

Seó at Theatre Royal

Seó, a newly created group working toward the celebration of traditional Irish music and dance, had its first performance in the Theatre Royale on 24th July. Created and produced by the Lismore Music Festival founder and producer Jennifer O'Connell, it showcases traditional music, song and dance inspired by the maritime and musical influences of Waterford and the South East Region. Seó runs until Thursday the 28th August.

For someone, like myself, whose experience with traditional Irish music goes as far as the usual year of Irish dancing in junior infants and the blurry tin whistle lessons of primary school, this show seemed slightly daunting. Nevertheless, whatever qualms I had were vanished within five minutes of this delightful, lively performance.

On a technical level, this show was stunning. The acoustics of the theatre enhanced the raw and ready sounds of the trad instruments, a surprising but pleasing combination. The instruments themselves were very well balanced, a pleasing mix of standard trad instruments such as bodhrán and uilleann pipes, as well as guitar, percussion, piano and voice. One of my personal favorite parts of this show would have to be the incredibly talented dancers. Not only did all four display a dazzling skill, their overall presentation and energy was stunning, managing to be enthralling whilst not taking away from the musical elements of the show.

What really made this show for me wasn't simply the technical skill or performance itself (both of which were of course weren't at all lacking) but the interaction with the audience. The enthusiasm of the group made audience participation happen without any feelings of pressure; they managed to create an atmosphere of pure excitement and infectious energy through sheer exuberance, and this is something that can be a lot more difficult than simply going on stage and playing a song. So for that, I say well done, and sincerely hope that everyone and anyone would consider popping down to the Theatre Royale before the end of August to give this show a look, as it is truly something you won't regret.