

St. Michael's at Six - One for the Brave **Review**

An ominous mist descending on the church set the scene for the last concert of the season – an evening of progressive heavy metal from drummer/vocalist Alan Emslie and guitarist John Irvine.

The duo made no compromises for the uninitiated by launching into the heavy riffs of MISANTHROPIC MYOPIC MAN. This first song set the tone for the rest of the set, combining complex guitar work, intricate drumming and an electronic backing track. The electronics did much to add to the symphonic sound – creating calm interludes, menacing bass-lines and lush chords to support guitar solos. The song also displayed the different sides to Alan Emslie's vocal capabilities, with powerful melodies, demonic growls and even some typical metal shouting.

ALL THE TIME cooled the pace somewhat as it proved to be something of an industrial ballad, punctuated by angular power chord progressions. It gradually grew to an impressive climax with a lot of crashing cymbals.

BEYOND THE 11th DIMENSION, the most “progressive” song, used irregular time signatures and was also the best showcase for technical expertise. John Irvine, on a 7-stringed guitar, incorporated slides, tapping arpeggios and a soaring solo that hinted at a Spanish influence. Alan Emslie's percussion was similarly skilled, and at times evoked a free jazz feel.

Highlight of the set was the instrumental DARK MATTER, which featured unusual electronic timbres sometimes reminiscent of sirens and motors as well as Arabic melodies.

This concert was certainly “one for the brave”, but was well received by an enthusiastic and broad-minded audience.

The *St. Michael's at Six* series continues to go from strength to strength and should be applauded for encompassing such a diverse range of musical styles.

Lewis Forbes
June 2006