

Choir, Bill Monroe's *Lonesome Moonlight Waltz* as well as a bluegrass version of *Don't Pass Me By* from the pen of Richard Starkey (Ringo Starr) from the Beatles' THE WHITE ALBUM, this group really delivered the goods.

With further good sets from the popular Vin Garbutt with his soaring vocals, the Malingerers who played three numbers after being chosen by the festival goers to represent the club tent on the main stage and impressed so much with their brand of country/blues that they have already been booked for next year's festival, Chris Sherburn & Denny Bartley with some fine songs and great sense of humour, the very talented guitarist Wizz Jones who had Dave Kelly sitting out front watching him and the spirited Faustus who performed a batch of sprightly jigs, reels and shanties (although a bit too much tuning between songs slowed things up).

It was then time for the final headline act Britain's queen of the blues Maggie Bell and the British Blues Quintet featuring Colin Allen on drums, lead guitarist Miller Anderson, keyboard player Zoot Money and bass guitarist Colin Hodgkinson alongside slide guitar wizard Dave Kelly. They took the stage by storm with their opener *Never Rains But It Pours* featuring Zoot on lead vocals. Miller then took over the lead vocal duties with the great blues tune *Tamp 'Em Up Solid* whilst also showing off his tremendous guitar playing alongside some amazing slide solos from Dave Kelly, whose turn it was next on vocals as he slipped into *Death Letter* from THE OFFICIAL BLUES BAND BOOTLEG album.

Maggie Bell then walked onto the stage to rapturous applause as she thundered out the classic *Wishing Well* proving that she was in tremendous voice. With Kelly and Anderson swapping guitar solos on *110 In The Shade* and Maggie rocking as only she can on the excellent Al Green tune *Take Me To The River*, Zoot showing his excellence on keyboards as well as lead vocals on *Move Too Soon*, Colin Hodgkinson stepping up to the mic to sing *Walkin' Blues* as well as to show off his great talent on bass guitar and throughout Colin Allen powering out a great rhythm and beat on the drums this show was just getting hotter and hotter.

Maggie slowed things down for a few minutes with the blues gospel tune *Way Down In The Hole* before doing a duet with Dave on the Bonnie Raitt song *I Believe I'm In Love With You* and ending with *I Just Want To Make Love To You* with more twin guitar solos and

great interplay between Dave's slide and Miller's lead guitar. They could not finish without an encore which quickly came as they performed a rasping and raunchy *Respect Yourself* before finally leaving to thunderous applause and cheers. Ely Folk Festival celebrated their 25th anniversary in fantastic style and finished the party with musical fireworks as Maggie, Dave and BBQ set the place alight. **David Knowles**



Eliza Gilkyson

Eliza Gilkyson

Blue Rock Studio, Wimberley, Texas, June 10

While they take a few months break during the summer months, Billy and Dodee Crockett—owners and proprietors of Blue Rock Studio—have been opening their home to acoustic music fans on a monthly basis for over four years for house concerts, Hill Country style. Their living room/performance area holds 120 persons. The concert on Thursday June 10, was the first of two consecutive evenings where three video cameras captured for future DVD release the performance by Eliza Gilkyson, her band and guests. Red House Records have just released the Gilkyson, John Gorka and Lucy Kaplansky trio album RED HORSE, and via the same imprint Eliza expects to have a new studio album in stores by the Spring of 2011. Whether a DVD will accompany that release, or appear separately, remains in the realms of 'to be confirmed'.

During her two set performance, Eliza was accompanied by her 'seated' band of Mike Hardwick (electric guitar, Dobro) and (her) son Cisco Ryder (drums, percussion). Ray Bonneville (harmonica, backing vocals) and Alejandro Diaz, Jr. (bajo sexto) joined Eliza on a few numbers. Having been introduced by Billy Crockett as a musician who

possesses 'a prophetic voice,' drawn from her Grammy nominated Best Contemporary Folk album LAND OF MILK AND HONEY (2004), Gilkyson launched her performance with *Not Lonely*—you know the one all about being a 'One-man woman.' Having shed her black lace bolero jacket, she followed with a new song, the environmentally themed *Fall Apart*.

Moving to her most recent studio recording, BEAUTIFUL WORLD, having delivered the opening selection, *Emerald Street*—coupled with enthusiastic audience participation in the song's whistling segment—Eliza followed with the album's penultimate selection *Rare Bird*, while *Party's Over* featured stunning solos from Hardwick and Ryder. Having mentioned her work with Austin-based Workers Defence Project, they secure fair treatment for the city's low-income construction workers—Eliza and band were joined by Diaz for her second new song *Bajan Al Norte* (it translates as 'Go North'). Reaching back to her 1992 Private Music release THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS, Eliza closed her first set with *Lights Of Santa Fe*.

The lyrically sensual *Fall Into The Night* from LOST AND FOUND (2002) opened Gilkyson's second set. Co-written by Eliza and her sister Nancy, who was sat immediately in front of me, their *Dark Side Of Town* lyric charts the life of the late Big Al Ragle (who died in 2003). Before performing it, Gilkyson dedicated her Blue Rock rendition to Stephen Bruton (who died in 2009). His harmony vocal can be heard on the studio version. Dipping into PARADISE HOTEL (2005), Eliza sang *Borderline* and then *Jedidiah 1777*, the latter being a tribute to an American War of Independence ancestor who served alongside George Washington at Valley Forge. The foregoing pair were separated by a rendition of her marginally older number *Heart Of A Man*.

Gilkyson's assessment of capitalism gone awry *Runaway Train* was followed by the dreamy, waltz paced, new song *Blue Moon Night*. Based on a W. B. Yeats poem, Joni Mitchell's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* provided an opportunity for the audience to participate, vocally, in the chorus. Eliza offered the insight that travelling musicians can gauge their level of success by the quality of their hotel rooms. In Raton Pass having been given a real key (rather than a computerized card) for her room door, inspired, she penned *Midnight On Raton* in a mere twenty minutes. It's a shoe-in that this song will become an audience favourite,

and the lyric references a rather well known Townes Van Zandt composition.

Circa 1955 Richard Dehr, Frank Miller and Eliza's father, Terry, aka the Easy Riders, penned *Memories Are Made Of This*. Vocally supported by that trio, the following year the song gave Dean Martin a number one US pop single. Vocally joined, once again, by the audience, the song drew her performance to a close. **Arthur Wood**

Jackson Browne and David Lindley

Royal Albert Hall, London, June 29

For the most part, Jackson Browne aficionados are a pleasant lot. Mainly middle class and over 50, they are fond of their mums, kind to children and generally well-behaved in public. There is, however, an unruly element within them—we'll call this bunch the Browne Nerds to distinguish them from the Blue Meanies—who follow Jackson around slavishly and think they know better than the artist how to construct an entertaining set. Sure enough, a mere 20 minutes into a Royal Albert Hall concert that Jackson himself described as 'special', these idiots were yelling out requests and ruining the atmosphere for the rest. It doesn't require a genius to deduce that a revered songwriter like Browne possesses a glittering back catalogue and is perfectly capable of compiling a show which reflects this without being subjected to a barrage of mindless calls for *Running On Empty*, *Fountain Of Sorrow*, *Take It Easy* or, from one particularly irritating loudmouth, *Rock Me On The Water*. Jackson really should firmly dismiss these moronic intrusions rather than suggest that he'll probably get round to playing most of them, for over an eclectic two-and-a-half hours he produced an uplifting performance containing an intelligent mix of the familiar and the quirky.

It was a game of two halves, to use a cliché forged in an age before England became such a bad joke in footballing circles. The first hour was occupied by a largely acoustic set capturing the flavour of the recent Browne-Lindley live album *LOVE IS STRANGE*. That was recorded in Jackson's beloved Spain with several notable Latin musicians, and percussionist Tino di Geraldo joined the two friends for this part of the concert. A sizeable number of Spanish fans were in the RAH to see and hear the three

musicians start their programme with some unfamiliar tunes—a Warren Zevon oddity about Indian gaming casinos in Florida, Bruce Springsteen's *Brothers Under The Bridge*, with Lindley dominating on vocals and lap steel guitar. The better-known *Looking East* was given a strong Eastern flavour and blues lover David shone on Blind Willie Johnson's *Soul Of A Man* and a rollicking *Mercury Blues*. It was time for Jackson to take over the vocal duties and he did so with that poignant concert favourite *Call It A Loan*, taking us into the more familiar realm of insightful love songs. Romance clearly isn't dead as *For Everyman* followed, taking most of us back to fondly-remembered nights in the 1970s. The difference being that we now look about 30 years older than the boyish American standing centre stage. A bizarre Lindley offering about man boobs, complete with a repetitive John Lee Hooker riff, took us to the interval after which Jackson returned with his band for the electric part of the show.

He had several familiar musicians alongside him, notably long-time guitarist Mark Goldenberg, keyboard player Jeff Young and veteran bassist Kevin McCormack, and they soon settled into a warm groove with *Giving That Heaven Away* and *In The Shape Of A Heart*. Young's skills on organ and piano were swelling the sound impressively while the two female backing singers added a soulful quality to the music. At that point, multi-instrumentalist David Lindley returned to the fray just in time to raise a howl of glee from the assembled throng with the opening chords of *The Pretender*. The Browne Nerds were in their element as we entered Greatest Hits territory and Lindley brought the house down as the band segued into *Your Bright Baby Blues* and he delivered a stirring solo that recalled the shimmering beauty of Lowell George's aching slide guitar original. It was the highlight of the show so far and brought many of the fans to their feet. An evocative *Too Many Angels* injected some drama into the proceedings and Jackson prefaced *I'm Alive* with a short diatribe on saving the planet. Browne went back to the piano for a dusty relic that had the grand old auditorium rocking—*Doctor My Eyes*, which featured a neat cameo from axeman Goldenberg. The gentle *For A Dancer* found Lindley on violin for a sympathetic reading of one of Jackson's finest songs. And as the band launched into *Running On*



Cara Dillon

Empty, the shakers and groovers boogied their way down the aisles to celebrate a memorable evening in front of the stage. Great gig, shame about the self-absorbed Nerds. Maybe next time they'll just shut up and let Jackson select his own material. He seems to know what he's doing. **Bob Kilbey**

Cara Dillon

The Gala Theatre, Durham, June 17

Back in February, I went to see the Transatlantic Sessions at the Sage. Among the galaxy of excellent artistes on show, Cara Dillon was the one who shone brightest for me that night and I was keen to see more of her. The chance came just a few months later when she appeared at Durham's Gala Theatre. I liked the venue; the seats were sensibly sloped to virtually guarantee a good view of the stage from all angles. The audience was quiet and attentive.

Bridie Jackson provided an excellent opening half-hour. Her songs are possibly best described as a Celtic, acoustic folk, tinged with gospel, her hauntingly beautiful voice harmonising well with her backing group, the Puddleducks (apparently the name changes every night!). I'd not heard of Bridie before but as she is based in the North East I think it is only a matter of time before I see her again, hopefully with a full show of her own. Let's face it; support acts can be a bit hit and miss, but this was a definite hit, setting the mood very nicely indeed for what was to come.

We didn't have to wait long before Cara Dillon arrived on the stage, backed by two guitars and a flute. That might not sound like much, but the sound they produced was wonderfully deep. Sam Lakeman, long-time partner to Cara in more ways than one, switched between acoustic guitar and keyboard throughout the evening. Ed Boyd was on acoustic guitar too and Brian Finnegan, on flutes and whistles, completed the quartet.

Cara's voice was as beautiful as ever. It's a blend of softness and supreme power, demanding attention and addictive to listen to. Her most recent work, *Hill of Thieves*, was well to the fore