

# Reader at ease with audience as she delivers a mighty fine show

Intimacy is a word that pops up in many music reviews, but from the dimly light faces on the balcony of Mareel's auditorium to the front row seats, Eddi Reader's performance on Tuesday made it feel like you were sat in her front room, rather than a concert hall packed to the rafters.

The Scottish songstress spoke of hard-nosed Glaswegians, seaweed wraps and Elvis Pressley in a colourful family history that accompanied her set list.

Not only is Reader a wonderful musician, but a charismatic entertainer.

Flanked by renowned singer-songwriter Boo Hewerdine and accomplished accordion player Alan Kelly, Reader and company played through tracks from her album *Vagabond* with the charming singer adopting in part an Irish accent to *Back The Dogs (Dancing Down Rock)* – a song about her Irish grandmother.

Reader's voice switched between rich and warming to a soaring songbird – with vibrato in the higher registers.

*Baby's Boat* had touches of the Parisienne with Kelly's accordion work, and *The Moon is Mine*, was delivered with plenty of pizzazz and flair from the trio.

Hewerdine is a songwriter I've long admired – *Bell Book and Candle* and *Patience of Angels* are particular favourites.

The combination of Reader and Hewerdine on the latter was magical – delivered with great power and emotion, it was a privilege to hear the two combine so beautifully.

Nods were given to other artistes too – with a fuller arrangement of Declan O'Rourke's tale *Married to the Sea* with a sympathetic guitar accompaniment from Hewerdine.

The gig also saw the audience transported back in time to a house party with Reader's family.

Reader encouraged the crowd to take on the part of party-goers, encouraging her shy mother to give them a tune. They happily obliged, beckoning Reader to sing.

Taking off her mother, she delivered the lines of Pat Boone's *Moon River* perfectly, acting out her mother's mannerisms in between.

Her honey-sweet vocals had me grinning from ear to ear, during *My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose* and infectious refrain of *Charlie is My Darling* was playing though my head long after the performance.

Reader was clearly enjoying herself and so was the audience.

Conscious of folk having to leave to catch the ferry, she crammed as much as she could before 10pm, rather than returning for an encore.

"The ferries are cancelled," joked one bloke as Reader served up her final numbers.

The remaining songs were thrown out to the audience and a stripped



Eddi Reader was in fine voice on Tuesday evening.

Photo: Stephen Gordon

down version of Fairground Attraction's *Perfect* was warmly received.

Sardinian born singer and guitarist Elena Piras opened the evening with a haunting a-capella rendition

of *The Burnin' of Auchendoon*.

The purity of her vocal was greeted with strong applause and Piras had the audience clapping and singing along through her set.

The crowd joined in with her take on *Wild Mountain Thyme* and Piras

left on a high with *A Man You Don't Meet Every Day*.

Reader said she'd have to return to the isles and no doubt there will be many a face on Tuesday lining the next ticket queue when she does

Adam Gues