

BRIEFLY



Marsden Jazz Fest hoping for a blast

THE 24th Annual Marsden Jazz Festival claims to be their biggest ever with over a 100 gigs, including 70 free events.

Internationally renowned saxophonist Jean Toussaint will be headlining, while on the Saturday there will be a parade led by street band BLAST Furness and a moving scrap metal sculpture – the Hurly Burly.

Also performing will be multi-award winning vocalist Claire Martin OBE.

The festival takes place from October 9 - 11, with many performing at the 19th century Mechanics Hall. For details visit www.marsdenjazzfestival.com



Heart-warming sounds of brass

A NEW concert season has been announced for the *Leeds Best of Brass*.

The first concert to take place will feature the 2014 holder of the Yorkshire Regional Champion's title, Brighouse & Rastrick Band who formed over 125 years ago.

Other renowned brass bands set to perform later in the year are Grimethorpe Colliery Band and Rothwell Temperance Band.

You can see Brighouse & Rastrick perform at Morley Town Hall on November 14.

For tickets call the box office on 0113 2243801.



Anything goes for The Coal Porters

A band who claim to be the first as well as best 'alt-bluegrass act' will be appearing in the region.

The Coal Porters includes Sid Griffin, who was a former member of the West Coast band Long Ryders.

Their latest album is out now called *Find The One*, described as acoustic folk with bluegrass and produced by the legendary John Wood.

You can see the acoustic act perform at Helmsley Arts Centre on October 3.

For tickets call the box office on 01439 771700 or visit www.helmsleyarts.co.uk

Reunited Bluetones

INTERVIEW

Four years after their farewell show in Leeds, the Bluetones have reformed and will be playing in the city this month. **Duncan Seaman reports.**

BACK in 2011 Britpop heroes The Bluetones bade farewell to Leeds with an emotional parting show at the city's O2 Academy.

Singer Mark Morriss continued as a solo act but four years on it seems the lure of a full band reunion was too good to turn down.

Next month the *Slight Return* hitmakers – who include vocalist Morriss, his brother Scott on bass, Adam Devlin on guitar and Eds Chesters on drums – pick up where they left off, opening their 20th anniversary UK tour in Leeds.

"We just wanted to play together," explains 43-year-old vocalist Morriss of the reason behind The Bluetones' regrouping. "We missed the simple thing of just being in a room together and thought let's just go and play some shows."

Having spent the intervening years starting new careers, Morriss admits restarting the band has been a bit like a family reunion.

"I think there was this sense that we loved what we had together and if we don't use it we're going to lose it."

Away from music Chesters set up in business as an osteopath, meanwhile Scott Morriss moved to Tokyo where he works for an animation company and also does freelance animation.

Devlin "kept his hand in" by playing with "a few other musicians and working with friends, making records and that sort of thing, helping out".

In advance of their Jukebox Tour the band – who scored

BACKGROUND TO THE BLUETONES

FORMED in Hounslow, Greater London, in 1993, The Bluetones' debut album, *Expecting To Fly*, reached Number One in the UK at the height of Britpop and contained the hit singles *Bluetonic* and *Slight Return*.

Follow-up albums *Return to the Last Chance Saloon* and *Science & Nature* also graded the top 10.

Three more albums – plus a greatest hits – followed before the band called it a day in 2011. Mark Morriss has released three solo albums. On his 2012 tour part of each evening was given over to a music quiz, with Morriss acting as the quizmaster.

13 top 40 singles and three top 10 albums in the 1990s and early 2000s – took to social media to invite fans to request songs to be played at their shows.

"We've asked people to get in touch with us via our Twitter feed and just let us know what songs they'd like," Morriss says. "There's someone who's monitoring it all and compiling a list for us and we're going to have a look at it before we go into the rehearsal rooms and it will shape what we deliver."

Fans shouldn't, however, hold out for new material at this stage, the singer warns.

"That hasn't even entered into our conversation. We were just missing the



chemistry of playing together, there's the 20th anniversary [of The Bluetones' first single, *Slight Return*] theme hanging around and it's like if we don't celebrate it now it's gone and I don't think any of us wanted it to pass by."

Although The Bluetones will forever be associated in

popular consciousness with Britpop, Morriss doesn't feel especially nostalgic about the old times.

He does appreciate however that "there doesn't seem to have been anything else that's come along since in the last couple of decades that's captured people's

imagination quite the way that did". He may not go as far as suggesting that guitar pop bands have died out entirely since the turn of the 21st century but he does note that "there certainly doesn't seem to be any kind of thing you could consider a movement or a groundswell".

Swiss orchestra to open Leeds concert season

CLASSICAL PREVIEW

David Denton

WAS it really the impresario, Sergei Dyagilev, who orchestrated the headline-grabbing riots on the first night of Stravinsky's ballet, *The Rite of Spring*, so that the notoriety would ensure the following performances were sold-out?

It certainly worked, his protegee composer became

the most talked about young personality in Paris and the ballet's orchestral score quickly transferred from the theatre into the concert hall.

Even today it has lost none of its shock and awe element – the sheer performing virtuosity required offers a showcase for the world's great orchestras and the dawn of spectacular recordings only adds to its popularity.

That makes it the perfect visiting card for the Basel Symphony, one of

Switzerland's long established and most important orchestras, when they open a new season of the Leeds International Concerts.

They arrive with their American conductor, Dennis Russell Davies, who, since his appointment as their Principal Conductor in 2009, has created its own record label – including a release of *The Rite of Spring* – to reaffirm its place among Europe's finest ensembles.

The programme opens with

a real rarity score from 'Les Six', the most provocative French composers of the early 20th century, that included Honegger, Auric and Ibert, who combined in the witty, *Marriage at the Eiffel Tower*. Central to the evening, is the distinguished pianist, Elisabeth Leonskaja, who plays Mozart's *Ninth Piano Concerto*.

■ **Basel Symphony Orchestra, Leeds Town Hall, September 26, 7.30pm. 0113 2243801.**



IN CHARGE: Basel Symphony orchestra's Dennis Russell Davies. PICTURE: BENNO HUNZIKER.

back in Leeds



ON THE ROAD TOGETHER AGAIN: The Bluetones are currently on tour and will be playing at the O2 Academy in Leeds later this month.



EARLY DAYS: The Bluetones earlier in their career. The band split up for four years but are now back together and touring.

studio and do something different, just something slightly off the beaten track," the singer explains.

"It's not so much another album to be added into my canon, it's more just a companion piece.

"I just went into the studio and recorded a dozen songs that I just wanted to sing.

"Everyone's looking for some kind of personal association with the tracks that I picked for it but it's more a case of I had my sort of Elvis Presley head on.

"I was picking the records in the way that The King would have done. It was like, 'I just want to sing this song, I want to sing that song'."

Perhaps most surprising of all is the Morriss's choice of *Lucretia (My Reflection)*, originally by Leeds goth band the Sisters of Mercy.

"I love the Sisters," he reveals, adding that all the songs are records from his collection "but they're not necessarily ones that I have to signpost particular points in my life.

"I've already done two solo albums so far but on each of them there are a couple of cover versions and I really enjoy the picking apart of

other people's songs. It was that exercise for this that I hoped would get the wheels turning again for me because I was experiencing a bit of a slow period creatively.

"Hopefully it's a winner all around. Hopefully people will like it and it's also proved a successful tool for me, back on the horse."

As for whether he can envisage having a dual career with The Bluetones and as a solo artist, Morriss says: "Never say never but I don't know when I'd fit it all in, to be honest.

"Something would have to give because I've got a lot of things on the go these days, which is very pleasing. I do a lot of book music for children's talking books, the chapter music and the theme music for those, which I really enjoy and I'm also in [the comedian turned singer songwriter] Matt Berry's band as well.

"He's going to be quite busy next year touring. He's a good guy to be in the company of."

■ **The Bluetones play at O2 Academy Leeds on September 16.**

■ **For details visit www.bluetones.band**

"Everything's sort of been bitty since," he reflects. "I think something around that time caught the imagination of the general public though I think I'm too close to the centre of it to have any idea of what that was."

As well as touring with his old band, Morriss has a new

solo album out. *The Taste of Mark Morriss* comprises cover versions of songs by, among others, OMD, the Pet Shop Boys and The Stranglers.

"I didn't have enough material together to start on a new album properly but I wanted to get back in the

Now as multiple prize-winners they are in demand around the world, and about to make their Carnegie Hall debut in New York, the ultimate venue for all chamber groups.

They chose Dutilleaux's *Ainsi la nuit*, an extremely difficult score to bring off in concert for these seven night pictures are reliant on the composer's experiments in sounds and colours.

It was to prove fascinating, the Heath's impeccable

balance between instruments creating subtle and refined shades, the generally slow tempos never rushed as each movement melted into the next. That feeling of being deep inside the composer's thoughts continued in the exquisitely sensitive account of Debussy's String Quartet, the shimmering colours and ravishingly beautiful textures combined with an assured technical brilliance.

The German-Hungarian concertmaster of the

Philharmonia Orchestra, Zsolt-Tihamer Visontay, had earlier led a specially formed ensemble in Maxwell Davies's Fifth Naxos Quartet, *Lighthouses of Orkney and Shetland*, and Ravel's String Quartet. If the first was a rather 'tough nut' for the audience, the playing in the Ravel, with its nimble grace, had the feeling of spontaneous creativity, the multiplicity of dynamic markings so faithfully observed.

ALBUM REVIEWS

Mark Edwards, Polly Weeks, Lewis Young, Arj Singh, Shereen Low (rock/pop), and Robert Cockroft (classical/opera)



Hooton Tennis Club – Hightest Point in Cliff Town: Hooton Tennis Club's stumble to success has been as endearingly ramshackle and insouciant as their lo-fi music. The four mates from the Wirral were signed to Heavenly Records just six months after leaving university and their debut album is full of hazy guitar pop classics. The songs catch all the arrogance, messiness, in-jokes and carelessness of youth. Songs such as *Jasper* and recent single *Kathleen Sat On the Arm Of Her Favourite Chair* tumble into life on the back of instantly hummable solos from guitarist James Madden, and Ryan Murphy's laidback vocals. **ME**



Foals – What Went Down: Oxford five-piece Foals' fourth LP is very much a 'solid' rock album. The opening two tunes are title track *What Went Down* and *Mountain At My Gates*, which showcase the band's developed, heavier sound. There are driving drums and guitars and the lyrics are half sung-half shouted. Yet it's the quirks along the way that stop the LP becoming just another release; from the warped organ intro on *What Went Down* to the distorted beats on *Albatross*, these intricacies keep the album interesting. There are touches of their previous releases on here, *Night Swimmer* could well be on *Antidotes* and *Lonely Hunter* on *Holy War*. **PW**



Yo La Tengo – Stuff Like That There: The 14th full-length release from the American indie-rock quartet is a collection of covers, two new songs, and reworkings of their old material. A strange mix, but one that works beautifully. *Stuff Like That There* is a long way from the group's other cover album, *Yo La Tengo Is Murdering The Classics* – a largely improvised take on classic songs as requested by listeners of a radio station – this displays what the band can do with other people's material when they're given the time to hone and craft their own selection of covers. Special mention goes to their cover of The Cure's *Friday I'm In Love*, which compliments the original but draws out a new beauty to the song. **LY**



Beach House – Depression Cherry: Pop duo Victoria Legrand and Alex Scally have built up a huge following thanks to the sleeper success of their last three albums. Each one took their drone keyboards, arpeggio guitar and breathy vocals formula to new heights. Here they've pared things down and large sections resemble their more claustrophobic early work. The lack of catchy hooks is disappointing at first but the experimentation of lead track *Sparks* hints at an intriguing, darker future. Songs like *Levitation* and *PPP* will please existing fans and their trusted celebration of sadness makes them a band to treasure. **AS**



Reuben James Richards – About Time: It's been more than 20 years since Reuben James Richards released the track *Hold On My Heart* which drew praise from former Atlantic boss Jerry Wexler who described the soulman as "one of the greatest voices he had heard in a decade". Having reunited with producer Dave Williams, Richards has finally released his debut album, filled with ten original songs, all written by Williams. The easy-listening record opens with the jaunty *We'll Always Be Together*, but Richards' poignant vocals shine best on *Please Let Me Down Easy*, *Who's Foolin' Who*, *Sugar Cane* and *Hold On My Heart*. Here's hoping Richards won't make us wait another 20 years for his follow-up. **SL**



Judith Weir – Storm. Signum Classics, SIGCD 421: Judith Weir's appointment last year as Master of the Queen's Music, was an inspired choice. She has enriched almost all genres, particularly choral music, with individual, often tonal pieces. This new recording from the BBC Singers under conductor David Hill contains works from the past 27 years. From the ecstatic melismas and open harmonies of the Perotin-influenced *All the Ends of the Earth* to the delicacy of the unaccompanied *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* and the potent drama of *Storm*, the writing is graceful, expressive and beautifully sung. **RC**

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Prize-winning quartet's five-star performance

CLASSICAL REVIEW

Heath Quartet

St Helen's an All Saints' Church, Wykeham

David Denton ★★★★★

"THIS is one of the most interesting young quartets I have heard in recent years," I wrote nine years ago when the Heath Quartet first appeared as part of a student concert.