

Review: Midge Ure, The Christians & Altered Images



When I got the opportunity to head to the Edinburgh Playhouse on Sunday evening to see three 'legendary' bands of the 1980s – as they were described by the promoters – I jumped at the chance. However, I must confess it wasn't Midge Ure, formerly the front man of Ultravox or Liverpool band The Christians who attracted me. It was Clare Grogan and her distinctly altered Altered Images line-up who were the main attraction for me. I fell in love with Clare Grogan back in 1980 when she featured in the film *Gregory's Girl* and when she became lead singer of Glasgow band Altered Images this cemented my adoration for her.

Altered Images opened the set at a less than full Playhouse with Clare having lost none of her bubbly engaging personality. If her voice seemed to struggle slightly at the beginning it became more powerful as she reeled off hit after 1980s hit. *I Could Be Happy*, *See Those Eyes*, *Don't Talk to Me About Love* and the inevitable finale of *Happy Birthday* were a joy for this ageing rocker (actually, I'm the same age as Ms Grogan) but the most powerful song was *Don't Give Up, Girl* – a personal anthem of Grogan's given the personal tragedies she has endured and a tribute to the girl she adopted after six miscarriages of birth.

There was barely time to draw breath before The Christians took their place. Led by Garry Christian – who displayed the humour typical of someone from Merseyside – the band performed *Bottle* and *Ideal World* among others before ending their set with the brilliant cover version of the Isley Brothers *Harvest*

for the World.

After a short break, the lights dimmed and a video message from Midge Ure was presented on a big screen. The former Ultravox singer was promoting his new album *Orchestrated* which is due out in December. However, on Sunday, Midge Ure was backed by his new young group Band Electronica but he reverted to the hits his fans had come along to see. After starting with *Yellow Pearl* – the theme to *Top of the Pops* many years ago – Ure rattled off *The Voice*, *Sleepwalk*, *Dancing with Tears in My Eyes*, *Vienna* and *No Regrets*. The band also performed an impressive version of *Fade to Grey*, a song written by Ure for Steve Strange's *Visage*. With *Love's Great Adventure* being lapped up by a hugely appreciative audience it was a fitting end to a splendid evening.

Edinburgh Reporter Rating ****