



[Barb Jungl](#)

Rodewald Suite, **[Liverpool Philharmonic Hall](#)**

Reviewed by **[Denis Joe](#)** November 2012

Once in a while you go to a gig and you realise that it is something special. There are few singers who can match **[Barb Jungl](#)**, and even fewer who can take a song and reinterpret it as well as making it their own.

It takes a love of the material and an intimate appreciation of a song to give it a new lease of life and one thing you are made aware of is that Barb Jungl does really love the songs that she sings. These songs are not primarily 'crowd pleasers'; you'll not find any of the dull diva songs ('I am Your Lady' or that awful song from 'Titanic') on Barb Jungl's set list or her albums.

I saw Barb on her second night in the intimacy of the Rodewald Suite and an ideal setting for a singer who appreciates her audience as much as the material in her set.

Opening with Marc Cohn's '**Walking in Memphis**' (from her album *Walking in the Sun*) it's a great and lively number that leads nicely into '

Sunset To Break Your Heart

' from the new album

Stockport To Memphis

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a beautiful song (dedicated to anyone who had been on a camping holiday to the Isle of Skye). The song reminded me of Joni Mitchell, particularly the quality of the lyric writing that captures a tender image of innocent romance, caught up in the intimacy of the world around the two lovers.

Next up was the classic soul song, originally recorded by Johnny Johnson and the Bandwagon, **Breakin' Down The Walls Of Heartache**

. There is something very brave about taking on such a great and energetic song with just piano accompaniment and it worked. The excellent Simon Wallace (who obviously shares Barb's enthusiasm for the songs) on piano, provided a superb break, whilst Barb never relaxes her rhythm. She does the song greater justice than did Dexy's Midnight Runners, bringing out the genius of the lyric writing.

Christmas songs are not usually my favourite listening. But one of the most beautiful seasonal songs I can think of is from Joni Mitchell's album *Blue*. For me, Mitchell is the songwriter *par excellence*

and

River

is one of her greatest compositions. Barb recorded the song, with the Northampton Royal & Derngate Community Choir, for her new album and it will be released on December 10th as a seasonal single.

Barb reinterprets Mitchell's song of loss into a glorious and optimistic gospel orison, giving it a vision of hope. And even without the choir (she asked the audience to sing along) the treatment given to the song maintains the glory of it. Simon Wallace's playing is tender but never intrudes. Barb Jungr's phrasing presents us with each word and note as if it were a revelation. And, for me, it was. I rate Joni Mitchell as one of the greatest singer/songwriters of all time and I have never heard anyone singing her songs that could match the original. Barb doesn't attempt to, and reinterprets the song, giving it a new meaning and a totally new atmosphere as well as a fresh splendour. In Mitchell's original you get the sensation of the coldness that speaks of desolation, in Barb Jungr's hands it becomes a song of renewal.

