

Leisure

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Guide to Old Leigh Regatta

Page 28



Bill and Ben: Tale

Billy Wright and Benjamin Grosvenor grew up on the same street in Westcliff. They are both young, incredibly talented musicians, and have played major music festivals this year. However for all the similarities their accounts of the summer are very, very different. One features canapes and classical music, the other sleeping in a bush wrapped in tin foil. These are their accounts of the festival experience.

+ Mates stole my clothes + I slept in a ditch +

■ Rock on – Redtrack's Billy Wright, centre, managed to recall some of the band's antics to give a flavour of their time at the Leeds and Reading festivals



BILLY WRIGHT, 22, lead singer of rock band Redtrack

WE began the long journey up to play Leeds with us all still reeling from the party the night before.

I spent an hour of the journey running around a field next to the M4 after the other guys in the band stole my clothes. I felt a lot less worse for wear, although I was very cold.

We got to Leeds. The sun was shining and the atmosphere was buzzing. For this show, we'd asked our friend Hollie-Jay Bowes – formerly of Hollyoaks – to come and sing Pretty Boy with us on stage.

We all met up and wandered about the site. We took to the stage just after we were due to start, because Mitch's guitar pedal broke.

But we still brought the house down, with about 500 people watching

us. After meeting some of the crowd, we collected our free beers and headed back to the hotel.

I turned in early, but Mitch and our producer J partied on behalf of the band, and then some!

After knocking on our door and not sleeping a wink, Mitch locked himself in the van for an hour while the rest of us ate and got ready to leave.

We arrived at Reading all feeling refreshed and very excited about the gig that night. Mitch spent the whole day in the car, trying to find his mind

“ Mitch spent the whole day in the car, trying to find his mind again, but after a pep talk from me was ready

again, but after a pep talk from me about ten minutes before we were due on stage, he was ready for it.

We took to the stage on time, and looked out at about 600 people who had come to watch us.

The set went brilliantly, the crowd were amazing and grew by another 800, and we played the best show of our careers.

Everyone went home that night, but I decided to stay and celebrate.

At about 6am the next morning, I had lost where my tent was, what my name was and all of my mates. So I slept in a bush, wrapped in tin foil.

The perfect end to a perfect weekend.

● Redtrack launch their debut album, *Whole Town's Heart*, at 229 Club, Great Portland Street, London, on September 18, 8pm to 11. pm. There will be coach going from Southend. See Redtrack on Facebook

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Festival shows we're not Poles apart

Page 29



CINEMA: Bittersweet love story Cyrus P30



of two festivals

+ My trailer had a lounge + Fireworks finale



■ Outdoor concert– pianist Benjamin Grosvenor performed at the Serenata Festival

BENJAMIN GROSVENOR, 18, classical pianist

I'VE played in concert halls all over the world and rain has never stopped play.

I was, therefore, apprehensive in the days preceding the Serenata Festival, a three-day outdoor event on the Isle of Purbeck, a beautiful part of the Dorset coast, and Britain's first classical festival in rock-festival format.

The tales from the local paper of the audience dancing under their umbrellas in the field to the music of Katherine Jenkins gave me hope. At least I would have a resilient crowd.

Especially resilient must have been those who chose to camp for the duration, though it must be said that some were in better circumstances than others.

The options ranged from traditional, pitch your own tent on driest patch possible to boutique-style camping – double beds, zebra skins, heating and butlers on call.

As far as the weather was concerned, I turned out to be the one of luckier of the artists involved – as I descended on to

the festival site, Kimmeridge Bay spread beautifully before me, bathed in sunshine.

The first novelty presented to me on arrival was that my dressing room was an Airstream trailer.

It was complete with lounge, kitchen, dining room and, of course, toilet. I can think of a few occasions when my dressing rooms have actually been toilets!

The piano completed its journey from London later than expected, but swift travel across a muddy field to the stage was made possible by an intriguing device, a remote-controlled robotic trolley, one of only three in the UK.

My solo rehearsal was quite disconcerting. One of the problems with playing outdoors is sound projection, so microphones have to be used.

Getting a piano to sound nat-

ural when mic-ed up is a difficult thing to do, and as I played the engineers fiddled.

I was taken from the acoustical world of a country field, where I could barely hear myself, to a very dry theatre, and eventually to the sound-world of a normal concert hall.

No pressure was on me in the slightest and the concert was all fun.

When the orchestra played alone I sat on my cold hands to keep them warm and the odd insects landing at the extremity of the keyboard were the only problems.

Dinner, and then singer Russell Watson followed.

The audience had plenty to do all day long.

There was chamber music, a scratch choir, a talent show, a balloon-man, puppet shows, kids' concerts and a multitude of restaurants, ranging from those that sold good ol fish and chips through to establishments where one could experience dining in its finest sense.

When Mr Watson's set came to a conclusion, dessert canapes, for those who had paid enough, and fireworks ended the evening, literally, with a bang.

“ The piano's travel across a muddy field was made possible by a remote-controlled robotic trolley, one of only three in the UK

SOUNDCHECK

Luck Strikes
Domino State
D'Ukes
Automatic Slim
Digby Fairweather
Page 26-27