

John Prine  
Fair and Square Tour  
Symphony Hall Birmingham U.K.  
Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2005  
By Chuck Micallef

John Prine started his U.K. Tour greeted with a standing ovation as he walked on stage. Not one note was sung nor a word spoken. The man just simply walked onto the stage. That sign of appreciation set the mood for the following two and one half hours. Mr. Prine did not let up. He just sang straight on through, interweaving his humorous anecdotes with Prine musical masterpieces both vintage and new.

The very competent musical backing performed by David Jacques on double bass and Jason Wilber on lead guitar/mandolin enhanced each song with sympathetic and expertly executed dynamics.

The concert opened with "**Spanish Pipedream**" a wonderfully whimsical song depicting a young soldier finding Love and a chance for lifelong happiness in the most unlikely place, a strip joint.

Then a song long hidden in the Prine archives "**Your Flag Decal Won't Get You Into Heaven Any More**"..."The present administration have been asking for this!!!" he quipped. If you are not familiar with this tune, dig out a copy of his debut album "**John Prine**" it is well worth a listen.

Next up, his classic "**Speed of the Sound of Loneliness.**" Here we listen to a Lover's lament over his partner's obvious abandonment towards their relationship and the consequences.

At this point I stopped taking notes and like most others, got swept away with images created in my mind by the inspired lyric. Song after song, the concert moved forward to the moment where John Prine stood alone on stage, just him and his guitar. Now it has to be said that this man's presence and aura strongly pull his audience towards him.

It was apparent from the audience's response that the current material from his album "Fair and Square" stood comfortably along side his classics. Most notably "Glory of True Love" "She Is My Everything" "Crazy As A Loon" and "Long Monday."

Then there came a very unique experience; during the performance of "Some Humans Ain't Human" the audience showed their overwhelming support of Mr. Prine's one line protest against President Bush "Or you're feeling your freedom and the world's off your back/some cowboy from Texas starts his own war in Iraq" by a dignified applause that did not interrupt the flow of the song.

The selling point of a John Prine Concert, in my humble opinion, is that one gets the sense that you are in the presence of "The Real Deal". Mr. Prine comes across as natural and genuine as anyone can be. No airs or graces just a guy that writes and sings songs that have touched so many lives. Maybe has changed the world in a small way by doing so.

Get a ticket for the next Prine Concert in your area.

Or you can do what the couple sitting next to us did. They couldn't get the seats they wanted in their hometown of Chicago so they worked their holiday around flying to Birmingham England to see him at The Symphony Hall.