

city scene

dave davies

Don't miss weekend of festivals

IT'S the time of year for music festivals, and this weekend sees the 17th year of Leicestershire's Heather Music Festival.

It prides itself on having an excellent standard of local and national established and new musicians.

The festival is based around three venues in the village, The Crown, The Queen's Head and Heather St John's Football Club, all "within crawling distance of each other".

Acts confirmed include Citizen Smith, Analogue Haze, Kristy Gallacher, Red Moc Chilli Peppers, Kid Ego, My name is Jonas, Miniature Heroes, Carlton Cole Band, Sarah Cooper, Stained Glass Alice, Los Salvadores, Little Girl Screaming, The Ashby Big Band, Propshaft, The Black Tears, Brick Out House, Warlock, Swift Flasby, Storm the Front, The Shabbs, The Street, Remedy, Medusa Cascade, Without Reason and Gren Bartley.

The festival runs from Friday evening to Sunday and camping is available at £5 per night; booking is advisable.

The money raised will be donated to Heather Primary School, Coping with Cancer, Help for Heroes and the British Heart Foundation.

Camping info: 07732 453333 or:

www.myspace.com/heathermusicfestival

BACK in the city, Melting Pot have started a new weekly live music club night on Fridays, at Revolution, New Walk.

This week features young singer songwriter Elizabeth Cornish with guitar and bass from Jason Smith.

Her songs are described as "uniting strikingly elegant vocals, delicate guitar lines, thought-provoking lyrics and heartfelt delivery into music that is pure, passionate and unique."

www.youtube.com/user/EICornish1/

SATURDAY sees The Leicester Peace & Love Festival, in the city centre, under the Big Screen, on Humberstone Gate West.

Running from noon to 8pm, this charitable event aims to "promote community cohesion, mutual respect, harmonious race relations and the prevention of violence and anti-social behaviour."

Acts confirmed include Back Page Turns, Kill Kaos, Shapeshifter, Mr Shooter, Megadog, acoustic reggae from By The Rivers plus poets and dancers.

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It's not a workout, it's a party, says the literature. But what does Becky Jones make of Zumba?



PICTURES: ALISTAIR LANGHAM

IN THE GROOVE: Becky Jones, centre, in the white top, joins a Zumba class run by energetic instructor Leona Shepherd, below.



The party's hotting up

Hypnotic Latin American beats are pumping from the stereo, and my heart rate is soaring as I shimmy and shake, stomp and stretch.

I'm at Brockington College in Enderby, amidst a sea of bouncing ponytails and flushed faces, taking part in a workout with a difference – the difference being that it's really great fun!

Along with about 50 other women, I'm losing my inhibitions in the name of Zumba – a high-energy fitness programme that combines easy dance moves with Latin rhythms.

The motto of Zumba is "ditch the workout, join the party" – and that's what we're doing.

It's all about enjoying yourself and losing a few hundred calories in the process.

Now, doesn't that sound like the perfect exercise routine?

The group – ranging from trendy teens in hot pants and vests to more mature ladies in baggy T-shirts and tracksuit bottoms – is led by the terrifically toned Leona Shepherd.

She's a professional instructor who's been holding Zumba classes for the past two months. "I think it's so popular because of the party-style atmosphere and the way it involves a variety of moves. The music gives a fun aspect to it – and you certainly feel like you've had a good workout," she laughs.

Leona also teaches street dance, cardio kicks, spinning, children's fitness, Salsacise, and hula fitness.

In fact, she finished a hula fitness class just a few minutes ago – not that you'd guess it from the way she's exuberantly dancing at the front of the class.

The routines feature aerobic interval training combining fast and slow rhythms, with a series of moves that tone and sculpt the body.

To the pulsating vibes of her Cardio Party Live CD, Leona follows the warm-up with a routine inspired by Merengue, which sees us marching and swinging our arms from side to side, before attempting the Beto shuffle (named after Zumba's inventor, Alberto "Beto" Perez).

Then there's a bit of sexy Salsa added into the mix, with lots of hip swiveling and clapping.

I must admit, my footwork in the first 10 minutes leaves a lot to be desired – but standing at the back, without my glasses on, probably doesn't help.

Once I've been beckoned to the front, and have a clear view of Leona bustin' her moves, I'm on fire.

Well, I'm improving, anyway. The great thing about Zumba is the fact you don't need to worry about getting it wrong.

The relaxed, fun atmosphere means you can just laugh it off, and keep trying, as you let the infectious music carry you away.

Soon, it's time for the Colombian folk dance, Cumbia, and after arranging ourselves into four lines, we start enthusiastically stomping and clapping, before snaking around the room, jumping forward then backward as we go.

Next, we're dragging our feet for the "sleepy leg" step and twisting from side to side wielding our imaginary machetes as we do the "sugar cane".

Phew. It's great fun, but it's also bloomin' hard work.

The Reggaeton track, with its heavy bass drum beat, inspires a routine of emphatic foot stomps and heel stomps, with strong arms and bent knees keeping us low to the ground.

Lasting seven-and-a-half minutes, the line dancing track requires plenty of stamina, but as we grapevine across the floor, shouting yee-ha!, it's clear we're all buzzing.

"Your cardio party is over" shouts Leona, as we cool down with some stretches.

I glance around trying to locate a clock. I can't believe an hour's gone already.

Zumba's exhilarating, energising, uplifting – and I can't wait for next week!

info

LEONA'S Zumba classes take place at Brockington College, Enderby, on Wednesdays from 7.30 to 8.30pm. £3 per session. Call 07940 334 243.

coming soon

INDISPUTEDLY one of the UK's biggest ever bands, undoubtedly one of its most loved, statistically one of its most successful and critically one of its most lauded.

Yup, it's Madness – the pop geniuses behind the likes of Our House, House Of Fun, One Step Beyond and many, many more.

The baggy-trousered boys are coming to Leicester's De Montfort Hall on Saturday, December 4, with their Do Not Adjust Your Nut tour.

The old uns are the best, but they've a new-ish album to plug, and they're looking for a new generation of nutty boys and girls to follow them.

Tickets, priced from £35, go on sale tomorrow, at 9.30am, via the 24-hour credit card hotline on 0844 811 0051 / 0844 826 2826, or see:

www.gigsandtours.com
www.ticketmaster.com

INDIEOLOGY is the new alternative music night coming to The Emporium Nightclub in Coalville.

The launch event, on Friday, August 6, promises to be an amazing live show with headline DJ set from Gary Powell of The Libertines.

Support comes from Leicester bands SuperEvolver, The Little Night Terrors and a set by DJ Stephanie Joy Hubbard.

The night is the brainchild of club promoter Will Henney.

Advance tickets, priced just £5, are available from the club on 07590-025 951/01530 815 278, or see:

www.theticketsellers.co.uk

YOU could come away with more than a smile on your face if you visit Drayton Manor Theme Park over the next six weeks, and enter its daily competition.

Prizes include annual passes to the park, Mega Blocks Thomas & Friends toys, K'Nex roller coaster sets, and Thomas the Tank Engine DVDs.

There's also the chance to win a stay in the new Drayton Manor Park Hotel, which isn't scheduled to open until summer 2011. And as an extra bonus, everyone who enters the competitions will receive a voucher, enabling one child to go free when accompanied by two full paying adults, during September and October.

Tickets can be purchased by calling 0844 472 1960, or see:

www.draytonmanor.co.uk



NUTTY: Suggs, of Madness