

# Review

## The Onion Club

# Wings of Desire

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In my humble opinion it's a difficult tightrope to walk merging music with a theatrical approach. Some artists have managed it with spectacular results but many more have straddled the pitfalls of pretentiousness and fallen flat on their faces.

The Onion Club certainly have a theatrical flair to their performances but it's also very much about the music as well, beautifully chosen and performed arrangements of other artists songs along with equally beautiful original songs.

They are an exclusive club, in terms of being a duo of Pauline Hynd ( alias Dubiety Brown) on vocals and guitar and Stephen Lee on piano/keyboards but they love to draw an audience into their world, seducing you and entralling you.

I've had the privilege to see them twice now. The first time around was in a church where they were at home in the gothic environs of All Souls Church, with minimal props and playing a short set as part of a multi-band event. Steve performed a number of the songs on the church organ to breath taking effect while Pauline's voice was at times husky and worldly-wise, at others almost ethereal.

They pulled off a fantastic reworking of Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds 'God Is In The House' that night in a set of immaculate highs and beautifully bruised lows. They even managed to get the audience to join in on one of their own songs.

The second time around I saw them performing in a former Victorian hospital on the outskirts of Arbroath. This time around it was their own show in an intimate, low lit room. They played two sets that night, interspersed by poetry readings. It wasn't my normal evening of rock 'n' roll but it was a very special occasion and a number of friends I'd coaxed into coming out on a drab evening joined me in being gently blown away.

Again, The Onion Club mixed a series of their own compositions with some gorgeous interpretations (the word cover doesn't really do what The Onion Club do to the songs) particularly a sublime version of Tim Buckley's 'A Song For The Siren'.

I'd heard This Mortal Coil's version only weeks earlier at a friend's funeral and it was an emotional moment for most of the room. This time it was equally beautiful but somehow seemed to say, things can be good again.

There were covers of old songs and new songs, blue songs and, well you get my drift. They set the bar exceedingly high by opening the first set with a cover of Tom Waits 'Broken Bicycles' and also took on Edith Piaf, Billy McKenzie and Goldfrapp along with originals such as 'Mata Hari' and the elegiac 'When The Kingdom Comes'.

The Onion Club are dramatic and theatrical and make some wonderful music as they take you on an emotional and musical rollercoaster, taking you by the hand into the world they have created for themselves. There is darkness and light, humour and sorrow, at times you find yourself smiling, at others a little overwhelmed. It's a journey you should consider making at the first opportunity.