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REVIEWS

It's just classic Kris crossed with class

Kris Kristofferson

The Bridgewater Hall

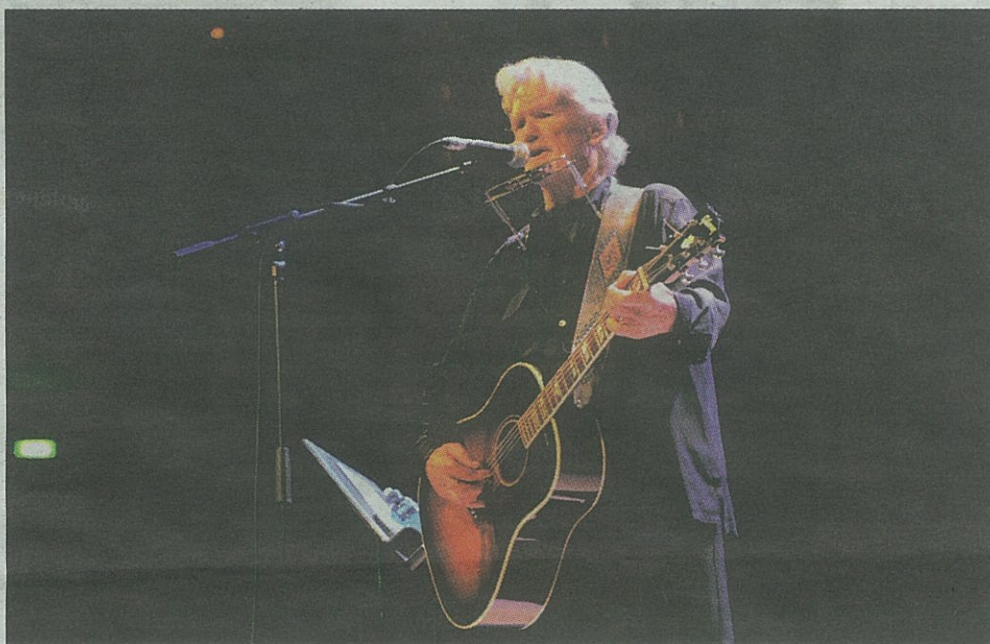
In this age of smoke and mirrors – whereby the artist almost becomes side-lined by dazzling lighting, enormous video screens, backing singers with voices to die for, athletic dancers and pyrotechnics – out steps 74-year-old singer songwriter/actor Kris Kristofferson on to the Bridgewater Hall stage alone.

Armed with an acoustic guitar, a harmonica and a pocket full of heartfelt songs, he manages to leave the lady in front of me in tears on several occasions.

His vocal ability is, by his own admission, not the best in the world and he is a very static performer, but I am with the teary eyed fan all the way, as Kristofferson is a masterful storyteller whose classic song Me and Bobby McGee remains as timeless as ever.

His ad-libs, protests, stories from the past and references to his family and friends add colour to this man's extraordinary life.

He has starred in movies alongside the likes of Barbra Streisand, Jane Fonda and James Coburn you might expect a man who is still caught up in



COUNTRY LEGEND
Kris Kristofferson

the trappings of Tinsel Town. But there is a reason why Kris is not dancing with Babs at Chelsea Clinton's wedding; this engaging performer still has some fight left and this comes across in stunning songs such as Nobody Wins.

The lovable rebel jokes that

George Bush probably sang this to Dick Cheney as they took a shower together!

It's moments like this that make you realise why Kris is adored by UK audiences far more than in the US.

His material covers disappointment, heartache, injustice and love and each one is delivered to the audience minus sentimental window dressing, as the

great man simply bares his soul with so much fragility, it feels like it is the first time he has sung it. Even more recent number, This Old Road, sounds like a classic here.

During Moment Of Forever, Kristofferson sings the line "Was it wonderful for you?" Judging by the standing ovation, I would say it sure was.

Glenn Meads

The Fading Hum

New Century House

TWO estranged brothers, a kooky beekeeper, a farm in transition, an empty beehive and a dead father.

In *The Fading Hum*, Charlotte Essex takes these seemingly disparate ingredients and weaves them into a more encompassing whole, exploring death, guilt, separation and environmental disaster.

It's a big ask for a one hour play, particularly for a new writer, yet Essex pulls it off with remarkable success.

It opens with city boy, Robin (a very likeable Jack Monaghan) returning to the family farm where his older brother Ted (a measured Jay Taylor) still lives.

His visit coincides with the disappearance of Ted's bees and he's called the National Beekeepers Society. Both brothers are surprised when the organisation sends out the beautiful, yet mysterious,

Melissa to help. Melissa (convincingly played by Antonia Kinlay) provides an opportunity for the boys to entertain. Over a few bottles of wine, emotions bubble to the surface and secrets are revealed.

It is a polished production. Laura Keefe's tight direction and Essex's sparkling dialogue keep the show moving at a good pace. And the young cast carry the weight of the emotions expressed surprisingly well in natural and believable performances.

The play has already been shortlisted for the Nick Darke Award – a prize to help a young writer finish a piece of writing related to the environment. It raises some important issues, yet remains entertaining rather than preachy and is never without hope. Showcasing gems like this is what our 24:7 festival is all about and no doubt will provide a springboard to a wider audience soon.

Carmel Thomason

Iolanthe

Buxton Opera House

THE Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company, which blazes into brief life each summer for the International G&S Festival at Buxton, offers the best representation of the 'traditional' approach to the Victorian operettas you are likely to see anywhere.

And Alan Spencer's production of *Iolanthe* is right in the middle of that tradition.

Not unaware of the way the world has changed since 1882 – he lets the audience have one good laugh at the mention

of the word 'fairy' applied to a man and then gets on with it – he eschews trendy modernisation, even when there's the open goal of a character who enters Parliament as half-Liberal and half-Conservative.

Well, almost: the first mention of that idea certainly got its applause, and I did hear 'coalition' mentioned once later on. But it's the pure G&S people want to see at Buxton, and the visual jokes are harmless and straight out of topsy-turvy-dom. It's totally affectionate and as British as can be.

Robert Beale

WEATHER

Midday tomorrow



TOMORROW: After a dry start over much of England, a band of mainly light rain will cross eastwards over all parts for a time. It will then turn brighter from the northwest, but western Scotland will see some showers. Max temp 24C (75F).



TOMORROW: The morning will be cloudy and there will be some occasional light rain or drizzle. It will remain cloudy and rather damp for a time in the afternoon, but it should turn drier and brighter later. It will be a cool day and there will be a fairly brisk westerly breeze. A mainly fine evening. Max temp 19C (66F).

At Home 24hrs to 6pm

	C	F	noon weather
Aberdeen	16	61	showers
Aviemore	14	57	showers
Barrow	18	64	cloudy
Birmingham	19	66	cloudy
Bognor Regis	23	73	sunny
Bournemouth	22	72	cloudy
Bridlington	18	64	cloudy
Bristol	21	70	cloudy
Cardiff	19	66	sunny
Glasgow	20	68	showers
Holyhead	17	63	cloudy
Isle of Man	18	64	cloudy
Jersey	19	66	cloudy
Leeds	21	70	cloudy
Liverpool	18	64	cloudy
London	23	73	cloudy
Rhyl	16	61	cloudy

Abroad

	C	F	
Amsterdam	22	72	fair
Athens	30	86	sunny
Barcelona	27	81	sunny
Benidorm	30	86	sunny
Berlin	26	79	sunny
Corfu	30	86	sunny
Dublin	17	63	cloudy
Faro	29	84	sunny
Lisbon	24	75	sunny
Majorca	31	88	sunny
Miami	33	91	cloudy
New York	24	75	fair
Nice	26	79	sunny
Paris	22	72	cloudy
Rome	27	81	sunny
Toronto	24	75	cloudy
Zurich	26	79	sunny

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Information

Tides: High Water Blackpool Today: 3:55am and 4:16pm. Tomorrow: 4:41am and 5:06pm.

Llandudno Today: 3:26am and 3:48pm. Tomorrow: 4:09am and 4:38pm.

Temperature: 6pm 17C (63F)

Max yesterday: 18C (64F)

Min yesterday: 14C (57F)

Sunshine yesterday: 0.7hrs. Month: 0.7hrs

Rain: 24hrs to 6pm: 0.00ins. Month: 0.00ins

Air pollution: Low

Lights: 9.02pm to 5.28am.

Sun rises: 5.26am. Sets: 9.02pm.

Moon rises: 10.51pm. Sets: 1.54pm.

Last Quarter: 3 August

TOURIST RATES

Australia	1.64 dollars
Bangladesh	102.25 taka
Brazil	2.45 reals
Canada	1.54 dollars
China	9.46 yuan
Czech Republic	27.17 korunas
Denmark	8.46 krone
Egypt	7.89 pounds
European Union	1.14 euro
Hong Kong	11.51 dollars
India	63.90 rupees
Israel	5.32 shekels
Japan	128.65 yen
Korea	1610.00 won
Malaysia	4.65 ringgits
Mexico	17.70 pesos
New Zealand	2.01 dollars
Norway	9.04 krone
Pakistan	125.91 rupees
Philippines	60.90 pesos
Singapore	1.98 dollars
South Africa	10.68 rand
Sri Lanka	165.98 rupees
Sweden	10.77 krona
Switzerland	1.55 francs
Taiwan	43.59 dollars
Thailand	45.06 baht
Turkey	2.23 new lira
United States	1.49 dollars

*Rates for indication purposes only