

## 1/Dec/2010 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette) – talking MUSIC

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Fight the frost with some Hot Vibes...*

If you fancy a walk on the wild side on Friday then check out the Bop and Roll:Broken Audio Takeover at the Hat Factory in Bute St, Luton. The event is described as a “massive night of music with a little bit of comedy” and features Drum and Bass in the basement from **Outrage** and **Genotype**, who will be showcasing his new album ‘Ritual Dance’. There will also be an Alternative Room with jokes and rock with a decidedly experimental twist from the likes of the **Melodic Astronomers Victorious** and Bop and Roll organisers - **Flexy Boys**.

Other goodies will be acoustic performances from **Amy and Jack**, **Ella Jo** and budding comedian **Hayden** who will be airing a fresh stand up routine. Somewhat intriguingly, they tell me that there will also be a world premier exclusive of new genre called Didgeridoostep to round things off. Promoter Gary Stevens says; “Amazingly the event will run with free entrance all night and hopes to be the first of many big nights to come at the Hat Factory. You can find out more on the Facebook event page at [www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=162528237107991](http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=162528237107991).

The White Swan in High St South, Dunstable has just published their December live music diary. On Saturday they kick off with jazz funk sounds from **Grooveshack**. The following Saturday (Dec 11) you can get a shot of 50s/60s rock & roll from the **Pink Cardiacs** and the debut by the **Hightown Four** on the Sunday (Dec 12) playing some Rock’n’Soul. The following weekend you can catch ten piece soul outfit **Soul Connection** on the Saturday (Dec 18) and a double bill the next day from the **ArJayZee 4** jazz band (4pm) and **Alvin plays Elvis** (9pm). To find out more about the White Swan and get directions check them out on the web at [www.declansdirtyduck.co.uk](http://www.declansdirtyduck.co.uk).

Next Friday (Dec 10) you can catch the next Chiltern Ceilidh at the Polish Club in Albion St in Dunstable. Ceilidh dancing is like a ‘barn dance’ but with more of an English and celtic feel. The music is provided by a live band of local musicians and the caller is Cate Bannister who will explain the moves so no previous experience is required. This event is great for all ages and has a very friendly atmosphere and tickets are just £7 for adults, £5 for concessions and children (10 & under) get in free. Doors open at 7.30pm, for more information and directions see [www.chilternceilidhs.info](http://www.chilternceilidhs.info).

A couple of weeks ago I mentioned that the Central Bedfordshire Council was threatening to withdraw funding of the music service and that the well regarded local composer, arranger and conductor Michael Rose was leading a campaign against this decision. You can see the council’s proposals on the web at <http://tinyurl.com/CBC-music-options>. Check out Michael’s website at <http://michaelrose.moonfruit.com> for more information and a few tips on how to help stop the cuts from going ahead.

## 8/Dec/2010 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette) – talking MUSIC

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *A wild ride in Dunstable*

On Friday you can catch some heavy bluesy rock from the **Horseman Shakes and the Draymen** when they play down at the Saracen's Head pub in High St South, Dunstable. The band began life as acoustic duo "Horseman Shakes" in the summer of 2007, founded by **Alex Small** on vocals and **Rob Muir** playing lead guitar. After playing several gigs Alex and Rob realised they wanted to rock a lot harder, so in late 2007 they recruited the talents of 'Draymen' **Dom Notarangelo** (rhythm guitar), **Olie Campbell** (bass) and **Dan Jack** (drums).

Since then the band have played around Bedfordshire and London gig circuits, released two EPs, produced a professional music video and reached the finals of the 2009 UK Live & Unsigned Competition at the Portsmouth Guildhall. Anyway the gig is free and you can find out more about the band at [www.myspace.com/horsemanshakeshthedraymen](http://www.myspace.com/horsemanshakeshthedraymen). You can also now link up to the Saracen's Head on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/saracenshead](http://www.facebook.com/saracenshead).

Ex-Dunstable drummer **Richard Spooner** (aka Dr Spoons) is in a new blues outfit based in Switzerland, his new home. The band is based around **Ron Cartel** was born and raised in the musical melting pot that is Harlem, New York City. Ron was brought up to a soundtrack of Rhythm and Blues, Soul, to Jazz, Blues and Gospel. In fact, his first public performance, whilst still at school, was at the Metropole Cafe in Manhattan with the legendary Gene Krupa.

Anyway, they've just released their first album "I Hurt Everybody" which is twelve tracks of extremely high class blues rock with extremely high production values. For some reason it reminds me a bit of the bluesy side of Frank Zappa. The CD is not going to be available till early 2011 but you can reserve a copy on the website, as well as catch up with the good Doctor, on the website - [www.roncartel.com](http://www.roncartel.com).

If you're looking for a different take on a somewhat overdone Christmas chestnut, then the production of Dickens' classic ghost story "A Christmas Carol" looks very interesting. The show features a cast of five actors and a musician who use dramatic masks, puppets, a magical set and original live music to create an entrancing heady brew, both moving and comic. It certainly sounds more interesting than some corny pantomime performed to backing tracks. The Stables in Wavendon is staging the show from December 21 to January 8 and you can see a preview on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/IiFjVRBg94g> or find out about booking at [www.stables.org](http://www.stables.org).

Don't forget that this month's Chiltern Ceilidh takes place at the Polish Club in Albion St Dunstable on Friday. Ceilidh dancing is like a 'barn dance' but with more of an English and celtic feel and there will be a live band and caller. Doors open at 7.30pm, for more information and directions see [www.chilternceilidhs.info](http://www.chilternceilidhs.info).

## 15/Dec/2010 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette) – talking MUSIC

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *The Christmas Music Slowdown*

The strange thing about the festive season is that the whole local music scene seems to take a bit of a dive. I guess that Christmas is mainly a social time and most people are out visiting relations rather than going out to live music gigs. Anyway, there are a number of local gigs happening over the holiday season, meaning that you don't have to sit through a Pantomime with a recorded backing track if you're looking for entertainment.

A new one to me is St Albans based musician **Nick Stephenson** who is playing over at the Harvest Home in Houghton Regis on Friday. Apparently Nick has been gigging around for the last 10 years and has played many UK festivals including Glastonbury, Secret Garden Party and Bestival as well as gigging all over the UK. He is noted for his unusually powerful voice, memorable songs and manic rhythm guitar playing. His debut album 'Dream Logic' was released in November and was produced by Hertfordshire based producer and living legend Bill Johnson. On Friday he will be a mixture of 50's, 60's and 70's songs along with original material and stuff from the new album. The music kicks off at 9pm and entry is free. See [www.lemonrock.com/nickstephenson](http://www.lemonrock.com/nickstephenson) for video and sound clips. The pub is on the corner of Sundon Rd and Hillsborough Crescent in Houghton Regis.

If you want to catch some very tasty alternative, power pop and rock then check out **Lecarla** when they appear at the Hat Factory in Bute St, Luton on Saturday. The five piece band made up of lead singer **Lizzy Dent**, rhythm guitarist **Hannah Whitmarsh**, lead guitarist **Joe Alfano**, bassist **Nikki Brightman** and drummer **Steve North**. Hailing from Milton Keynes, they were featured as "Kerrang Local Heroes" in 2009 and this year saw them completing their first UK tour as well as having support slots with The Blackout, We Are The Ocean, Go:Audio, Attack! Attack!, All Forgotten, Deaf Havana, My Passion and The Towers Of London. On Saturday they share the bill with the **Scholars** from Hemel Hempstead, **Tonight we're Electric** and **Stephen Whiley** from Luton. Doors open at 8pm and entry is £4 (16+ venue). For more information about the gig see [www.theweightpromotions.co.uk](http://www.theweightpromotions.co.uk) and for Lecarla, check out [www.lecarla.co.uk](http://www.lecarla.co.uk).

On Saturday you can also catch the almost legendary **Von Trapps** who describe themselves as "a bunch of hapless chancers, ready to rock any venue". This four piece, punk and rock 'n' roll covers band go on to say that they're "Loud, proud and none too serious". The band seem to have a good core of followers who describe them as one of the best pub rock bands in England and they certainly do mix their influences – for instance a mash up of "Why the Ace of Spades" and "Jolene". The Froth and Elbow is on High Street South in Dunstable and you can get in touch with the band by typing "The Von Trapps" into the Facebook search box.

## 22/Dec/2010 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette) – talking MUSIC

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Christmas Crackers...*

The major news for bands and gigs over the last week has been the snow which has caused quite a few cancellations. I guess that most people will have already settled their arrangements for the Christmas break but if you're wondering what to do with yourself in the run up to the big day then there's still a few things going on around the area.

In Dunstable tonight you can catch the **Duffy Brothers** at the White Swan when they'll be doing their Christmas show from 9pm. Other places to check out in Dunstable are The Saracens Head which is doing live music on Thursday and Friday and the Wheatsheaf in High St North, which has new management so they might be worth checking out. On Friday you can catch the **Von Trapps** at the Nags head in Dunstable. Over in Luton there's the George II which has live music on Christmas Eve and you can catch **Bob Watts** at the Chequers Pub in Streatley.

Down at the Horn in St Albans tonight you can catch E'crip Xmas Party a line up of the best local bands and guest appearances with acts confirmed so far are **Timeshark, Giants, Vertigos** and **KB**. Tomorrow DTA are presenting **Kid Cosmic, Spy Catcher, Fallow Fields** and **The Electric Modern** and on Friday the Monday Club Xmas Special Presents two live bands. See [www.thehornstalbans.co.uk](http://www.thehornstalbans.co.uk) for more details. Check out the 'Sounds Around' listing below to see what else is going on around the Luton / Dunstable area.

*[Note: this article wasn't printed on 22/Dec/2010 due to space considerations in the Xmas editions]*

## 29/Dec/2010 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette) – talking MUSIC

### The Brian Heywood Column

#### *Another new year of music...*

Eagle eyed readers will have noticed that my column wasn't printed in last week's paper. This was apparently due to a technical glitch, so you missed my rundown of pre-Christmas live music in and around Luton and Dunstable. As far as I recall, this is only the second time my column has not been printed since I started writing it back in October 1995, over fifteen years ago. I think the first time was due to my portable PC being hit by lightning in Melbourne when I was gigging over in Australia in 2002.

There's only a couple of days left of 2010 but you may still be able to catch a couple gigs if you're quick. Down at The Horn in St Albans you can celebrate New Years Eve with popular local covers band – **The Slaves** – for £15 on the door or £12 in advance (see [www.thehornstalbans.co.uk](http://www.thehornstalbans.co.uk)). If you want to be a bit more active, then there may still be some tickets available for this year's Big Ceilidh in Hitchin Town Hall, featuring **Quinn, Hansell, Kiddier** and **Sheena Masson**. Tickets are £25 which includes a buffet and grand champagne raffle ([www.unicornceilidhs.org.uk](http://www.unicornceilidhs.org.uk)).

Over at Chalton Village Hall on Friday **Moose on the Loose** will be playing 60s and 70s covers at their New Years' Eve party (free entry) or you can catch **The Von Trapps** playing Punk 'n' Roll at The Wheatsheaf in High St North, Dunstable. Check out the 'Sounds Around' listing to see what else is going on around the Luton / Dunstable area.

After the front page article in the Dunstable Gazette about the use of recorded music in the Pantomime a couple of weeks ago I thought I'd share the irony of it all. Back in May last year there was a conference called 'Art of the Possible' held at the Grove Theatre which came out with the recommendation to 'Communicate new opportunities for employment of creative workforce'. Traditionally the Pantomime circuit is one of the major employers of musicians during this period when other gigs are pretty thin on the ground. It's also a great way for young musicians to get experience in theatre work since there are a lot of shows appearing in places that wouldn't normally host a musical production.

I've seen some great shows down at the Grove Theatre featuring a live band and I feel that energy that you get from live music makes any kind of show much more exciting. It also seems pretty hypocritical to come out with a recommendation to encourage arts employment and then not do this when given the opportunity – all for the sake of 'three rows' of seats. Oh well, I guess it fits in with the philosophy of over commercialising Christmas. Maybe next year they'll do away with live actors and just have video screens, might save a few quid...

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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](mailto: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.myspace.com).