

From Paul Cruise    Review of BRIGHT  
MORNING STAR

Here's my impression of the performance, long-winded as usual :



*Though bookended by fresh interpretations of "The First Nowell" and "Auld Lang Syne", Loosely Woven's 'Bright Morning Star' was hardly your standard Christmas fare - but absolutely typical of the group's eclectic tastes. An audience thinned by the heat at Avalon Baptist Peace Church took in a musical travelogue spanning centuries and continents with a faintly ecological theme. The classic Chinese love song "Bu Liao Qing" (given exquisite pathos by Lily Clarke) and an old Jewish lullaby "Durme Durme Mi Angelico" (similarly honoured by Samantha O'Brien) sat well with contemporary hits like Steve Earle's "Galway Girl".*

*Of course, tribute was due to the late Aretha Franklin and the task naturally fell to*

*her avatar Kristy Dickson, who owned Bacharach/David's "I Say A Little Prayer" with a 'jazz trio' of maestro Wayne Richmond on keys, Ralph Mitchell on electric bass and her invincible mum Noni Dickson at the drum kit. Another elegy, Andrew Piper's a cappella "The Unfortunate Tale Of A Country Chicken" featured Samantha, Wayne, Ralph and a hapless Kimberley Crichton (who otherwise acquitted herself splendidly on cello and mandolin) as the ill-fated chook - complete with beak and feathers!*

*With the company trimmed to eighteen members for this show, each voice found its niche and smart arrangements, mostly by Wayne, allowed Sam's flute and Noni's new harp in particular to shine through. However, it was the magnetic Les Flood as a Monroesque vamp in the Eartha Kitt scorcher "Santa Baby" who stole the cream. Warm as it was in that humid hall, the mercury left the tube when she beguiled her*

*three dumbstruck sugar daddies. She's a dab hand at the glockenspiel, too.*

*Once again, a couple of original numbers made the set list, among them a timely revision by Alan Clarke (alas, not the former Hollie) of Bob Dylan's protest era anthem, "The Climate It Is a Changin'":*

*'Come, politicians, and lend me your ears*

*Put the planet ahead of seductive careers'*

*- a request which couldn't be more topical in our age of excess. So as we flock to the local hypermarket and gift emporium, let's remember to value the things that can't be bought or sold, like truth, compassion and the 'bright morning star': Christ himself.*