

7/Mar/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Metal City Goes into Orbit



Harpenden's cosmic rockers - **Laika Abduction Theory** - will be appearing at this month's Metal City gig over at The Roman Way (Tomlinson Avenue, Lewsey Farm, Luton). The band have a somewhat eccentric approach to their unique quality rock which has influences from 50's and 60's surf and garage rock, 70's space rock influenced (Hawkwind, Bowie and Roxy Music). They also bring in some stuff from the "experimental" punk era (Pere Ubu, Cabaret Voltaire) but their sound is firmly underpinned with no nonsense guitar driven power (Pixies, Mudhoney and

Swervedriver). Other bands appearing on the Metal City launch pad will be Aylesbury's hardest working metal band **Another Mile Down**, the genuinely unique sound of St Alban's **Trippy Wicked** and local favourites **The Kinetic Theory**. Entry is just three pounds for four bands and non stop session of Rock and Metal all night. The doors open at 7pm and last entry is 10.30pm with the music continuing on until 12:30. You can get more information by checking out www.metalcity.co.uk or [metal_city](#) on MySpace.

On Friday Chiltern Ceilidhs presents some the 'Young Turks' of the English Ceilidh scene with **Pigeon English** and **Roger Watson**. The band is based in Lincoln and Manchester and their repertoire consists exclusively of traditional material from England, with a particular emphasis on tunes from Lincolnshire and the North West; but also drawing on the traditions of other regions, and many less well known tunes unearthed from various manuscripts. The caller for Friday's dance will be one the founders of the modern ceilidh movement - **Roger Watson** – who was a founder member of the **New Victory Band** and has made a name for himself by mixing English melodies and world music in his **Boka Halat** ensemble. The music begins at 8pm and tickets will be available on the door - £6 for adults, £3 concessions and free for under 12's. For more information check out www.chilternceilidhs.info or call 01582-47565.

Luton's newest venue – the Live Room at Charlie Brown's – is going from strength to strength with another packed programme of live music. On Thursday you can catch the power pop of the **Switches** from London as they stop off at the beginning of their UK tour. Their sound is a tight and very rocky with powerful vocal harmonies that reminded my slightly of Midnight Oil and some of Jeff Lynne's heavier stuff with ELO. On Friday you can catch **Romance** and **The Culture** in special late starting show (first band at 11.30pm) so that people catching the **Rifles** gig at the Students Union don't miss anything – in fact a Rifles ticket stub will get you discounted entry. On Saturday **The Underground Heroes** kick off their tour with support from **Rival Joustas** who "reclaim rock and roll for the kids" according to V Magazine and **The Art of Opposition**. The venue is close to Luton Central Railway Station in Midland Road and entry usually costs £5, see [theliveroomluton](#) on MySpace for more details and future dates.

EDITORIAL-DEADLINE

14/Mar/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Celtic Overload

As St Patrick's night falls on a Saturday this year you can expect to get wall-to-wall Irish music around the town. From the number of calls I've been getting it looks like a lot of pubs and other venues are jumping on the bandwagon – in fact I've been booked up on this date since last May! So if you want some celtic music on Saturday evening all you'll need to do is head for your local beer dispensary and you should get it in spades. As I've pointed out before in this column, it is not surprising that we celebrate the Irish Saint's day since Patrick was probably originally from an area of Cumbria which is now part of England. It seems a shame that we don't we celebrate St George's, St Andrew's or St David's days with the same abandon as the Irish Saint.

Anyway, if you don't care for your musical preferences to be dictated by the shadowy marketing organisation dedicated to promoting Guinness and Mangners then there are a few other options available this week;

- tonight you can hear some angular pop punk from **Look See Proof** with support from **Fruition** and **The Model Horror** at the Live Room at Charlie Brown's in Midland Road, Luton (£5)
- tomorrow you can catch the **Bon Jovi Experience** down at the Horns in Watford (£8)
- on Friday you can see the 3 piece rock'n'roll band **MAJIK** play some pure old school with support from **Cosmic Debris** at the Live Room (£4)
- on Saturday the winners of 'Fresh Meat' on Zane Lowe's BBC Radio 1 show - **Opera House** – stop off at the Live Room in Luton as part of their tour (£4)
- or you can hear **Tom Hingley** (front man of Inspiral Carpets) with support from **Fruition** and **Chris Phillips** at the 'Wide Away Club' at Shorty's in Hitchin (£4 - doors open at 7pm)
- on Sunday you can get some good time, foot-stomping Cajun, Zydeco, Swamp pop and Mayhem from the **Bon Temps Playboys** at The Horns in Watford (at the bottom end of Hempstead Road, near town hall) from 3:30pm (free).



The new petition about music licensing on the Prime Minister's web site is stirring things up a bit. South Devon MP Hugo Swire has tabled a parliamentary Early Day Motion on the subject (<http://tinyurl.com/2mdlp5>). Currently none of our local MPs have signed up to it despite having supported the last one which was tabled at the time that the legislation was being bulldozed into law. So if you think that live music shouldn't be a regulated entertainment that could land musicians in goal then get a message to your MP by going to www.writetothem.com and punching in your postcode. If you haven't done so already you can let Tony Blair know how you feel about the effect government red tape on the performance of live music by signing the petition at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/licensing>.

21/Mar/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Mark of Quality

Back in August 2000 I wrote about a 19 year old Luton based singer / song songwriter called **Mark Joseph** who I reckoned was on “road to stardom” after his gig at the Cork and Bull caused queues that went around the block. In 2003 he scored his first top 40 hit with ‘Get Through’ which he released on his own label and led the Daily Telegraph to label him as ‘the boy who beat the biz’. He subsequently landed a record deal which led to a three more top 40 hits, all tracks from his debut album ‘Scream’. Since then he has toured the country with his band and has supported big acts such as The Corrs, Leanne Rimes, Wet Wet Wet, Ocean Colour Scene and the Moody Blues. He’s still the darling of the airways where his last single - Lady Lady - was a huge radio success, making Record of the Week on BBC Radio Two and was one of the most requested songs of the year.



Pan forward to 2007 and Mark is still based in the area, living in Leighton Buzzard, where he’s hatched a plan for the release of his second CD ‘Sold To Sound’ on his own label. He is still applying the finishing touches to the album with the help of top producer Andy Green (Keane, KT Tunstall, The Feeling). The album is due for worldwide release in August and he’s tied with the Luton based creative agency Butterfield Morris Bushell (BMB) to provide a comprehensive press and PR programme to promote it. BMB’s managing director, Rob Butterfield, tells me that they; “were chosen over and above the traditional ‘record industry type agency’ because of our award-winning expertise in managing brands”. Rob, who is also an accomplished bass player who has worked with a number of high profile local bands, goes on to say “Using an ‘out of town’ agency fits well with the whole concept of Mark and his label - 38 Records - which is totally unique and has real potential to revolutionise the music industry.”

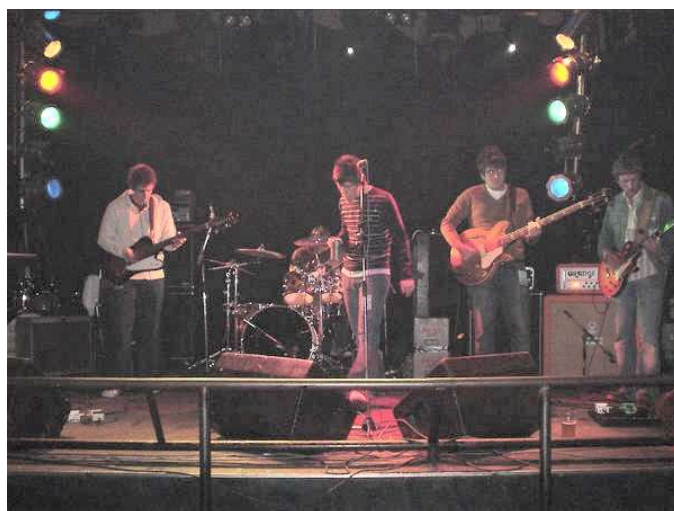
This has to be the wave of the future, especially with the big media corporations dropping top selling artists and generally backing out of the music business and with more and more top artists taking over their own release and promotion schedules. Frankly this is a ‘good thing’ since the big players have shown that they are unable to keep up with new trends and develop new artists, simply providing us with pop travesties in mould of Simon Cowell and skimming off any profitable artists that do emerge from the creative heartland of the real music business. If we can get away from the tired old ‘London-centric’ approach to the music that we get to hear then there is a lot of scope to get a much more diverse and vibrant music scene, and perhaps UK PLC can get back to being one of the major players in the international music scene.

28/Feb/2007 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Raid at New Music Venue

No it's not a police bust for illegal live music under the new entertainment licensing laws, but rather it's a bunch of rockers from Hemel - **The Raid** - who are headlining at the Live Room in Luton on Saturday. The band got the gig after the Live Room's promoter saw them supporting the **Towers of London** a few weeks ago. **The Raid** are living up to their name by smashing down the doors of the music establishment with their of guitar powered rock. In fact they've already been invited to record for EMI publishing in March, won a BBC phone in poll for new bands, been made band of the month for Totalrock Radio and Playmusic magazine with a major feature and cover CD. The manic rollercoaster ride started after they recorded their demo tracks at Sawmills with producers John Cornfield (Muse, Razorlight, Supergrass) and Greg Brimson (Bush, Levellers, Eminem) and it has now got to the point where the heads of major record labels are calling them up.



Originally the band started off as four piece with school friends Adam Robinson (vocals), Paul Taylor (lead guitar), Sam Street bass), and Tom Chambers (drums) gigging out in London. At these gigs they bumped into another former school mate Andy Maguire and it wasn't long until he was asked to join the band on rhythm guitar. On Saturday they will be playing at Luton's newest and most ambitious music venue with support from Luton rockers **The Tyke Tyler Band** (formerly Shine) who will be helping to exercise the high specification sound system at the 300 seater venue. The Live Room has gotten off to a great start and has a full programme of live music with upto to four gigs a week. You can check them out on MySpace at www.myspace.com/theliveroomluton and Raid at www.myspace.com/wearetheraid. The Live Room is based in Charlie Browns in Midland Road, Luton and entrance is £5.

While we're on the subject of great promoters in the Luton area, Paul from PDMmusic tells me that they are changing tack somewhat in the coming months. After over two years of promoting new bands, giving them the opportunity to experience playing live, they've decided to make some changes that give more focused support to new bands. The first step is to become an officially 'not for profit' community based organisation which will give them access to funding to help them pursue there aims of increasing performance opportunities for new music and also help train people to promote gigs, either as a band or as an independent promoter. They'll be kicking off with a one day training session in partnership with the Headstart Project and have also secured funding to trial a shared release singles project. See www.myspace.com/pdmpromo for more details.

Don't forget that you can do your bit to help promote live music by letting Tony Blair know how you feel about the effect government red tape on the performance of live music by signing the petition on the Prime Minister's website (<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/licensing>).

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>.