



J.M.A. Bring Young & Dylan To Enniscorthy

Jackie Hayden

The high ceiling in the concert room of the Presentation Arts Centre in Enniscorthy can make it a hard venue for some acts to fill, but there were no such problems for JMA for their tribute night to Neil Young and Bob Dylan last week. With the tight harmonies of Anne and James Meyler, the incendiary guitar playing of Mick Egan (who added tasty harmonica and gutsy vocals too) as well as the thundering tight back two of drummer Keith Devereux and fluid bassist Mick O'Brien they filled the hall, and then some.

After previous gigs by this impressive outfit I expressed the view that I thought they did Young better than Dylan, perhaps because Egan's no-holds-barred approach to the guitar seems to suit the former's songs better. But this was a more seamless set, with such a sense of cohesion to the sound throughout the performance that you could barely see the join between one classic songwriter and the other. It was almost as if they had decided to do Dylan as Neil Young would. I could ask them but they might not tell me, but whatever it was it worked from start to glorious finish.

In truth it would be hard to nominate stand-out songs, but from the Neil Young canon 'Cinnamon Girl', 'Cortez the Killer' and 'Like A Hurricane' were especially dynamic, and the great slabs of guitar washes that Egan tore from his guitar during 'Powderfinger' drew enthusiastic bursts of applause from an appreciative audience. From Dylan's back pages they plucked 'One More Cup of Coffee' and 'Oh Sister', but the outfit proved they were willing to go even further beyond the obvious with a superb shot at 'Senor (Tales of Yankee Power)'. Egan and Anne Meyler harmonised splendidly on an emotional 'Just Like A Woman', while James Meyler took masterful control of 'Forever Young'.

So with the Presentation Centre's stained-glass window as a backdrop, JMA delivered a two-hour set of music that was made from pure crystal.