

## 4 February 2017 The Swingles

I have been lucky enough to see The Swingles a couple of times over the last few years, both of which I have travelled to London for. So I couldn't believe my luck when I saw they were playing at St Andrew's!

As a little background on the group, Ward Swingle was born in America in 1927. He was a vocalist and jazz musician. He founded the The Swingle Singers in Paris in 1962 where they started out as an eight part group. Amongst his first pieces performed were vocal a capella arrangements of some of J S Bach's music. Although they have gone from strength to strength over the 50 plus years and obviously the line up is different now, four guys and three girls, they have remained true to their founder's roots.

All the music we heard was live and every sound, be it the tune, harmonies or percussion was produced by the voices of the group members. They sang using microphones, then some of the sounds were fed back on a live loop to add extra layers and textures to each piece.

So with regards the vocal tapestry we were treated to on Saturday 4 February, of course Mr Bach, or 'Jonny B' as they affectionately call him, was there. In the same classical vein was part of Concerto Grosso by Corelli. They perform some covers of more popular songs including Paul Simons' *America* and Mumford and Sons' sublime *After the storm*.

Over more recent years the group have proved to be, not only talented singers, but also very capable song writers and their recent albums include many original Swingles pieces. *Hiding your smile* by Joanna and *Burden* by Edward being amongst my favourites. Their new album, which is due for release next month, is an eclectic mix of folk music from all over the world. Some numbers again written by members of the group and some taken from the original songs and turned into a new shiny Swingles version of their former selves.

It was obvious from the smiles on their faces that they really enjoy performing together, feel passionate about everything they sing and love bringing their music to audiences all over the world. As a singer myself I really connected to the beautiful clear tones of their voices and the tightness of the harmonies. But I was completely blown away by the sounds and effects that the human voice can produce. If you ever have a chance to see this amazing group live, don't hesitate. They are, without a doubt the hottest ticket in town.

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