

Salisbury International Arts Festival

Party in The Close

Reviewed by Megs Slark

As we entered the Close armed with three packets of three for a pound sweets and a bottle of sixty six pence lemonade, we were stunned to see a big circus tent and hundreds of people flooding the land of the Close, all eating from stalls and glancing at the stage every few minutes.

As I laid down my picnic blanket right at the front of the close, near the stage, my ears were filled with music from my own school band; Caught in the Crossfire. The brilliant skill was obvious throughout and the blaring volume suited it perfectly. I led down and watched the clouds morph into different shapes for a while. The weather was dry, yet overcast. The band played their final song and exited the stage.

After a twenty minute set change and a lot of persuading of Freya (my guest to the event) we got up to dance. The second band were incredible, they were my favourite band of the night. Kanda Bongo Man mixed bold, brave drumming with brilliant vocal skills and awesome stage presence. We shuffled into a spot right in front of the stage and busted some moves for about an hour, before going back to check on our bags, which some women that were sat near us offered to look after. After finding that they were safe, we got back up and had another dance. We saw some friends and had a quick chat before deciding we needed the loo and rushing off to the (rather posh) porta-loos outside the entrance to the Close.

Upon returning, we noticed some people with funky paint on their faces. We asked them where they got their faces painted and they pointed us in the direction of the circus tent. We went and joined the queue which would have been extremely boring, if it weren't for the street theatre being performed next to the queue. For half an hour, I watched as a man pranced around the space spraying water from his strap-on udders. If not vaguely inappropriate, this sketch was mildly entertaining.

I got a rainbow coloured swirl around my right eye and Freya got a dynamic butterfly. Best of all, it was free! We made our way back to the stage and had a last dance, to Soothsayers and the Red Earth Collective. Their music had quite a slow beat, making it hard to dance to, and seemed to only have the simplest of lyrics, making it my least favourite band of the evening. We took a seat and watched the beautiful display of fireworks, which ended the evening perfectly. The music from Cirque du Soleil accompanied the incredible display and it was a sad moment when the music stopped and the crowd burst into rapturous applause for the evening. Only because it meant the event was officially over. We packed up and wandered out of the Close, stunned by how fabulous the night had been.

We've already vowed we'll go again next year. Not a bad night for £1.66.