

Live gig review for 'THE BIG BLUES FESTIVAL' by Rosy Greer - Lancashire Blues Archive
@ The Atkinson, Southport, Merseyside - 9th/10th October 2015
<http://www.theatkinson.co.uk/special-event/big-blues-festival/>



The Atkinson is an impressive well run Arts Centre in the middle of Southport. With an excellent concert space, incredibly helpful and friendly staff, good food and drink, which made it a fantastic venue for The Big Blues Festival.

Held over two days, it has to be one of the most prestigious events on the Atkinson calendar this year and hopefully will become one of the yearly highlights for the blues in and around the northwest and beyond.

The festival opened with just one band on the Friday evening, the amazing award winning Nimmo Brothers. From Glasgow, Alan and Stevie Nimmo, both on guitars and vocals, gave an impressive performance with Wayne Proctor on drums and Matt Beable on bass. With a mix of upbeat rocky numbers and classy ballads, they highlighted many of their self penned numbers and also some classic blues including an epic and funky 'Black Cat Bone'. Although both brothers are involved in their own projects of King King and the Stevie Nimmo Trio, it was a great accolade for them to play to a full house of enthusiastic supporters, which they did brilliantly.

<http://www.bluearmadillo.com/the-nimmo-brothers-artist/>



Nimmo Brothers

Saturday afternoon brought us the Prestonian band Tipitina. Playing today as a five piece with Debbie Jones on excellent vocals and guitar, Justine Randall with super fingers on keys, Andy Jones on guitar, Olly Collins on bass and Brian Hargreaves on drums. They have a great New Orleans sound and Debbie has a fantastic voice. Playing a mix of jazz to Gospel, blues to soul they gave a fantastic performance including 'You Are A Blessing' , from their album , with a gospel feel and a great take of the Amy Winehouse classic 'You Know I'm No Good'. A lively finale with 'Going To Last' with playtime for the band members, giving a great end to a super set from this incredibly professional band. <https://www.facebook.com/Tipitinauk>



Tipitina

David Migden and The Twisted Roots were next to grace the stage, with their own, very individual sound. Kicking off the set with the interesting 'Second Hand Tattoo', David Migden fronts the band with his amazing deep velvet voice. Multi instrumentalist Graham Mann pulled all sorts out of the bag on keys, with Joe Gibson on guitar, Phil Scragg on bass and James Sedge on drums. A great rendition of 'Rougarou' followed, from the current album Animal & Man. With David blasting on trumpet and Graham on trombone, a hint of jazz was brought into the frame. More tracks from the current album and the highly acclaimed 'Killing It' album with 'Wild World', giving dream harmonies, slide guitar and a showcase for Graham on keys. 'Heaven' slowing the pace and 'Top Of The Mountain' with a pounding beat. A fantastic track next with 'Reverend Jack Crow', an off the wall tongue in cheek ditty not unlike a Zappa number and to finish off the set the name sake of their second album 'Killing It'. They are a unique band with a sound that is totally their own, so well worth a catch if you can. <http://www.davidmigdenandthedirtywords.com/>



David Migden & The Twisted Roots

Next, from Preston and a firm favourite in the northwest and beyond, The Stumble. They are a superb Chicago style blues band fronted by the charismatic Paul Melville on excellent vocals, Colin Black on exceptional lead and slide guitar, Simon Anthony on super sax, Antony Scapens on guitar, Cameron Sweetnam on bass and the powerhouse of Boyd Tonner on drums. They played several of their classic tracks from previous and current albums including 'Shopping', BB King's 'All Over Again' and 'Upset Me Baby', 'Crazy' and 'Heat Of The Night' which will be on their new album. Their final number 'Bus Stop', a firm favourite with the audience, completed this worthy set and put the Stumble in a class of their own. Just brilliant! <http://www.thestumble.com/>



The Stumble

For the evening session the magic Marcus Malone and band brought to the table their own mix of sounds combining blues, rock and funky soul. Originally from Detroit, Marcus fronts his band on vocals and guitar with Sean Nolan on guitar, Jamie Lawrence on bass and Mike Horn on drums. With a wonderful acoustic opener Marcus captivated the audience from the off. This led into some rocky numbers and a slow rocky 12 bar with some excellent guitar work from Sean. 'Detroit City Blues', from the new album, showcased both guitars as leads. Funking it up with 'Super Natural Thing' bringing the set to a close with 'You Gotta Slow Down' and the final number 'Christine', with some more superb guitar work from two masters. <http://www.marcusmalone.com/>



Marcus Malone

The final act of the evening was the young and talented guitarist and singer songwriter Chantel McGregor. Show casing her newly released album Lose Control, she was ably supported by Colin Sutton on bass and Keith McPartling on drums. Leaning towards heavy rock with guitar solos in that vein, Chantel did bring some calm with a couple of acoustic numbers performed as a solo. With some more high volume rock, the set was brought to an end with 'Your Fever' from the new album, 'Freefalling and the final track 'Walk On The Land'. <http://www.chantelmccgregor.com/>



Chantel McGregor

So there endeth The Big Blues Festival and what a success. Well done to all the staff at the Atkinson and especially Emma acting as MC, who worked tirelessly through the evening to make sure things went like clockwork. I will certainly look forward to next year's offering.

Rosy Greer - Lancashire Blues Archive and Independent Reviewer
www.facebook.com/lancsbluesarchive