

Wine and Folk

A New Show from Pirate Productions.

Text: Rachel Parker Photo: Philip Dutton

Rachel Parker, one of the directing team writes ...

I think I am like quite a few people in that I grew up with folk music, whether just songs people would sing for fun, or by listening to some of the records from the 70s English folk revival, bands such as Steeleye Span and Fairport Convention. I hadn't really paid much attention to the folk scene since then until a couple of years back someone introduced me to some of the great new bands in English folk, such as Bellowhead and the Imagined Village. I was reminded how much I had always enjoyed that kind of music and started listening to a lot more, including some of those old records.

As a long-standing Pirate and some one who had been involved with organising shows before, it occurred to me Pirates could perform some of this music. The cabaret-style shows with food and wine that Pirates regularly put together seemed like the ideal format, and with my friend Alex



Directors Alex Teligado, Rachel Parker and musical Director Philip Dutton

Teligadas agreeing to join in with the organisation, and Philip Dutton agreeing to musically direct, we had a show. We were delighted with the response when we held auditions, both in the sheer numbers, and with the enthusiasm and ideas that people brought. Now with the show fast approaching, we have a lot of really excellent music coming together and a show I think audiences are really going to enjoy.

"So what counts as 'Folk'?", is the question we are often asked, as different people have widely varying ideas. In fact we have taken an unashamedly broad view, and included many

different styles from traditional style singalong favourites, to unaccompanied or acoustic solos, from close harmony to folk-rock style, even to country and western, as in our view that is part of what folk music is these days. And with Pirates being such an international group we have obviously included songs from a wide range of countries: Britain, Ireland and the U.S. are well represented, of course but so are others such as a great girls' song in Canadian French and a really pretty duet in Estonian.

In keeping with the established format there will be a wine-tasting and dinner available although both of these are optional. Standard tickets are €17 with food and drinks extra, and there is a reduction for students up to age 16.

Wine & Folk will take place in Gasperich Parish Hall, from Wednesday May 11 to Saturday 14. Doors open at 7.15pm and music starts at 8pm. All the details, and online reservations are available on the website **www.pirates.lu**.





Wine and Folk

Text: Graham Cleverley - Photo: Steve Eastwood

There's nowt so Queer...as Folk! And nothing as difficult to define judging by Pirates' culinary and oenological celebration 'Wine and Folk' directed by Alex Teligadis and Rachel Parker in Gasperich last week. For instance an undoubted hit of the evening was Alex Teligadis' performance (backed by band noises) of 'Granny', the tale of the terrible happenings in that old seaside town far away. But Granny was written by Billy Connolly, a comedian from Glasgow, with not a drop of country and western, let alone folk music, in its heritage.

In the same vein, Gabor Bella and Pieter van den Paverd made a virtual show stopper out of John Denver's 'Country Roads', quite deservedly but without any reason to be called folk music.

Still, the entertainment value of the evening is what counts, no matter how Cecil Sharp or Jerry Silverman might be shuddering, and on that score things mostly went well after a slightly shaky start due to overamplification, which badly affected in particular a couple of the early female singers. Brian Parker was first to demonstrate that it really was OK not to be deafening with a solo mandolin performance of Eddie Vedder's 'Rise' (though again 'Rise' is only folk-ish).

For me probably the most pleasing contributors to the show was Neil Johnson singing solo or in chorus on various numbers, including my favourite of the night, the ballad 'The Birth of Robin Hood', folk by anyone's criterion, and performed straightforwardly

and unaffectedly and at reasonable volume, all of which suits his attitude and natural style.

It was of course also pleasing for a Hampshireman to see at least one local song included, the quartet on 'Drunken Maidens', especially since the show was due to end with the Yorkshire national anthem sung by everyone including the audience - as had been Somerset's anthem Widdicombe Fair in the first half. In general the songs sung as a chorus had the usual Pirates' quality and justified enthusiasm, though really in a hall as small as this there is no real reason for electronic amplification other than habit and inertia. Miking a chorus of 12 (and putting up with the subsequent distortion) is at most providing a psychological prop.

Waters of Babylon, a round with the choir split and down from the stage, showed how moving an unassisted performance could be, while an unfortunate version of A Man of

Constant Sorrow proved how unmoving a misinterpreted version of a moving song can be.

Without trying to list all the performers who did themselves justice, the items that stand out in memory include the trio on Donna, Donna; Fran Potasnik leading the chorus on City of New Orleans (great song, but another tin pan alley import); Silva Lonus and Jens Getreu singing their duet in Estonian (another performance that would have been improved by greater dynamic range). The female quartet on My Johnny is a Shoemaker also stays in one's mind, as do Philip Dutton's impassioned leader of the chorus in Wild Rover, and the chorus on All Around My Hat, which showed some surprising tastes for hats on the part of the singers.

An enjoyable evening in the tradition of Pirates 'Wine and' evenings, not just for the music. The fuselli and creamy mushroom sauce (my choice) also went down very well indeed.