

# LOOKING BACK

Limerick in 2007, a very fine vintage | Ms Zoe with some of the event highlights

When I had the idea to write this article, looking back at 2007, and the gigs, festivals, exhibitions and theatre that made it a great year to be in Limerick, I thought it was a cracker. We are the Limerick Event Guide after all, events are what we do, let's look back and admire. When I thought about it a little further though, the realisation of what a mammoth undertaking it was kind of hit me. So I am going to make a disclaimer before I continue, this guarantee of a year in review does not guarantee that every last thing that happened within the county limits is gonna make it into this article, space is limited and my memory isn't what is used to be. In saying that, I am taking my hat off to all you gig goers and show makers, theatre players and picture painters as you continue to drive the growing whirling rainbow of activity that makes Limerick the place it is. Take a bow. It's all about you.

So, back to February '07 we go and the Belltable Unfringed Festival which in it's tenth year came out of the Belltable and high stepped it about town, with 10 locations and a spread of fantastic music to complement nightly theatre, on the bill with movie premiers and street theatre performances, that surprised and bemused Saturday morning shoppers on Thomas Street. Standout performances from Limerick's own Teaspach Theatre, Limerick Youth Theatre, Impact Theatre and Amalgamation, with a very warm sense of sharing something pretty wonderful pervading the ten days of Unfringed. Looking forward to '08 already.

Fresh Film Festival was bigger than ever, with 1st youth prize going to RE Productions for Hang Up Noise Man, the Fresh Film crew continue to champion young film makers in the pursuit of cinematic excellence. Entry now open for 2008, get your cameras rolling. St Patrick's Springfest Parade was the biggest yet with more than a thousand participants, 160 vehicles, 6 floats including one that almost caught fire, and a flyover by the Irish Air Corps. Riverfest 2007 spread out into the Docklands with The

Asgard and the L.E Niamh open to the public and plenty more food, fun and frolics in the city's street spaces. All things considered, 2007 was a great year for festivals in the city and county with Ev+a, Cuisle and the ICO's Shannon International Music Festival continuing to grow and draw audiences to the city.

From festivals to live music. And there is lots of that about. Baker Place has established itself as the alternative venue for live music in the city centre with a busy roster several nights a week. The burgeoning DJ timetable we will get to later. Ross from Gigtown has a few highlights of his own from Baker Place 2007 which include the Homecoming Gig of the "Limerick Breaks Out Tour." With the Fewer the Better, Walter Mitty & The Realists and We Should Be Dead taking to the stage, it was a night that showcased how great it is to be a Limrocker today. John Carroll's album launch also rated as a fabulous night, up there with Japanese born 'Electric Eel Shock' gig in March. This eagerly anticipated appearance did not disappoint, according to the Gigtown crew, "Spacelab brought the crowd and Eel Shock brought the noise." LSAD's rag week also gets an honourable mention.

Baker's sister bar, The Wicked Chicken, continues to play host to some of Limerick's best vinyl spinners who week in week out keep this tiny little room bouncing. From Broken Funk via Greenwood and Jody, to guests like Qool Dj Marv, Donal Dineen, Captain Kirk, Dj Mek, Tuki and Aoife Nic Canna the Chicken was throughout 2007, the tightest little party in town.

Mickey Martin's is keeping the dream alive and the punters happy down the lovely new Augustinian Lane, Paul Tarpey of the Cheebah Crew has been busy with the bookings and has pulled some personal highlights from what has been a busy year on the Djing side of life. Paul Webb's Court Yard Party this summer is first on the list,

"Webb is no stranger to the underground minimal house that is currently in clubland fashion but only he would play 20 minutes of opera and end with 'A walk on the wildside.' He was joy to listen to this night."

Also on Tarpey's list of gig highlights was Dj Adam Whitaker in Mickey's last month, "Adam's London style was truly across the boards. He set the pace for those who mix the old and new." The Nextmen's 'pop funky' set in Greenhouse in September rated highly, with Green Velvet's set at the Strutt Bank Holiday Weekender in Dolan's, "creating a hurricane of beats. If there was one relentless set of big room music to be at in Limerick this year, this was it."

Limerick audiences have been good to dj's this year, and they have delivered the goods right back. The Underground @ Baker's is now home to several weekly club nights, providing an almost boutique collection of beats in a variety of musical styles. From the punky electro of Tigons & Ligers every Saturday to the indie funk Sunday night fun of the Elbow Room round the way of some serious riffage at Static Rock.

It seems that in some respects, smaller rooms and smaller crowds enjoying more eclectic music is the way the wind was blowing this year. Without a doubt, the students of the University of Limerick Music, Media and Technology course are having a positive effect on the music scene in Limerick.

Also busy on campus in 2007 were the team at the University Concert Hall, bringing the best in comedy with Des Bishop, Max Boyce, Jon Kenny and Jason Byrne playing to big and receptive audiences. I, Keano played to sell out crowds in May, while gigs by Ray La Montagne, Ian Archer, Sinead O' Connor and Joan Armatrading will linger long in many memories. The work of the Irish Chamber Orchestra and guests peppered 2007 with superb classical music performances.





There are gigs custom made for the big big room, and no better venue in town for the big and bouncy party than Trinity Rooms, winners of the Best Nightclub Category at the Hospitality Ireland Awards 2007 for the second year running.

Some highlights from a packed calendar of events according to Director, Joe Clarke included Lucky Dube's performance in April. "It was a stunning gig from what then the world's biggest selling reggae act, South Africa's Lucky Dube and his 12 piece band. The area outside the club was full of people have pre party parties around their cars from about 5 o'clock, his rhythm section was rock tight and his female backing singers in full African dress were note and rhythm perfect. This appearance by a reggae master will be remembered for the great night it was, and as his first and last appearance in Limerick. Lucky Dube died tragically later in the year. R.I.P."

Also on the hitlist for hot nights out in Trinity Rooms was their very own 4th Birthday Party which ran pretty much for the month of July! With hundreds of people locked outside a packed club from 10pm, the party inside was epic, with Kate Lawler, free drinks, Bodytonic DJ's and what the Sunday World classed as 'the raciest fashion show ever held in Ireland!'

A first Trinity appearance by The Blizzards for the Spin South West Launch Party in November was also one to remember. "With queues around the corner for about 2 hours before doors opened, the pink carpet to the huge pink spotlights sweeping the sky, the place looked amazing. From the very first chords of "Fantasy", let's just say the 300 year Granary building which has survived uprisings, rebellions and civil wars very nearly needed to get the builders in!" For a seven night a week, party all the time venue, the list of rocking night could run to a couple of pages, so swift but sincere mentions also go to FishgoDeep with Tracey

K, "We all knew Greg and Shane were amazing but who knew how stratospheric they would be with Tracey K live. Likewise Japanese Popstars and DJ tag team of Johnny Moy and Arveene who have brought nights to Trinity Rooms that make the hair stand up on the back of our necks just remembering them." Other Trinity specials in 2007 were, "our arena at Planet Love, all the sweeter for it being the biggest independently promoted festival in Ireland, ever. Zion Train Live, CSS in Dolan's, Soundings at Dagdha and Paul Webbs sets each and every Saturday night."

With a 'Fire' themed NYE celebration to end 2007, Trinity Rooms are going out with a bang and heading into 2008 the way they mean to continue.

So, we have always had pubs and clubs, we have now, after an industrious 2007 more pub nights and club night to enjoy than ever. For me the great seachange, the zeitgeist, the somethun' somethun' pervading the air in Limerick is heightened by the variety of entertainments to choose from when you feel like leaving the house.

Limerick, because of Daghdha and Irish World Academy of Music and Dance in U.L, is now the home of dance is Ireland. With a growing dance community, and a burgeoning creative zest among them, Limerick audiences have enjoyed, month on month, wonderful performances down Daghdha way. Every Mamuska deserves a mention, The Framemakers in October and an inspired performance by Australian Jazz trio The Necks make the St John of the Cross space a special venue in town. With the Gravity and Grace Festival to look forward to this month, the future in bright for dancers and dance lovers in 2008.

I am back to my disclaimer again, so little space and so much I didn't get to. Hope you enjoyed looking back. Look forward to 2008. It is going to be even better as long as people continue to get up, get out and get into it. Which

ever way your taste runs, from theatre to dance, comedy to poetry, street theatre to jazz, classical to contemporary there is something out there for you to enjoy. So find it, try something new, and let us know what you think. There are lots of creative, innovative people out there leading the development of quality gigs | bands | theatre | sets | art | clubs | pubs | venues which add to the great vibe building in and around Limerick.

But you know what the guy said about being a leader, unless he has followers he is just a lonely guy taking a walk. Keep supporting, it's all for nothing without people to appreciate it. Round of applause. You've been a great audience!

Some other highlights

White House Poetry Revival | The Riverside Market | All Ireland Final, we lost I know but it was great to be there | Limerick Jazz Society gigs, beautiful, every week | Schubert Series in Castleconnell | New Thomas Street Bedford Row | Belltable Film Club | Crazy P in The Clubhouse | Cathey Davey Upstairs @ Dolan's |

And the lows

Impact Theatre closing their O'Connell Crescent Space | Loss of Shannon - Heathrow route, it matters | People saying, "I meant to be at that gig." a.k.a, you meant to unplug the xbox. | People shouting abuse at dj's for not playing their favorite tune. They are at work, they are not a jukebox | The Richard Harris Statue, sorry, I think it looks like the evil king from Shrek |

2007

