

Some Enchanted Evening in Winchester by Jane W

What a wonderful weekend! It started with a fab trip to the West End to see Bend It Like Beckham, and ended with a tremendous concert.

So Bend It Like Beckham then...

Don't worry, I'm only kidding. Let's go straight to the main event.

I feel truly blessed having been able to attend so many of Lee's concerts this year. And two in a fortnight! What a treat! I just wish all my friends could be so lucky.

Originally KK and I had planned to go to Winchester together. However, KK had to choose between Winchester and seeing Stephen and Lee at the Pheasantry. She opted for the latter, but, to make sure I wouldn't be going alone she persuaded J to keep me company instead. (I think J is incredibly grateful, KK!)

J and I met at Waterloo and travelled from London together. We met the gang for dinner. It was great to see P, C, MM, the other J and particularly, after such a long absence, S. The other J had already spotted Mr Mead. I took that as a good omen.

The Royal Theatre is charming. It's a proper traditional theatre from the period when architects liked their buildings ornamental. As we settled in to our front row centre seats (courtesy of S) we realised we were going to have one helluva view.

Mason and the band came on to welcome applause. Then, with his customary energy, Lee dashed on to the stage.

I've been trying to find the best way of describing how he looked. I'm going to nick a phrase I heard someone behind me say. He looked like a Greek god. I'll revise that a little - he looked like a modern Apollo. His curls clustered over his forehead, his eyes shone, his brilliant smile turned the stage to sunshine.

And as he approached the front of the stage he looked straight at me with what almost seemed like recognition. I swear he gave me a little nod. Meadmush set in. If you want to know what I was like for the rest of the concert, imagine a jelly with an inane grin.

He didn't launch straight into song but posed in his new tux, joking about being Lee Bond.

He started with 'Where or When', a song that has lately become one of my favourites. I love how his voice soars towards the climax. He followed with 'A Foggy Day in London Town', as normal.

Then he made his usual complimentary comments about the town and the theatre, and remarked on how full the theatre was, pointing up at people in the circles. He thanked the audience for coming and he asked: 'Are you all from Winchester?'

'Noooo!' came the call from the front of the audience.

'This lot aren't.' Lee explained to the rest of the audience. 'The front two rows have come from Scotland and Ireland and Yorkshire and Norway and Holland...'

'And Liverpool' cried S.

'Liverpool? Wow!' And he teased her a few times over the course of the evening.

And as normal I lost track of the song order, but I shall do my utmost.

‘Singing in the Rain’ came quite early on. He seemed to be enjoying himself immensely and laughed as he sang. Oh, and the dancing! He’s really come on. Yes he was still comedic (he actually referred to his ‘comedy dancing’) but some of his moves were quite sophisticated.

He introduced ‘Some Enchanted Evening’ by saying it is one of Andrew Lloyd-Webber’s favourite songs, and spoke briefly about working with the Lord.

He told a cut down version of the story of his first snog as the lead up to ‘I Fall in Love Too Easily’, which he sings beautifully – though I always think it’s a down-beat song to follow such a cheerful intro.

Now can anyone help me? It’s ‘Almost Like Being in Love’ – what film was that used in? Every time I hear Lee sing it I get a half-memory of first hearing it in a film but can’t remember which. I adore Lee’s version though. [Thank you Lin – yep! ‘Brigadoon’ and ‘Groundhog Day’]

Lee finished the first half with ‘Luck Be a Lady’ – a good, light-hearted way to head to interval.

Eek Amanda! Sorry Amanda! Amanda was in fine voice and looked very glamorous in a blue dress I’d not seen before. She told us how much she’s going to miss Lee when he leaves Casualty – awww!

Actually Amanda’s second set was pretty much unforgettable. After ‘Somewhere Over the Rainbow’, she stayed on stage. They did the ‘Get Happy/ Happy Days Are Here Again’ mash up then Lee sang ‘The Way You Look Tonigh’t to Amanda. Another awww!

Next Amanda sang ‘Fly me to the Moon’ to Lee. Lee got silly. Very silly. He pulled faces as Amanda tried to be romantic to him; he danced with her

then pretended to pull a muscle – and all the way though Amanda carried on regardless like the lady she is, playing the straight man to Lee’s clowning superbly. (Think Shirley Bassey on the Morcambe and Wise show – yeah. You’ve got it!)

How Lee can switch from his outrageous tomfoolery to something as beautiful and sorrowful as ‘Bring Him Home’ still amazes me – but he did!

Most of the set was the same as other SEE concerts, but as well as BHH he also gave us ‘Close Every Door’. How I have missed that song!

His finale was again ‘See You In My Dreams’ and, in response to some SERIOUS applause and cheering he came back for ADWD – complete with audience choir – a truly joyful end to a fabulous show!