

Press Information.....Press Information.....Press Information

Black Swan named as Folk Club of the Year!!

The Black Swan Folk Club in York is proud to announce that it has been selected as “Folk Club of the Year” in the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards 2009.

The BBC’s official announcement explains that the award is “voted for by professional folk musicians to honour the often-lifelong contribution of those who run the venues which provide folk’s lifeblood”.

We are delighted that a panel of hard-working and experienced musicians has chosen us above a host of other venues for this prestigious prize. We hope this reflects the efficient organisation, friendly welcome and great atmosphere of our events. In particular, we are very pleased that our small venue, comfortably full with fifty people in the audience, has taken an award which in the past has usually gone to much larger clubs seating upwards of a hundred or more.

The club’s main organiser, Roland Walls, will be travelling to London for the Awards Ceremony on Monday 2nd February, along with long-serving resident singers Eddie Affleck, Phil Cerny and Stan Graham.

About the Radio 2 Folk Awards

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, designed as an annual celebration of folk music and the people who make it. The main awards, such as Singer of the Year, Musician of the Year Best Band and Best Album are voted for by a team of journalists, festival organisers, agents and promoters, while performers themselves choose the club award.

For more about the background to the awards, go to:

www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/events/folkawards2008/abouttheawards

and for details of previous winners see:

www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/events/folkawards2008/winners (for 2008) or

www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/events/folkawards2008/previouswinners1 (for 2000-2007)

Lifetime Achievement awards are also made each year. This time these go to the American singers James Taylor and Judy Collins. For more about the 2009 awards, including the various shortlists, see:

www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2009/01_january/15/lifetime

Radio 2’s Radcliffe & Maconie Show will be broadcast live from backstage at the awards, followed by extended highlights on Mike Harding’s Radio 2 show on Wednesday 4th February.

About the Black Swan Folk Club

The Black Swan Folk Club has been meeting almost every Thursday evening for over thirty years. There are no surviving records from its early days, when it was largely run by students, but it seems to have been established in the mid 1970s.

The club has always met at, and indeed takes its name from, the Black Swan Inn on Peasholme Green in York city centre. This historic gem of a pub, a listed building with many fine features, makes a delightfully atmospheric setting for live acoustic music.

Although a relatively small venue, the folk club has always aimed to present the very best professional and semi-professional performers. For example, this coming year brings return bookings for two iconic names in Irish and Scottish music, Andy Irvine and Dick Gaughan respectively, while the doyen of English folk singers, Martin Carthy, is also a frequent visitor, most recently selling out two shows in 2008.

The club's musical remit is a broad one, with singer-songwriters, acoustic blues and other styles alongside traditional folk. There is a strong international theme, with frequent guest artists from USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and continental Europe. The club also seeks to nurture new talent, with Young Performer showcase events and other initiatives. Some artists who now fill major concert halls, such as Kate Rusby, sang at the Black Swan in their early days.

Folk music is very much about participation and the Black Swan club holds monthly "open house" Singers Nights when anyone can have a go. These attract anything from a dozen to a score of talented amateur performers and are always thoroughly enjoyable. The club is also the driving force behind the City of York Folk Weekend, a free two day celebration of the healthy local folk music scene, this year scheduled for 30th and 31st May at the Black Swan Inn.

The Folk Club is also involved in this year's York Residents Festival and the very day before the Folk Awards ceremony, 1st February, it presents "Sunday Afternoon Folk" from 2pm at the Black Swan Inn, with half a dozen of the best local musicians doing short sets. Meanwhile the main Thursday night programme has a Singers Night on 22nd January, highly-rated young quartet Crucible on 29th January and top songwriter-guitarist Steve Tilston on 5th February.

In recent years the Folk Club has developed a fruitful relationship with the National Centre for Early Music, on nearby Walmgate, and hosts around ten concerts each year at that larger venue, presenting some of those bigger bands and major solo artists who are simply too popular for the small pub room. The new NCEM season begins in March with Norma Waterson, Martin Carthy & Chris Parkinson, followed by Spiers & Boden.

The club's main organiser since 1987 has been Roland Walls, an enthusiastic listener rather than a performer himself, who turned up in the audience one night in 1982 and got hooked! He is aided by a loose committee of resident singers, musicians and other supporters.

For more about the club and its activities, look at its website and its MySpace page:
www.blackswanfolkclub.org.uk and www.myspace.com/black_swan_folk_club

Roland Walls
17 January 2009