



Leicestershire

Lyrical blend of four originals

Wednesday, May 26, 2010

A packed Embrace Arts Centre enjoyed a world-class performance by an international jazz group on its way to Ronnie Scott's and a European tour.

From America, superstar bass player Steve Swallow on his five-string acoustic-electric bass guitar – which can act as a second lead guitar when needed – and Adam Nussbaum, who was the most lyrical drummer I have ever heard.

Add, from the UK, Mike Walker on tasteful electric guitar and the genius Gwilym Simcock on piano, and together they wove a tapestry of interlocking solos and themes.

Every number was an original, with all four band members contributing, building to make a sculpted evening's performance.

Space forces me to pick highlights: Simcock's Swallow-inspired You Won't Be Around To See It provided the most intriguing angular theme for the band to work from.

Walker's Laugh Lines was a witty piece, and Nussbaum's drum solo was already superb when he suddenly dropped the volume to a whisper leaving us on tender tenterhooks.

In the second set Walker's Wallender's Last Stand featured Simcock's Argentinean-inflected melodeon over Nussbaum's gorgeous Latin rhythm.

Nussbaum's delicate blues Pretty Baby allowed the audience and band to relax and Swallow's Ladies in Mercedes was the epitome of great soloing.

It also provided another example of Nussbaum's painterly drumming.

If only the band's name matched their sophistication!