



CLANNAD

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CLANNAD'S GAIETY SUCCESS

Several days before this Clannad concert in the Gaiety Theatre all the seats were booked and the capacity audience certainly got great value for money.

Apart from singing most of their songs in Irish, the Gaoth Dobhair quintet differ from most other professional folk outfits in another important way; they rely on their exquisite harmonies and acoustic instrument arrangement rather than on boisterous reels and jigs to get audience reaction.

The band opened their almost 90 minute-long set with a quiet gentle O'Carolan piece which they said was untitled. They then went right into

some new songs in the repertoire - “An Crúiscin Lán” merging very neatly into “Cuach mo Londubh Buí”. Even at this early stage the audience were behind them.

Then we had another new song - the famous Cathal Buí Mac Giolla Gunna song of the yellow bittern dying for lack of water, “An Bonnan Buí”. Noel O’Dúgáin’s harmonica and his brothers Pádraig on organ enhanced most effectively the harmonies of Ciarán and Pól Ó Braonáin and their warm crystal-voiced sister Máire.

It was a brave effort to throw in the new material, and just about all of it in a gentle tempo, at this early time and it payed off.

Later on we had another new piece, “An Crann Úll”, and again the tempo was gentle and easy, so that it contrasted interestingly from the Siamsa Tíre rendering in their show.

But most of the material at this stage was well-known, including “Two Sisters”, “An Ghiobóg”, “Siúil a Rún”, “Ó 'Bhean a' Tí”, “Máire Bhruinneall”, “Mo Mháire” and surprisingly “Níl Sé Ina Lá”, which we normally expect as the encore. This is a song I heartily detest normally but Clannad have almost made an art-form of it.

Having praised the group many times, I was hard on the lookout for something in the line of criticism. But last night even their presentation of songs was better than usual. There is still room for improvement. When playing a theatre as big as the Gaiety and using spotlights they should consider using back make-up.

From the unofficial Clannad website: www.clannad.org.uk

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