

It was an early start on Sunday morning. Although Bedworth is about as far north as Lee will come this year, the Sunday trains meant my friend and I had a circuitous journey from up north, but other than having to change in Birmingham and leap a huge gap onto the train it was pretty uneventful.

We met with J and D-of-the-Red-Wedding-Dress at our hotel in Nuneaton and J kindly drove us to our dinner rendezvous with the others. Three of my friends had been on holiday and thoughtfully bought us souvenir pens.

Now our dinner experience was memorable for *not* actually containing a meal. Despite having booked the table before hand, the pub said we'd have to wait 45 mins for food. We would not have time to eat.

J (who assured us she is NOT a Lee fan) kindly bought us all chocolate rabbits. They would have to suffice until after the show.

Bedworth Civic Hall is a wonderful venue for those on the front row as the stage is no higher than a steep step. You feel as though you could reach out and touch the performer (though I imagine that the theatre staff would say something if you tried :-)).

The theatre filled up nicely. I saw a lot of familiar faces.

The lights dimmed, on came the band followed by Himself. He started with a song from *Babes in Arms*. It was a lovely gentle start to the evening, followed by 'A Foggy Day in London Town'. These songs are perfect for Lee's voice and he was in good form but from where I sat the sound mix made the drums a little intrusive at first.

Lee apologised for not having his hair cut for the show. Indeed his curls were wayward but, thanks to the back lighting during the first two songs, they cast a fascinating filigree of shadows over his face – which transfixed my attention.

This was a more serious concert than we are used to. No joking around - and there were Meady Moments as he had the lyrics to the new songs handy on a music stand.

His 'Singing in the Rain' was a highlight for me. He was so suave. D later commented that he was another Gene Kelly. Praise indeed from D.

Actually I checked D's face a few times during the performance. "Enraptured" is the word that springs to mind.

And J (who is not a fan) grinned like a maniac as she watched.

Amanda Henderson was excellent. Dressed in a flowing green gown with a heavily beaded bodice, she looked so sophisticated. She gave us a confident 'At Last' and 'I've Got Rhythm' and Lee gave her a little kiss as she left the stage.

Lee told the story of his first love, Louise, and their snog in the park which lead into 'I Fall in Love too Easily'. And he gave us another beautiful rendition of 'The Way you Look Tonight'.

Now I am going to admit that although I enjoy all these MGM songs, they don't give Lee a lot of scope to show off his range and versatility. We had to wait for 'Feeling Good' before he had a chance to soar. And soar he did! He stood right in front of me to perform it. J (who is not a fan) almost slid off her seat she was so enamoured with him!

Chris Norton (stage name Norton James) was an extra guest. He's someone to watch. Strong voiced and with the sort of stage presence that reminds me of Stephen Rahmin-Hughes. He sang 'De Lovely'. Very enjoyable!

Naturally Lee gave us 'Some Enchanted Evening' (in both senses of the word). He finished the first half with 'Luck Be A Lady'. The half ended

abruptly - we didn't realise that the interval had started until the band left the stage.

D declared herself in love and J (who is not a fan) could barely speak for exciting giggling.

I think he started the second half with 'Ain't that a Kick in the Head'.

Again Lee spoke honestly, though briefly, about the break down in his marriage which led to 'One More for the Road'. It was a shame that the staging didn't allow him to sit close to Michael, the pianist - or allow for a prop of a glass of whisky. Yet Lee acted the song beautifully.

Amanda's second dress was a stunning red gown. Lee said she looked beautiful and indeed she did. She sang 'Over the Rainbow' to the delight of D.

Lee and Amanda also sang an ambitious duet - a mash up of 'Happy Days Are Here Again' and 'Come On Get Happy'. I think that once they have become more practiced it'll be a very special piece.

Lee gave us some contemporary numbers towards the end. His 'Lullaby (Good Night My Angel)' was heartbreaking.

Then he sat right in front of me for 'All of Me'. I am so glad he has kept this in the new concert set. I love it!

He finished with 'I'll See You In My Dreams'. Instead of his usual RP he sings it in an accent that I find utterly charming.

The audience went wild cheering for more and of course he returned for ADWD, complete with singing along from the audience. All the performers came on for the bows and we leaped to our feet (including J - who is not a fan) for an enthusiastic full standing O.

A moderate sized crowd gathered at the stage door. I'm pleased to say that Amanda got a fair amount of attention, which was nice because she really deserved it. I complimented her on her dresses and on 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow'.

J (who is not a fan) got an autograph for a friend at work (who is).

Then as I tried to get a photo of Lee and D, I was all ready to take a picture, (Lee put his arm around D's shoulder and posed in his usual accommodating fashion) but J waved me back towards him. J and some other friends took pictures of the three of us. From what I saw of them they are lovely shots of Lee and D - with me with a dopey grin on his other side.

He was all charm as usual, and in no rush. When all the crowd had got all the pictures/ signatures they wanted he got into his car. With a pip-pip he turned to wave at us all – and nearly hit the car in front! Oops! He braked in time though; no harm done.

So at last, after saying bye bye to lots of friend a few of us headed back to the pub for our much delayed dinner. We were all on a major high.

D says she'd love to come again.

I am looking forward to other trips.

And J is excitedly planning getting to the Clacton concert.

But I have to stress – she is not a fan 😊