

Jazz with Chris Ingham: cjr.ingham@outlook.com / chrisingham.co.uk
 Folk with Chris Wilbraham: chris.wilbraham@tinyonline.co.uk

the 10-piece Harry Strutters Hot Rhythm Orchestra and a dazzling dancing troupe.

Saturday, March 16

GEORGINA JACKSON (Haverhill Arts Centre, 8pm, £15/£10 u18s, haverhillartscentre.co.uk, 01440 714140) Part of the Swinging Cat Jazz Club season, terrific singer/trumpeter Georgina Jackson joins saxophonist/host Hannah Horton and Tim Laphorn (piano), Rob Statham (bass) and Nic France (drums).

Thursday, March 21

ERSKINE & KAVUMA ULTRASOUND QUINTET (Hidden Rooms, Cambridge. 7.30pm, £20, cambridgejazz.org, 07827 012875) Edgy, original straight-ahead jazz with Thelonious Monk tendencies, featuring Theo Erskine (tenor sax), Mark Kavuma (trumpet), Deschanel Gordon (piano), Michael Shrimpling (double bass), Shane Forbes (drums).

Saturday, March 23

SHARP LITTLE BONES feat TONY KOFI (Hunter Club, Bury, 7.30pm, £18, headhunterslive.org, 07799 650009) An acclaimed quartet purveying a fresh and contemporary blend of jazz, funk, blues, bop and electronica featuring Tony Kofi (saxophones), Simon Paterson (composer/bass), Paul Deats (piano) and Andrew Wood (drums).

Wednesday, March 27

JON LLOYD QUARTET (Stoke By Nayland Golf Club, 8pm, £18, 01787 211865, fleecejazz.org.uk) ECM-style European contemporary jazz from saxophonist Lloyd along with John Law (piano), Nick Pini (bass) and Alex Goodyear (drums).

FOLK

This week's article comes from the pen of David Bartlett, who will be running The Robbie Callas Cup next Wednesday:

Imbolc is a traditional Gaelic festival marking the beginning of spring. February 1st seems a bit early for that but then again maybe not so much in these times of changing temperatures. The word – Imbolc – actually means ‘in the belly of the mother’, suggesting that the seeds of spring are beginning to stir and it takes place halfway between the winter solstice – Yule - and the spring equinox – Ostara. This year I celebrated it in the evening darkness of February 2nd with my favourite dancing side, Old Glory Molly, and a few very fine ales. Molly dancing is a form of Morris dance traditionally done by out of work ploughboys in mid-winter. It died out in the 1930s, but since the 1970s has enjoyed a revival notably in East Anglia and the East Midlands. The dancing and the beer drinking took place at The Locks Inn in Geldeston, a community-owned riverside pub right on the Norfolk and Suffolk border, only accessible via a long, unmade road which adds to its unique charm. Geldeston comes from the Old English ‘Gyldi’s Enclosure’ and is first

mentioned in 1242 – there were certainly moments during this superb re-enactment of Edwardian Molly dancing that I felt like I’d gone back a century or so. Eight pm on the dot, with immaculate choreography a parade of Molly dancers appears from the dark of the riverside brandishing high-held flame-flag torches, they march slowly amidst the ominous pedestrian beat of a bass drum. No hurrying here - just a sense of inevitability as dark-hatted, overcoated figures grow closer and black-cloaked musicians alive with ivy head-dresses approach the hardstanding in front of the pub. Apparently, in the past, they sometimes demanded money with menaces. Well, they got that right – the look was vacant, starey and don’t-mess-with. An unpretentious gem of performance art. The night here is black as a cloak. The dark sticks to you like clay on boots – cloyingly close. It’s cold - the cold of river valleys. The Molly broom-man and others mark out a dance stage with paraffin lamps and staring. And four stand sentinel at the corners. The dancing is a seemingly effortless mix of metronomic hobnail-clomping, bent arm swings, stopping-and-turning, knee raising (lower leg loosely hanging), face-to-face shoulder clutching, clasping arms in rings, and last-minute, swift-footed dodging. A wonderfully well-practised performance that is totally beguiling and unbelievably cool. All this with an accurate but pleasantly almost hesitant accompaniment on melodeon, recorder, drum, and tea-chest bass. All delightfully hypnotic. The musicians are all women. The dancers all men. The result is traditional folk heaven. Silky-backed waistcoats – with their peeping braces - reflect some light. After dances are over, overcoats are donned for warmth – most is done in silence. There is no bowing or fawning to the crowd. The box-man collects for charity. I bought another beer and then went back out to catch the last of the magic. I found a different place to stand and watch – a little corner to cosset me. I was transported. I had beer, atmosphere, music, and glorious Molly dancing. What better way to celebrate Imbolc: in the belly of the mother.

Here are next week's gigs:

Friday, February 23

Sudbury Arts Centre, 8pm, Fishclaw. £12.94.

The Apex, Bury, 7.30pm, Seth Lakeman. £29.50.

Monday, February 26

Colchester Arts Centre, 8pm, James Delarre & Saul Rose, support from James Delarre. £12.

Wednesday, February 28

Risbygate Sports Club, Bury St Edmunds, 8pm, Bury Folk Collective present The Robbie Callas Cup, unaccompanied singing competition.

Friday, March 1

Risbygate Sports Club, Bury St Edmunds, 8pm, Milkmaid Folk Club, Magpye.