

[Manchester Evening News](#)

You are here: [Home](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Music](#) | [Live reviews](#) | Imagined Village @ Bridgewater Hall

Live reviews

[Print Article](#)[Share this article](#)[Submit Comments](#)[View Comments\(2\)](#)

advertisement

Imagined Village @ Bridgewater Hall

Sarah Walters

14/11/2007

GATHER together a list of musical luminaries that includes Billy Bragg, folk legend Martin Carthy and his daughter Eliza, Sheila Chandra, John Copper and Johnny Kalsi and that should amount to maximum pulling power at the box office.

And so it's surprising that The Imagined Village - self-appointed revisionists giving folk music a multicultural overhaul - only half fills the Bridgewater Hall. But then, as picker and violinist Chris Wood reminds us, shelling out good money to watch this experiment is something of a leap of faith.

And it's a leap the audience takes, of course, because this stellar cast list is a sure spectacle. Predictably, the performance is largely faultless and full of banter and charged sermons. It's reinterpreting folk to fit such a broad church that proves a more hit and miss affair.

When the inimitable Bragg beats his proud chest loudest on England Half English, spliced together with a Carthy family version of John Barleycorn, there's real merit in its modern makeover. Wood and Chandra's haunting duet, *Welcome Sailor*, is intense, and Benjamin Zephaniah's inspired retelling of Tam Lyn (adding a multimedia angle with the poet's contribution beamed into the venue on a massive video screen) is this project's pinnacle.

But then there's *Scarborough Fair* - airbrushed with sitar (beautifully performed though it is by Trans-Global Underground's Sheema Mukherjee) but largely left in its original, wistful form - or a meandering instrumental, written by Village mastermind Simon Emmerson, that results in a cuddly bird spotting quiz.

The set, though, cries out for less loaded moments, and when it finally arrives in the ceilidh hoe-down encore, bums finally shift off seats.

And not before time - this was, after all, supposed to be a celebration of English folk music's longevity, not a wake.

What did you think? Have your say.

[Print Article](#)[Share this article](#)[Submit Comments](#)[View Comments\(2\)](#)

Reader rating for Imagined Village @ Bridgewater Hall

(2) votes

[Submit your rating](#)

Most recent 2 of 2 user comments

You're correct, it was a bit hit and miss, but when it was right, it was really right. A really interesting experiment, populated by consummate musicians

Pascoe

14/11/2007 at 23:50

I hadn't heard the CD or read any reviews, so was unsure exactly what to expect but assumed a high-quality evening would ensue, simply by the presence of Bragg, Carthys, etc. I wasn't disappointed. Obviously with a project such as this, there were going to be some sections more successful than others. Overall though, a highly entertaining, exciting and thought-provoking evening that reinforced my belief that folk is currently the most exciting area of music in this country. Loads of highly talented young musicians (Kris Drever, Kate Rusby, Jim Causley, Bellowhead etc etc), established artists still going strong (Carthy, Waterson, Richard Thompson etc etc) all with a foot in the past and an eye on the future.

bingojesus, Didsbury

14/11/2007 at 22:40

Search



© M.E.N. media 2007