

Wine and Song – a perfect marriage

Is there a more perfect marriage than that of wine and song? Last weekend Pirates Productions hosted an Evening of Wine and Song directed by Rachel Parker and produced by Steve Preston. Tables were arranged to simulate a cosy restaurant. Singers Claire Wolseley, Fran Potasnik, Barbara Hall, Liz Turner, Louise Chapman, Carol Abel, Pam Carlisle, Steve Preston, Steve Wilkie, Alan Carlisle, Alex Teligadas, Randolph Melton, Stuart Alexander and Brian Parker were all beautifully attired in evening gowns or black tie to complete the illusion.



Fran Potasnik

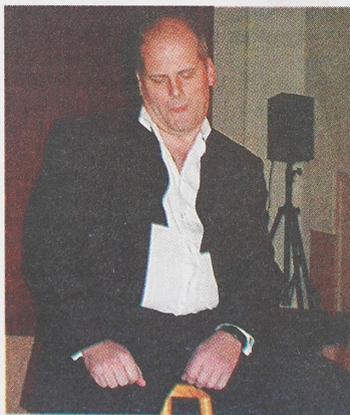


Louise Chapman

The soiree included a very generous tasting of ten Spanish Wines, and featured a concert of cabaret songs from the 1920's to the 1980's showca-

sing the talents of composers Weill, Britten, Hollaender, and Bolcom. If you look at the club's web site on www.pirates.lu you can find biographical information and detailed song lists of the composers.

The choice of music progressed beautifully along with the slow slide into the wines. After an initial 45 minute tasting of whites and rosés, the audience settled in their places with bountiful plates of cold tapas. The first song of the evening prompted the audience to 'raise a glass' (no arm twisting there). By the evening's beautiful finale of 'Falling in Love Again' almost everyone, fortified thoroughly by another 45 minute tasting of reds and urged on by the entire cast of singers, was singing along and, did I see some tears? (or were they mine?) Lights were dimmed and candles lit as



Steve Preston

the music was all in the 'cabaret' genre, featuring the 4 composers. If I were going to make any criticism of the evening at all, it would be the choice of composers in the first place. These are tricky, complicated arrangements and an extra round of applause should be given to Jackie Fleming and Liz Turner who handled the piano

pieces with aplomb. The audience may have been better served with a slightly more accessible choice of music. A few people I spoke to thought the musical selection a bit cold and unusual for a relaxed evening of wining and dining. However, it has to be said that the music progressively became more familiar and warmer. Well, the second half of the event was entitled 'Love'.

One thing that cannot be denied is that for an amateur group the talent is formidable. Perhaps the music was chosen to display this impressive range of talent because every singer rose to the challenge of their songs. Randolph Melton did a terrific version of 'Black Max' tipping his hat and looking every bit the part. There aren't too many people capable of handling 'Close the Curtain' and 'Tell Me The Truth About Love', two songs by William Bolcom that provided the perfect showcase for Steve Preston's deep commanding voice. Barbara Hall demonstrated immense personality with 'Toothbrush Time' and then 'Calypso' (Drive Faster), which surely had to be one of the evening's most difficult pieces.

For me the two standout pieces were Liz Turner's lovely and sweet rendition of Kurt Weill's 'Complainte de la Seine' (sniff sniff - I heard it two nights in a row and it was even better on the second), and Louise Chapman's crystal clear 'Kopf Bis Fuss' by Friedrich Hollaender, highlighting the best of the classic age of Berlin Cabaret. Here are songs to make you fall warm and fuzzy into your glass and to sing all the way home (and days afterwards). All of the singers did a marvellous job and deserved the huge round of applause they received on the two evenings I attended. As there was no encore prepared and the audience demanded 'more', I guess Pirates will just have to have another such evening. Bravo!

Mary Carey