

Review: AnDa Union @ Rich Mix (London, 11th February 2016)

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No matter how much you try to avoid any hackneyed horse riding comparison or equestrian references, you'll eventually mention them, failing in your efforts. Because, when it comes to Mongolian music, horses and their gaits are so intrinsic to the cadenced tempo that equine movements and music rhythms eventually mirror each other.

That's what inevitably happened at Rich Mix during the London stop-over of AnDa Union's U.K. tour presented by the folk music "loudspeakers" of the Nest Collective. The Mongolian ensemble brought to the British capital its repertoire inspired by the past millennia music heritage of the Central Asian region, the endless open steppes, indigenous legends and nomadic life.

During the last years, the nine-piece band has elaborated and fine-tuned a unique show, which aims to connect the musicians' tradition with their audience from the first to the last note. As a matter of fact, AnDa Union don't make do with dressing their distinctive and colourful *deels* (traditional clothes), intoning the mesmerising *khöömii* (throat singing) technique and playing handcrafted instruments like the *morin huur* (horse-head fiddle), *tobshuur* (two-strings lute) and *maodun chaoer* (flute). They also catch their fans attention narrating stories, tales and funny anecdotes which date back to century or even millennia ago and retrace Inner Mongolia history.

They relate to the rustic and meaningful folk repertoire of their country, singing and playing about the hardy short grass of the North called 'Altargana', which is strong like family ties; the allegoric representation of 'Heemor' (the wind horse) which epitomises good fortune and well-being; and the Mongolian version of the Robin Hood's tale titled 'The Legend of the Swan Brothers'. The more the stories followed one another and rhythms trotted, cantered and galloped, the more resemblance had Rich Mix to a yurt with its large crowd nestled around the stage and absorbed by the unusual show performed by the "fellowship of blood brothers and sisters" (AnDa Union).

Despite the fact that vast majority of the audience had only dreamt about Mongolia before, for one evening, it was like they were strolling through its steppes and being part of its open spaces. That's arguably the most significant merit of AnDa Union musicians, who can epitomise their country's atmospheres, landscapes and horses in a two-hour-long live set.

Source: <http://www.rhythmpassport.com/articles-and-reviews/event-review/review-anda-union-rich-mix-london-11th-february-2016/>