

Reuben's Train reviews

“Reuben's Train are a duo performing mostly American songs, some traditional and some not so traditional, from the darker side of life. Mick Watson, (vocals, eyebrows), and Keith Osborne, (vocals, guitar, banjo & sideburns), have been performing together for the last 10 years in London folk clubs, dressing always in black and leaving the audience wondering quite where they are coming from and quite how they should react.

They return to Towersey where their many fans might have worked them out by now.”

Towersey Village Festival 2005

"Reuben's Train" (Reub 01)

"Overland" (Reub 02)

Reuben's Train

We sing our songs and happily harmonise the choruses every week, and the songs are about murder and mayhem, incest and injury, lost work and lost love but mostly we simply sing the song as tunefully as we are able. Reuben's Train put the sorrow and the drama back into the songs.

A Victorian audience would have understood, but watching people who have never seen them perform today is a treat. Unable to understand whether the song is supposed to be sad or funny they have little idea how to react.

Mick Watson wrings every ounce of drama and pathos out of the words while Keith Osborne, a serious guitar player provides beautifully judged accompaniment. Quickly the audience are giggling at the bathos of these songs. When you are comfortable with humour of it all, they sing "John Doe No: 24" and then you can hear a pin drop in the room as the sadness of the words cuts through and there is a lump stuck firmly in your throats.

It's always a virtuoso performance from Reuben's Train and to get two CDs from them is a real treat, for the recording they have slightly toned down some of the drama, as it is difficult to deal with unless you are seeing them live.

"Reuben's Train" has much of their earlier material on it, an eclectic mix of traditional American and songs from people as diverse as Dwight Yoakum, Dolly Parton, Kris Kristofferson and Mary Chapin Carpenter. The ability to transform songs from people you never listen to into something you find yourself singing in the kitchen is rare and it is here. "Cincinnati", "Sunday Morning" and of course "John Doe No:24 are my favourite tracks.

"Overland" Has a few more traditional songs on it but still reveals their pleasure in the bizarre and miserable end of the spectrum of song. Songs from Willie Nelson, Nick Drake, and the Tiger Lilies. "What is Home", "Mary" and "Little Birdie." are high on my list. These two blokes are the very best we get to hear, buy a CD today.

TF.

Folk London

Dress code black. The dynamic duo will take us a dark journey, but not without some laughs, maybe, through their repertoire of Americana, depression, despair and bad hangovers with style and Simpsonsque guitar accompaniment.

Islington Folk Club

“.... London's most dramatic duo. Sophisticated, funny and weird ...

Islington Folk Club

" Unusual English duo.....with excellent harmony, guitar and banjo, (plus frock-coats and impressive eyebrows)..."

Time Out

“....a duo whose musicianship is matched only by the intelligent drollery they bring, it's a crime that we haven't heard more of the supremely wierdly talented Reuben's Train”.

Both Sides of The Tweed Festival

Exceptionally entertaining black-clad duo, whose dramatic presentation of American and English traditional and not-so-traditional classics play up the melodrama with wry humour.

- *Time Out 2007*

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