpace area sometime later this month.

On Saturday you can celebrate thirty years of UK punk and alternative music in the Luton area with the lads of **UK Decay** when they hold their second 'Class of 1979 - 1989 Reunion' at the Hat Factory in Bute St, Luton. It looks like it's going to be quite a big bash with the event taking over the entire basement area of Luton's revitalised Arts Centre. In the main basement bar there are no less than four fantastic live bands from 8pm. **The Adenoids** will be bringing their colourful anarchic style to the party while **Los Cyclones** has been described as "a lethal cocktail of wild rock'n'roll, storming garage punk and raw soul with a dark twist". **Jesus Christ Supercharger** is a three piece comprising of 'Baby Ray' Philpot on drums, 'Johnny-G' on guitar and 'Dan-the-Man' on bass who all played in the well-known 80's Luton band, 'The Party Girls' who were known for their 'Surf Punk' flavour. Rounding off the live set will be one of East Anglia's top contemporary punk bands **Hot-Wired** from Norwich.

In the adjacent basement lounge there will be a 'chill out' area with a screenings UK Decay and other Luton area punk band videos including UK Decay at the Luton Carnival in 1982, Bone Orchard and the Pine Girls at the Library Theatre in 1984, Click Click and other classic and rare footage. There will ex-members of UK Decay and other local bands from the glory days of the Luton Punk scene. Sadly UK Decay will not be actually playing at this event but members of the band will be attending. Tickets are available online at www.ukdecay.co.uk for £7 or you'll be able to pay £7.50 on the door to get in on the night (£5 conc.).

If you're into high quality Blues/Rock then stick 3rd of February in your diary as **Saiichi Sugiyama** (www.saiichi.com), the man TimeOut called 'The Japanese Bluesmaster' is playing down at the White Swan in High Street South, Dunstable. More details next week.

31/Jan/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

A Cure for those Wintertime Blues



On Saturday the man TimeOut called 'The Japanese Bluesmaster' is playing down at the White Swan in High Street South, Dunstable. **Saiichi Sugiyama** (www.saiichi.com) first saw the White Swan when he played there in Shana Morrison's band last August. He was so impressed with the place that he asked the owner if his blues ensemble could play at the recently refurbished venue. Since Declan is something of a blues aficionado, how could he say "no". Saiichi has travelled a long way on his road to the blues. He was born and raised in Asakusa, a part of downtown Tokyo, where he was turned on to the blues after hearing "Go Back Home" by Stephen Stills featuring Eric Clapton on guitar. This led him onto the Layla album, live Cream tracks, and finally to John Mayall's Blues Breakers album, and eventually artists like B. B. King, Freddie King, Albert King, Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters.

After to moving to England to get closer to the English blues scene in 1990, Saiichi teamed up with the ex-Graham Bond Organization drummer, Paul Olsen, and the former X-Production bassist, Marco Frangos to form a power blues triumvirate known as **Bluewater** which made a splash on the London blues circuit. After this he pursued a solo career releasing his first album in 1994. Away from the bright lights his knowledge of vintage guitars came in handy when he became an advisor to the Christie's auction house on sale of Clapton's guitars in 1999. He has also written various Clapton guitar related articles for Japanese publishers and done some demonstrating for Marshall Amps which is based just up the road in Bletchley.

Since then Saiichi has cut tracks for Cream and Beatles tribute albums and in 2004 released his second solo album with lyrics written and performed by Pete Brown. The CD was well received with critical acclaim from the Japanese rock press, British blues publications and has been featured on the US, English, European and Japanese radio airwaves. The gig on Saturday features Saiichi on guitars and vocals along with and his regular touring band of **Helder Pack** (drums), **Ben Reed** (bass) and **Mauricio Pena** (keys). You can find out more information on his MySpace page (saiichi) or you can call the venue on 01582-667833. Gigs at the White Swan (High Street South, Dunstable) are usually free but be sure to get there early as it is likely to be packed.

On Tuesday you can hear **Fruition**, **Antec Sonata** and **The Half Rabbits** at The Hat Factory when PDM promote their Indi and Alternative rock night at Luton's Arts Centre. This is the first gig of the year as the January edition was cancelled due to a big sewer bust up at the Bute St venue. The Half Rabbits are coming over from Oxford and Rolling Stone has said of them "Expect great things" so they should be worth coming out to see. Doors open at 8pm, entry is £3 and there are no age restrictions. See www.pdmusic.com for more details about this and future PDM gigs and for links to the band's MySpace pages.

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