

4/Feb/2009 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Brakin' New Music in Luton

PDM will be putting on their next The Gig Room showcasing the best in new and unsigned artists next Thursday (February 12) at the Hat Factory in Luton. Topping the bill are **Third Law** along with **The Amateurs**, **Gekko** and **Folk 'n' Ska Souls**. Local rock / indie / pop punk outfit **Third Law** (www.myspace.com/thirdlaw) have been around the scene since 2000 and are one of the many local bands inspired by guitarist Rik Taylor – in this case his work with Clientelle – and they plan to release a studio album in the spring produced by Luton's top producer Justin Saban. The Birmingham based **The Amateurs** (www.myspace.com/theamateursuk) are Kerrang! Radio DJ Loz's hot tip for 2009.

Gekko are three rockers from Stevenage who are heavily influenced by the blues influenced progressive rock of Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd as well as the poppy post-punk of The Police to get their signature psychedelic funk rock sound. The final band - **Folk 'n' Ska Souls** – describe their sound as “the Pogues and The Specials having a fight, with Robert Plant trying to break it up and The Levellers watching n cheering it on.....”. You can find out yourself by paying £4 (on the door) or £3 (in advance) for a ticket or you can get more information by calling 01582 878100 or checking out www.thehatfactory.org.



Angela from the Hat Factory tells me that the Brakin' Arts Festival is happening again this year and is inviting artists to apply for performance slots between June 15 and 26. This is a good opportunity for emerging professional artists to show off their talent. While the festival covers a wide range of art forms, music is a strong thread through the fortnight of events at the Hat Factory venue in Bute St, Luton. Brakin' Arts has a relaxed ticketing system, allowing the audience to enjoy either a performance or a series of performances on any given day, and pay what they want as they leave whether it is 10p or £10. Bands or musicians who want to pitch for this year's festival can download an application form from www.thehatfactory.org. However, you need to put your skates on, as submissions need to be returned before next Friday (February 13).

Don't forget that local boy Paul Young is rocking out with some hot Tex-Mex music down at the Horn in St Albans tomorrow night. Tickets for the event are £14 or £12 in advance and you can get contact details from the Horn's website at www.thehorn.co.uk or about the band from www.los-pacaminos.com.

There may still be some tickets left for the Rik Taylor memorial concert on Friday featuring; **The Rock Gods, Stuart Milner and Amanda Seal, Bowfinger, Sweet Morning Oblivion, 3 Card Trick, Emerald Dogs, Devlin, Too Far Gone, Clientele** followed by a special 'Rik' in the Wall finale. The gig is at the Oxon Road Club, Oxen Road, Luton and tickets are available for £10 in advance from Matt at Coda Music Store in Guildford St, Luton (01582 725 625), Dave Ashcroft (david.ashcroft@ntlworld.com), Chris Phillips (chrisphillips@londonexec.com) or online at www.wegotickets.com/event/43352.

11/Feb/2009 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Let Battle Commence

The Majick Music Group is planning to resurrect the Dunstable Battle of the Bands this year. The idea is to help promote the local music scene as well provide young local bands an opportunity to perform to larger audiences as well as develop their profile. The competition will span the three months from April to June and there will be around twenty heats taking place in various pubs and venues across the town. The location of the final hasn't been confirmed but will take place in a larger venue or the bandstand in Priory Gardens. Personally, I would have thought that the Grove Theatre would be ideal for this as the last Battle of the Bands final was in the Queensway Hall and the new venue was meant to be a replacement for this major local venue.

Ryan from Majick tells me that the project already has the backing of the town council and other local music services companies. I don't have full details of how to apply for performance slots in the new competition but I do know that the entrants will be at least 16 due to the fact that the heats are taking place in pubs. Prizes are still being sorted out but are set to include music shop vouchers, a drum skin with a design of choice and a performance spot in this year's Dunstable Music Festival. As in previous years, I will be profiling the bands and checking out the live performances whenever I can. Anyone interested in getting involved can contact Ryan by email at majick@live.co.uk.

On Sunday you can catch **Boo Hewerdine** when he plays over at the Sun Hotel in Hitchin. Boo's music is well known to folk audiences due to his collaborations with Clive Gregson and with Eddi Reader, probably most famously on her major hit "Patience of Angels". Playing support will be former surfing champion **Robin Auld** who is a roots/pop guitarist and singer who incorporates African, blues, celtic, country, folk and pop into his music. For more information check out www.hitchinfolkclub.co.uk or email Keiron at goodmusic@hitchinfolkclub.co.uk.

The organisers of Rik Taylor's memorial concert would like to thank all who ventured out into the snow on Friday. According to Chris Edwards, it was a "brilliant night well attended". Chris, who helped organise the gig goes on to say "Thanks to all the bands who played storming sets, and took it upon themselves to travel in very bad conditions to ensure the show went on". The highlight of the evening was when one of the last recordings, Rik was working on was used as a backing track for some of his closest friends to play along to, with the lead guitar played by the man himself. For those who could not make it, the gig was professionally filmed and a DVD will be available soon. Stayed tuned here for more details.



18/Feb/2009 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Half Term Rock Feast

On Friday you can catch some superior rock and metal at the first of this year's popular rock nights at St Luke's Church Hall in Leagrave. Friday's gig will feature two local acts; **Blood of the Kill** and. Leighton Buzzard based **Blood of the Kill** are a three-piece screamo metal band combining catchy harmonies and brutal breakdowns. The band members are Jacob MD on lead vocals and lead guitar, Jack R on backing vocals and rhythm guitar and Max H pinning down the drums and doing the screaming. **Chemical Melon** are a three piece punk rock outfit that got together in October of 2008 as a result of a Christmas show and are influenced by Gun 'n' Roses, The Black Crowes, Queen, Led Zeppelin and The Mighty Boosh amongst others.

These nights are organised by the Leagrave Youth Work Action Group (LYWAG) and are one the few big events in the area open to the under 18's. The gigs take place in St Luke's Church Hall, High Street, Leagrave and are now in their fifth year. Over the years, the Rock nights have played a major role in giving local bands a chance to play live on a proper stage with many acts having launched their careers at the LYWAG events. The door open at 7 and the night finishes at 1 with tickets an affordable £2.50. For more information about the gig and other events organised by LYWAG visit www.lywag.org.uk



On Sunday **Cosmic Blaze** (myspace.com/cosmicblaze1) are playing down at the Castle Tavern along with **Wolf Law**, **Speedshot** and **Last of Our Heroes**. **Cosmic Blaze** is a local four-piece rock band who play original songs that have been described it as "having a retro-rock feel" and "sort of got that melancholy British rock sound to it" in the vein of early Pink Floyd. They have been together since last year and have opened for Intermission and Isaywestealthistv at the charity "Stop the Traffik" gig and at various other venues in Luton, Letchworth, Beford and Welwyn Garden City. Tickets are £2 and admission is strictly 18+.

Sunday's gig is being organised by Gate 9 Promotions who are always on the lookout for new acts to play at their gigs – see their MySpace blog for more details (www.myspace.com/gate9promotions).

Local stadium rockers **Imperial Vipers** are helping to start a new chapter in Rock 'n' Roll history when they play at the opening night of Mark Fuller's Embassy Club in London Mayfair on Monday week (March 2). Along with the **Quireboys**, the Vipers will be kicking off a regular night of rock music that will be going under the title of 'Krusher'. The Embassy was a favourite haunt of Motorhead's Lemmy and owner Mark (aka DJ Krusher) intends to make the nightclub the beating heart of the London Rock circuit. Entry costs a fiver and the music starts at 9pm and goes onto 2am. You can check out the Vipers online at www.myspace.com/imperialvipers and their song "Broken" is track of the week on the talkingMUSIC myspace page (www.myspace.com/lutonscene).



25/Feb/2009 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Late Breaking Jazz Funk News

Jazz funk and fusion fans need to get their skates on and get down to the Hat Factory tomorrow night to see the phenomenal sax player **Scott Garland** perform his musical tribute show to “The Master” David Sanborn. This is a one-off show exclusive to Luton’s Art Centre in Bute Street and must have been organised at very short notice since I only got the press release after the publication of last week’s column. Since Scott started out in 1987 with The National Youth Jazz Orchestra, he has just about toured with everyone who’s anyone on the international Jazz, Funk and pop circuit including Jools Holland, The Brand New Heavies and the award winning Pete Cater Band as well playing for West End shows and recording sessions. I’m told that for tomorrow’s outing he has assembled an all star group of musicians to give a night of quality jazz funk and fusion music.



According to Luton Council’s Audience development officer, the event is “a major achievement by the Focus on Jazz Team and a major scoop for Luton”. The Focus on Jazz Programme was launched at the end of 2004 with a lot of input from home-grown talent, Perry Louis. Jazz dancer Perry has spent the past twenty years living, breathing, and being all things Jazz and acts as a consultant for the hat Factory’s Jazz programme as well as doing DJ sets at the gigs. Tomorrow night the doors open at 8pm and entry is £9, £7 concessions and £5 for NUS and Cultural Network members. For more information and tickets contact the box office on 01582 878100 or surf over to the website at www.thehatfactory.org.



On Saturday you can catch local Alternative / Emo / Indie rock band **Bad Habbitz** when they play a charity gig at the Greenfield Village Hall in Flitton. Since their last charity outing in December, they have acquired a new singer - **Elise Robinson** - who in the words of the band’s guitarist Jonny Murray, has “given the band a completely new look and sound”. The band has also spent some time in the studio recording their debut four track CD called "Lovers & Memories" which will be on sale at the gig. The band plays a mix of covers from artists such as Foo Fighters, You Me At Six ,Oasis and Paramore as well as original songs written by the band members. Support for Saturday’s gig will be from **The Limits** and profits will go to the Tanzania World Support Challenge and the Pasque Hospice. Entry is £5 and tickets are available in advance from the band (www.myspace.com/BadHabbitzTheBand) or on the door which opens at 7pm.

Bands who want to take part in this year’s Dunstable Battle of the Bands should send an email to organiser Ryan at majick@live.co.uk. The competition is open to bands across the Bedfordshire area (with all members 16+) with the judges considering planning and preparedness, originality, interface with audience and quality of performance as well as the overall presentation. You can find out more on the web at www.dunstablebob.co.uk and on www.myspace.com/dunstablebob.

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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 <http://www.lutonscene.com> and on MySpace at lutonscene.