

BELLTABLE UNPLUGGED

IRELAND'S BEST MUSICIANS VISIT THE BELLTABLE FOR INTIMATE AND UNPLUGGED PERFORMANCES. FIRST UP SENECA & MORE | LEG GETS CLOSE TO ROB HOPE

Elective Production's Nick Carswell launches a fresh platform for emerging and more established bands to perform their music in the cosy confines of the Belltable basement without amps, mics or any electronic crutches whatsoever. The Belltable Sessions kicks off on Thursday July 10th with unplugged sessions from Pugwash aka Thomas Walsh, Doug Sheridan, singer songwriter Clara Monahan and Limerick's own wunderkid's Seneca who are set to release their debut album 'Sweeter than Bourbon'. LEG caught up with Seneca's guitarist and singer of songs, Rob Hope.

Tell us a little about your new album, 'Sweeter than Bourbon'?

'Sweeter Than Bourbon' is hopefully the first of many albums to come from us. It was quite difficult to make as we hit so many stumbling blocks along the way but we are very happy with the final result. Hopefully what we have achieved is an album that people with different tastes can enjoy. We want people to love the whole album, not just one or two songs, and that's where the extra effort had to go in. Luckily a lifelong friend of mine Mark Gavin happens to be an amazing engineer so that made the album making process a lot easier than it could have been. Hopefully people will like it as much as we do.

Are you looking forward to taking it on the road?

We are hoping to do a few gigs around the country before going over to the States towards the end of the summer for a tour. Nothing is concrete yet but we will certainly be doing as many gigs as we can before we go and people can see our gig list by going to www.seneca.ie

Has the widespread critical acclaim Seneca have received and your growing band of supporters increase the pressure or are ye just enjoying yourselves?

To be honest we are just so happy to be able to be playing together full time. We would be lying to say that there is no pressure to try and succeed but unless you do things right people won't get to hear your music and that is what it's really about in the end. We absolutely love playing live and there is nothing better than playing to a crowd who enjoy our set so if we want to keep that and maybe increase the number of people who like us then we have to do the work outside of playing, business in other words. Business is a dirty word in music but unfortunately it's a necessary evil as any musician will tell you.

How did it all start?

Well myself and Yvonne were in a band together that broke up just after Locky joined (break up had nothing to do with him) and the three of us reformed as Seneca with a violin player named Terence. Through other commitments Terence had to leave the band and luckily I ended up jamming at a house party with Brendan, realised very quickly just how good he was and asked him to join up with us. The rest is history.

Tell us a little about your upcoming appearance at the inaugural Belltable Session?

Once Nick Carswell asked us to play there was no way we could miss it. Really looking forward to it. Hopefully we can do the sessions justice.

What's your take on the current music scene in Limerick?

Well it's quite simply amazing at the moment isn't it? Since I've been in Limerick there have never been so many great acts at one time with as many people going to gigs. With acts like Vesta Varro, Giveamanakick, Supermodel twins, Walter Mitty and the Realists, We Should Be Dead, Kernan McMullan and Brendan Markham plus many more around at the moment and with DJ's like Alan Jacques to push them Limerick has to be one of the best music hotspots in the country. I'm assuming LEG agrees.

Wholeheartedly of course, where do you want to go from here?

Well hopefully we will never have to get real jobs again, ha ha.

After a listen to 'Sweeter than Bourbon' LEG reckons the listen public happily will keep Seneca far from Fás. You can catch Seneca, Pugwash Doug Sheridan and Clara Monahan at the kick off Belltable Session on Thursday July 10th. Prepare your ears for the soft and unadulterated sound of pure music.

