

Edinburgh Fringe Festival REVIEW – Damien Dempsey *****

Damien Dempsey *****

Ballroom @ Assembly Room

Run Finished

On Wednesday night the Assembly Rooms played host to a flying visit from the latest in the grand tradition of Irish singers with a social conscience. Accompanied by John McLoughlin on guitar, Damien Dempsey walks the fine line between making a point and entertaining the audience.

After fluffing his intro and catching himself halfway through bidding good evening to Aberdeen, Damien launches into Sing All Our Cares Away – very much his live manifesto – joined on backing vocals by an audience well acquainted with the material.

Dempsey's percussive guitar playing would suggest a comparison with Christy Moore, but a photo of The Dubliners' Barney McKenna taped to his guitar suggests otherwise. His voice is most certainly his own, laced with a broad accent, yet capable on the likes of Bustina's 'Outta Here' of suggesting delicacy and vulnerability in the upper range.

New tracks such as Canadian Geese and Almighty Love sit well alongside old favourites such as Colony, Negative Vibes and Factories and are interspersed with some enjoyable banter, particularly his retelling of a recent encounter with Bruce Springsteen.

Dempsey rounds off with "It's All Good", a song about strength and optimism in the face of adversity with a rousing chorus which was echoed around the ballroom long after the pair had

left the stage.

Submitted by [Michael Moloney](#)

