

The Brian Heywood Column

Rock 'n' Roll Circus hits Dunstable



The Ruby Shoes are following up the success of their last hometown gig in May by hosting another night packed with top local talent at St. Marys Social Club in West St (Dunstable) later this month. The 'shoes' will be topping the bill with their hard edged rock sound and band spokesman Chris tells me that; "We are especially excited because we will be unveiling four or five brand new tunes for the first time ever" as well as launching their new CD release. The bands already confirmed include Luton band **Shapes** and Stevenage's own **Jukebox Vandals** with more in the pipeline including a surprise act from out of town. The gig is set to take place on Friday October 24 with ticket prices of £4 on the door and a limited number of advanced tickets available for £3 and there will be goodie bags for those who come wearing their Ruby Shoes. You can get more details from www.myspace.com/therubys shoes.

On Friday week (Oct 10) you can get a shot of seventies Glam Rock when **MUD II** play a gig at Charlie Brown's in Midland Road (Luton). The original band kicked off at the end of the sixties skiffle movement and had their first big break when they won the BBC's national 'Search for Sound' competition in 1967. During the seventies they had a string of hits on Mickie Most's Rak label including 'Dyna-Mite' and 'Tiger Feet'. The current band line-up features musicians who toured with Les until his last gig in 2002. After consultation with original members and Les Gray's estate, they decided to put the current band together and tour as MUD II. The music starts at 8pm and there will be support from **Lou Short** and **The Girls Who Love Sci Fi**. Tickets are £10 on the door or you can get them in advance from Vinyl Revelations in Park Street (Luton) or online at www.wegotickets.com.

The Horn Music venue in St Albans has done it again. After winning UK Music Pub of the Year back in March at The Publican Awards, the team stepped up again to receive UK Entertainment Pub of the Year at this year's Great British Pub Awards at the Park Lane Hilton in London last month. Since taking on the Horn in 2005, Adrian and entertainment promoter Hansi Koppe have worked hard to ensure there is live music six nights per week with Hansi booking as many original acts as possible. You can check out their amazingly diverse music programme at www.thehorn.co.uk, highlights coming up are Chas and Dave (Nov 12) as well as The Hamsters (Oct 31) and John Otway (Nov 13). Any chance of a hat trick chaps?

The Hertfordshire Folk Association are organising a series of workshops featuring **Hannah James** (accordion) and **Sam Sweeney** (fiddle) of the phenomenally talented folk group, **Kerfuffle** on the first weekend of December in Harpenden. The cost will be £10 per session and you can contact joefrench99@hotmail.com, or phone 07961 853717, for full details.

8/Oct/2008 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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A Record Month for Music

Despite the record industry being in the doldrums, this month sees a number of bands with local connections releasing their music in various forms. Local stadium rockers **The Imperial Vipers** tell me that their new single 'Check This' is now available for download from iTunes so those who missed out on the CD or vinyl editions, or anyone who just wants to listen on the move can grab a piece of the action for a measly 79p. Find out more about what the Vipers are up to on www.myspace.com/imperialvipers or checkout the video at www.imperialvipers.com.



Local original rocker **Loz Jones**' debut album 'Spoiling It For Everyone', which was released at the end of September, is also available on iTunes as well as well as Napster, Tiscali V:MX and HMV Digital. The eleven track CD, which features songs such as Idiot Room, Watching You Think, Beautifully Naive and Awakening Times, is already getting good reviews and Loz tells me that the "the response and overall feedback has been amazing". The official launch party for the album is on Friday at the Hat Factory (Bute St, Luton) and fans who pre-ordered the CD received two free tickets as an additional bonus. Find out more about the CD from www.lozjones.com, www.myspace.com/lozjonesmusic or by emailing Loz at info@lozjones.com.

James from Basick Records tells me that Milton-Keynes based heavy metal / screamo band **Fellsilent** has signed to Sumerian Records who will be releasing their debut album 'The Hidden Words' in the US. The band, who recently played at The Grove Theatre in Dunstable, have been described by Metal Hammer as having "Futuristic mathmetal overtones... injected with mountainous melodies." Sumerian was founded by booking agent Ash Avildsen who commented; "After hearing the first 40 seconds of **Fellsilent**'s song "Immerse" I knew there was something very promising about to happen." He went on to say "Keep your eye out for **Fellsilent** in North America, as we will be making sure to get these boys over here as soon as possible in 2009". So catch them while you can (www.myspace.com/fellsilent).

Back in the real world there's a bumper crop of blues in the area over the next fortnight with the **Cadillac Blues** band (and friends) appearing at The Sportsman in Croxley Green (Scotts Hill, Rickmansworth) on Saturday. The line-up will feature **Coll Michaels** and **John Curtis** from Cadillac Blues together with **Lee Ryder** and **Roger Brewer** from the **Eezy Ryder Blues** band. You can preview Cadillac's music at www.cadillacblues.co.uk.

Next Friday (Oct 17) you can catch Blues and Rock from the **Moondogs** at the Limelight Theatre in Aylesbury. This will be their third visit to the venue and are replacing The Carvin Jones Band from the USA who had to cancel their UK tour. The **Moondogs** play well-crafted original numbers and popular blues/rock covers set and have played at WOMAD, at Chicago Blues Festival in France and even Hobble on the Cobbles 2006 in Aylesbury. Check them out at www.moondogs.co.uk. Doors open at 7pm and tickets cost £9 (£8 concs), call 01296 424332 / 431272, www.qpc.org or www.rockingtheblues.com.

15/Oct/2008 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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A Sting in the Tail

If you missed the Police re-union tour that finished earlier this year then you can get a second bite at the cherry when the locally based tribute band – **The POLICEmen** – appear on Friday at the Hat Factory in Luton. The band, described as “Possibly the UK’s finest police tribute band”, has been performing all the top Police hits, such as “Message in a Bottle”, “Every Breath You Take”, “Roxanne”, to appreciative audiences since 2002. In fact, you are more likely to get an authentic take on the music hearing it in a small venue such as the Hat Factory basement venue than some overblown stadium production. So if you want to help **The POLICEmen** with their enquiries you can get tickets in advance from the Box Office on 01582 878100 for just £6 or £4 for concessions, NUS cardholders and Cultural Network Members.

Also on Friday, you can catch one of London’s top celtic rock bands - **The Biblecode Sundays** – when they return to O'Shea's Bar in Castle St. The six piece band features Andy Nolan (accordion), Carlton Hunt (drums), Enda Mulloy (bass and vocals), Joe Moran (flute and vocals), Patrick Franklin (fiddle) and Ronan MacManus (vocals and guitar) who play a mix of Irish folk, rock and traditional music along, with a few wild and wonderful covers played with an Irish flavour. I caught a bit of their show on the last visit and the venue was packed so make sure that you get down there early or buy tickets in advance (£5), for more info call 01582 414061.

On Friday week (October 24) Bedfordshire based folk tinged alternative rock band **The October Game** are hosting a multi-arts night at The Sun Hotel in Hitchin. Going under the moniker of ‘Fuzzy Face’, they plan for the event where people can relax in a friendly atmosphere while enjoying some of the best in cutting edge art from across the fields of music, theatre, poetry, dance, art and film. Top of the bill is **The October Game** who will be supported by **Fairies In The Attic** (physical theatre and life-sized shadow puppetry - www.myspace.com/haringeyarts), **Toodar** (lovelorn acoustic tales from Tom Grundy - www.myspace.com/toodar), **Frank Burton** (surreal English stand-up poetry - www.frankburton.co.uk) and the cinematography of acclaimed director Simon Blake. There will also be a charity bookstall in aid of Keech Cottage Childrens’ Hospice. Tickets are available in advance for £4 or on the door for £5 and you can get more information from www.myspace.com/fuzzyfacenight (18+ event).



Towards the end of the month (October 26) you can revisit the seventies when three seminal revival bands play at the St Albans Alban Arena. The featured bands are **Focus** (Thijs van Leer), Martin Turner’s **Wishbone Ash** and **The Groundhogs** (Tony TS McPhee) who all helped plant the seeds for the current crop of progressive and melodic rock bands so check them out. For more information call the box office on 01727 844488 or check out the programme and booking details on the web at www.alban-arena.co.uk.

22/Oct/2008 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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Arresting Rock 'n' Roll at the Swan

On Saturday you can catch Leighton Buzzard based **The Pink Cardiacs** at the White Swan in Dunstable where they will be pumping out their special brand of rock and roll music from the late 50's and early 60's. The White Swan is one of the growing number of pubs in Dunstable putting on live bands, creating something of a live music revolution in the town – what better way to take your mind off the dreaded credit crunch. For more information call the pub on 01582-667833, email declan.duggan@zoom.co.uk or surf over to www.declansdirtyduck.co.uk.

The following Friday (Oct 31) there will be a special Armistice Concert presented by **The Living Archive Band** at the Madcap Theatre in Wolverton. This year is the 90th Anniversary of the end of the Great War and the centenary of the Territorial Army and the show pays tribute to the men and women of Milton Keynes who served their country during times of conflict. The production is part of the Living Archive Project, which was set up to record and store the experiences of local people while they're still alive. Living Archive has developed as a cultural, educational and artistic agency by recording, archiving and celebrating this unique history of residents' lives and sense of place, connecting the new residents of the town to the history of the area.

There have been a number of spin-off from this project, one of which won a prestigious Sony Radio award for the Wolverton based actor and musician Brad Bradstock. Back to Friday's show, I've heard a previous version of this moving anthology of songs and readings and was especially knocked out by the song "Bright Battalions" by local singer / songwriter Kevin Adams. This show will be an ideal antidote for all the phony commercial hokum surrounding Halloween. Tickets are £8 and are available from Madcap Theatre in Creed Street, Wolverton, MK12 5LY (a couple of minute's walk from Wolverton Station) or you can email info@madcap.org.uk, phone 01908 320179 or check out www.madcap.org.uk.



Next Saturday (Nov 1) you can hear Canadian guitarist **Erik Mongrain** when he performs over at Luton's Arts Centre - the Hat Factory. Erik is a young guitarist and a composer originally from Montreal, in Quebec and became known for his idiosyncratic percussive style of playing. Entirely self-taught, his percussive 'lap-tap' technique, in which he taps the chords out as if the guitar were a piano, is both very spectacular and very musical. More recently, he has resumed standard guitar posture and has been writing at tremendous speed songs in which the harmonies and melodies are profoundly inspired. If you liked Bob Brozman then you won't want to miss this fantastic young guitarist. Tickets are £9, £7 for concessions

and £6 for NUS and Cultural Network Members. Call the box office on 01582 878100 for more information about Saturday's gig and you can find out more about Erik from his website at www.erikmongrain.com.

29/Oct/2008 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

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Rockin' Halloween

Despite my negative comment about Halloween last week, any excuse to have a party is fine by me and on Friday the LYWAG mob has lined up yet another evening of top class local music in Leagrave. The evening will kick off with a manic mix of Pirates of The Caribbean and Guns and Roses when Bedford's own **Captain Loveguns** will be mixing some dazzling guitar work and the 'E' word (i.e. entertainment!) with their Pirate Rock Opera. After that, the Luton three piece **Shadow Factory** will be combining elements of thrash metal, punk and the power of progressive rock along with a ballad side to suitably darken the mood for Halloween while **The City Kings** will lighten the atmosphere again with their bouncy brand of indie would make even the living dead get up and dance.

The run up to the witching hour will be the dark domain of the **Flexi Boys** who will ensure that all ghost, ghouls and zombies in the audience will be moshing the night away. In their own words they are "The Shaun Michael's of Grunge bands!" with singer and guitarist **Chris Steven** reminiscent of early Kurt Cobain. So dig out your fancy dress and get on down to St Luke's Church Hall, High Street Leagrave, about a five-minute walk from Leagrave Station. Doors open at 7pm with the night finishing at 10pm and entry is £2:50 with tickets available on the door. For more information and directions check out the Leagrave Youth Work Action Group website at www.lywag.org.uk



Paul from PDM Music tells me that their next show at the Hat Factory is next Thursday (Nov 6) and features **Rogue**, **PRoM**, **Hey Jupiter** and a new acoustic act - **Inertia Falls**. Established Punk/Rock band **Rogue** (www.myspace.com/wearerogue) will be using the gig to unveil their new line up which includes the ex-bassist of The Kindred - Rob Letting. **PRoM** are the Birmingham based The People's Republic of Mercia (www.myspace.com/thepeoplesrepublicofmerciam) who good old rhythm and blues with a modern feel and have supported the likes of Eddie and the Hot Rods and Wilko Johnson. St Albans based **Hey Jupiter** are back gigging their brand of emotional rock after taking a short break after appearing at the Redbourne Festival earlier this year while **Inertia Falls** are a new Luton outfit featuring Nik Scott (ex Phonic Rapture) who will be performing an acoustic set. The doors are at 8pm and tickets are £3 in advance or with a flyer on the door or £4 without. You can find out more information about all the PDM Music events at their website (www.pdmmusic.com).

I'm currently reading the Tony Visconti autobiography (ISBN 978-0-00-722944-4) which is a 'must read' book for anyone interested in music production. Tony worked with seminal acts such as T. Rex, Bowie, Thin Lizzy, U2 and Morrissey and he describes the evolution of the British music scene from the late 60's. As well as giving an insight into the production of some classic albums, it also gives a feel for how various artists worked in the studio.

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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> and on MySpace at [lutonscene](http://lutonscene.com).