

## Deep Blue Sea

### Harpenden R&B Festival 2018



So, here we are at Harpenden Blues Festival and on come Deep Blue Sea. Question. Is this blues?

I am going to say it's great news for the blues. The sources of their songs can be traced back to some form of blues - there's Jagger swagger, a bit of Aretha, Jimi, Dylan and Son House - but also Amy Winehouse, Tedeschi Trucks and a wide range of other influences. These songs take you to new places like the flesh pots of London or the industrial waste land of the north or states of mind like depression and alienation or joy, love and loss.

That's pretty impressive for a vocal, guitar, bass and drum combo. But combo is the right word. They combine to create something stronger than the four, something deeper. And that's what good music is about.

I'm not going to list the songs, this is a review of the live performance so let's pick one moment in one song. Dre's soulful voice breathes life into the words, her hands, never still, add drama and effect to her awesome vocals (it's weird when the songs finish and she speaks so softly in her gentle Californian accent and engaging giggles - a strange contrast).

Iago on guitar is playing a staggering solo which builds and builds. You can feel a tension. Amanda is behind the drum kit, with a gleeful smile belting out the beat harder and harder. Iago throws his hat at Graeme who dodges it and suddenly they seem to double the tempo.

Dre is now pogo-ing (yes, there's a bit of punky attitude about this band) and the whole thing seems about to fall apart as the crescendo increases. They stop. On a pin. Audience goes crazy. Band laughs and look at each other pleased.

I'm stood at the back watching, I know the band is recording this for a live album and video and they are hoping they catch a good performance. They aren't a bunch of session musicians playing the notes - they are stretching things, taking risks, daring to fall on their collective bums. They want to capture that. They have. The audience knows it's a great performance and demand an encore. I have to leave before I get chance to tell the band all is well, but at least I know I can get the album later.

**Paul Gray, All About Blues Music**