

# **SOUND OF RUM MUSIC FESTIVAL**

**(Isle of Rum, 11-13 May 2007)**

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BARRY GORDON parties hard on Mull, and says a tearful goodbye to the island's celebrated music festival.

THE ISLE OF RUM, eh? Generally frequented by its important colony of Red Deer and Golden and White-tailed Sea Eagles, this island of the Inner Hebrides is so remote and desolate, you could probably walk round it in a day with nothing more than the chirp of a small bird to disturb you.

Normally, only 22 official residents live on the island (many of them children); however, this quaint, eternally sleepy island gives way to over several hundred music-lovers every May, as folk bands far and wide descend upon the 40-square-mile natural nature reserve to entertain at the Sound of Rum festival...

The Squashy Bag Dance Band then took to the floor (literally) with their own, fiery brand of Celtic mayhem. Featuring Tam the Banjo, fiddler extraordinaire Eilidh Shaw, and Donald "Drummy" Hay...

Session A9, however, brought the first night to a resounding close with their fiddle-dominated hijinks...best exemplified by Frog In Throat. A bit of a folk supergroup given those onstage (Sirens' Rachel Newton on vocals, Innes Watson, formerly of Croft No. 5, on fiddle, and leading Bodhran player, Dochas' Martin O'Neill...

With the marquee tent at almost bursting point, it was easy to see why the Peatbogs have won Best Live Act awards in recent years.

**Saying that, spare a thought for the fragile-as-crystal harp-duo, The Duplets. Regal in their pseudo-Victorian dresses, two of Scotland's most promising clarsach players - Gillian Fleetwood and Fraya Thomsen - showcased the instrument's versatility to spellbinding effect, proving the festival wasn't all about playing loud, fast and hard...**

When you combine the gorgeous setting with high-quality musicianship, unquenchable enthusiasm - and let's not forget the exquisite hospitality - you could almost feel the tinge of sadness in everyone's hearts as they stepped onto the ferry and waved good-bye to a truly wonderful festival that will be fondly remembered for years to come.

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