

Review

Thomas Oliver & Louis Baker

7.30pm 21.10.15

Venue: Mainstage, Founders

Reviewer: Adrienne Matthews

It was a full house welcome for Wellington based singer/songwriters Thomas Oliver and Louis Baker at Founder's Mainstage. Both successful musicians in their own right, the good friends have recently come together for a series of concerts. With a varied range of ages present in the audience it was clear they have already established a wide and enthusiastic following.

Personable and appearing relaxed, they opened with Oliver's "City Lights" and I was immediately struck by his skill on the weissenborn lap steel guitar. If anyone can make a guitar speak and sound like an orchestra it is this guy. His vocal skills and range, including a fine falsetto, (Barry Gibb eat your heart out) are superb and when he sings softly the sounds have a delicacy that invite the listener to hang onto every word.

Louis Baker is the yang to Oliver's ying. His voice is a rich mixture of soul and blues with a dynamism and versatility that explains the success he has already found overseas. His guitar playing is both dynamic and highly sensitive which helps this pair to create music together that is at times, spell binding.

The highlights for me were the melting harmonies and the musical storytelling, the songs often based on Oliver and Baker's personal experiences. Their sheer musicality shines through at every turn and is particularly evident in their intros and exits which are well thought out and have a rare delicacy.

The evening's performance held plenty of interest with solo numbers such as Oliver's "If I Move to Mars" and Baker's "Rainbow" interspersed with a few great blues numbers "Get Back" and "Take Me To The River" which showed off the vocal power these two are able to generate when required.

My only criticism is that I would have like to have heard Baker's words more clearly but aside from that, this was a concert that showcased some of NZ's finest musical talent.