

## Lior | His Majesty's Theatre | ★★★★★

The first concert I went to without my parents was in 2005. Opening for Missy Higgins was this brilliant acoustic artist I'd never heard of called Lior. Standing on stage with nothing but his guitar, the crowd didn't take much notice of him at first, but within seconds of opening his mouth, the entire audience was completely silent. Since that night nearly 20 years ago, I've enjoyed following the musical journey of this genre bending genius and am always excited when he releases new work.



Joined by Perth's Flamingo String Quartet, Israeli-Australian singer songwriter Lior, swept the crowd up with his velvety tones in the cabaret style set up at His Majesty's Theatre. Seated where the orchestra pit usually is, guests arrived with pre-purchased picnic boxes and wine, enthusiastically awaiting his entrance. After two cancelled shows due to Covid, this Perth audience was dying to see him live and so excited for his return.

Lior opened the evening with a few crowd favourites like *Daniel* and *Bedouin Song*. Chatting between pieces, he introduces each work with snippets about who the piece is written for, or what was happening in his life when writing it. I'm not sure if it's the way he shares his thoughts or the rich history behind the texts; Lior makes you feel like as though he's telling the story just to you.

Surrounded by four or so of his guitars on stage, Lior moves between instruments and ensemble changes with grace. Alternating between string quartet accompaniment, guitar or a cappella, his voice caresses the audience with a colourful quality that fuses western with Middle Eastern music.

With a tone that sounds influenced by traditional Indian thumri style singing, he merges ancient with contemporary to create a spine-tingling, breath-taking sound.

Introducing his new album *Animal in Hiding*, Lior was joined by Domini Forster as they performed a few highlights including *Gloria*. Talking about their journey of writing the album, Lior and Domini started collaborating at the end of 2019 not knowing they'd have to finish the album over Zoom. On stage, the musical chemistry of these two is like nothing else. Their stage presence is relaxed and welcoming, with so much respect and artistic adoration for the other – you could feel their enjoyment at being back on stage

performing to a live audience. While I don't usually warm to completely homophonic harmonies, their magical chemistry and Domini's dark, natural vocal quality, paired with the evocative, emotion rich text made this style work so beautifully.

Even though live performance has been back for months, I still found myself sitting with my eyes closed, wanting to soak up and appreciate every ounce of the evening, not wanting it to end. There's something so magical and soul nourishing about being a part of live performance and for me, Lior epitomised that feeling.

Between the perfect pitch, stylistic sensitivities, and his superb ensemble skills, Lior provides a masterclass in musicality.

*Claira Prider*

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