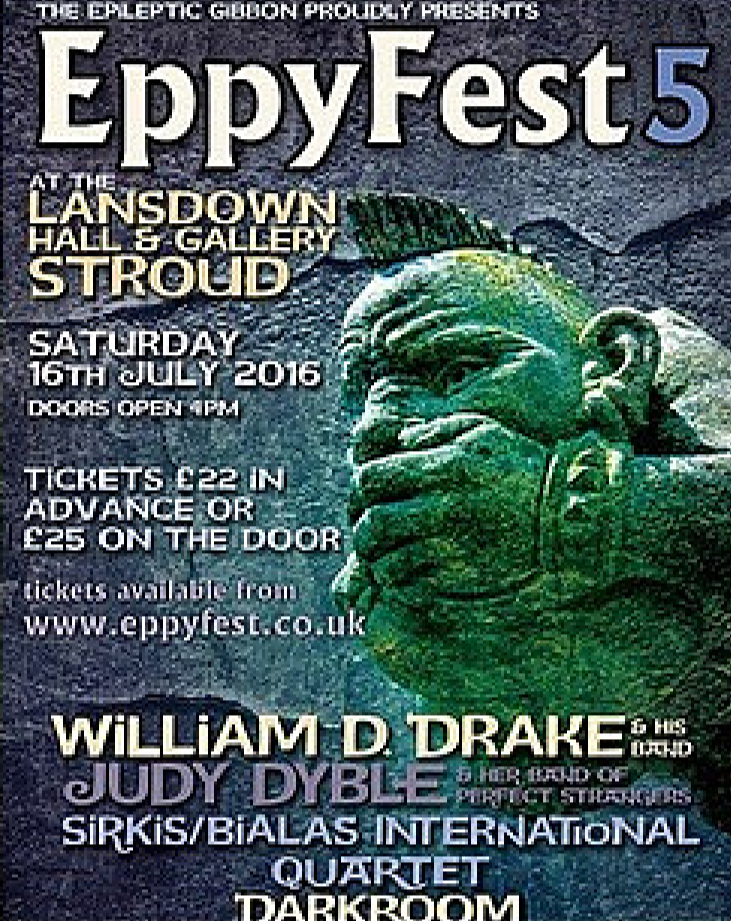




The Progressive Aspect

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[With artist photos by Rebsie Fairholm]

It takes a person of determination, enthusiasm and drive to set up their own festival. To keep it going for five years also requires resilience to repeatedly overcome the unforeseen and continue to take the required leap of faith each year. Such a man is Ian Fairholm who has in EppyFest (named after his Epileptic Gibbon podcast) curated a particularly relaxed event with a welcoming family vibe. This was my first time but, like the larger Summer's End, the atmosphere and friendly environment overrides any previous knowledge of the acts who are actually on the bill and I'm prepared to rely on the judgement of the organisers. All things panning out successfully, I'll certainly be there next year.

The setting in the beautiful Gloucestershire market town of Stroud does EppyFest no harm either, and on a sunny day, like the one enjoyed by this year's festival, it's a lovely place for an afternoon stroll before the evening's entertainment.

Being a one day event makes for a more manageable proposition than some of the longer festivals that take up a whole weekend, and with a 4pm start time it's an unhurried day. The venue, Lansdown Hall (the same one used for the inaugural and, so far, only **Winter's End Festival** in 2010), is ideal with plenty of space for the 50 to 70 in attendance: this is a small event with no apparent intention to grow outside its current parameters - and quite right too. 50 chairs are laid out in the centre of the hall, bar and mixing desk at the back, merchandise tables and ticket desk at the side. Simple!



The event itself is fine enough in itself and coupled with the many meetings with friends old and new it's a lovely day with plenty of time for a chat over a bottle or two of the very tasty **local ale**, but what of the music? Six disparate acts covering a lot of ground, largely edging on acoustic territories but with the scope to give it some welly where required. This is not a prog festival per se, selecting from artists of true quality who produce interesting music that doesn't fall under a specific genre classification. Given the variety on display a massive raising of the headgear is due to sound man extraordinaire James Heathcote as the levels and clarity throughout the evening were superb.

Upcoming shows

- 24/07/16 - **RAMBLIN' MAN FAIR (Event)**
MAIDSTONE at Mote Park
- 24/07/16 - **MOSTLY AUTUMN**
CARDIFF at The Globe
- 24/07/16 - **MULTI STORY**
WOLVERHAMPTON at The Robin 2
- 29/07/16 - **FROST***
BRISTOL at Thekla
- 29/07/16 - **BLUE OYSTER CULT**
LONDON at O2 Forum, Kentish Town
- 29/07/16 - **THE CRAZY WORLD OF ARTHUR BROWN**
- 03/08/16 - **THE ROOM**
SOUTHAMPTON at The Talking Heads
- 04/08/16 - **CAMBRIDGE ROCK FESTIVAL (Event)**
BARTON at Haggis Farm Polo Club
- 04/08/16 - **MULTI STORY**
BARTON at Haggis Farm Polo Club
- 05/08/16 - **A New Day (Event)**
FAVERSHAM at Mount Ephraim Gardens
- 05/08/16 - **CAMBRIDGE ROCK FESTIVAL (Event)**
BARTON at Haggis Farm Polo Club
- 05/08/16 - **THE ROOM**
FAVERSHAM at Mt Ephraim Gardens
- 06/08/16 - **A New Day (Event)**
FAVERSHAM at Mount Ephraim Gardens
- 06/08/16 - **CAMBRIDGE ROCK FESTIVAL (Event)**
BARTON at Haggis Farm Polo Club
- 06/08/16 - **PANDORA'S BOX**
LISBURN at Island Arts Centre
- 07/08/16 - **A New Day (Event)**
FAVERSHAM at Mount Ephraim Gardens
- 07/08/16 - **CAMBRIDGE ROCK FESTIVAL (Event)**
BARTON at Haggis Farm Polo Club
- 07/08/16 - **THE GIFT**
LONDON at The Lexington
- 07/08/16 - **WE ARE KIN**
LONDON at The Lexington
- 07/08/16 - **TIGER MOTH TALES (Peter Jones)**
LONDON at The Lexington
- 07/08/16 - **THE POWER OF 3 (Event)**
LONDON at The Lexington
- 09/08/16 - **CROSS, David [Band]**
LONDON at The Lexington
- 11/08/16 - **GRYPHON**
BANBURY at Cropredy Festival
- 11/08/16 - **CROPREDY FESTIVAL (Event)**
BANBURY at Cropredy Festival
- 12/08/16 - **GRYPHON**
FARNCOMBE at Farncombe Music Club
- 12/08/16 - **CROPREDY FESTIVAL (Event)**
BANBURY at Cropredy Festival

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Third act up and closing the very enjoyable first half were the Sirkis/Bialas International Quartet who took the music in another new direction – jazz-based with added folk and world music influences. Led by renowned Israeli drummer Asaf Sirkis and Polish vocalist Sylwia Bialas, both of whom compose the music, the London-based quartet created an inspirational set of heartfelt, emotional songs and vibrant soloing with Sirkis's off-kilter rhythms lending it an unusual characteristic. With improvisation at the core of a number of the pieces, Sylwia's vocals were often quite extraordinary. Asaf's unorthodox choices, deployed with a skill and precision that demonstrated his technique, were bolstered by a section where he sang in the Konnakol style of traditional Indian vocal percussion. The addition of this "sound singing" and solo sections where electric bassist Kevin Glasgow and keyboardist Tom Hewson could also shine saw the quartet working together beautifully. With another very well received set the first session had given the audience plenty to process over the dinner break!



SIRKIS BIALAS INTERNATIONAL QUARTET SETLIST

Ismael
A Hymn
Vortex
Dreams Dreams
Orgon

Facebook | Bandcamp

Websites – Asif Sirkis | Sylwia Bialas