

HARMONIC

The Arts Club
Dover Street, W1S 4NP

Barry Millington's rating

Description: The opening night of the new classical music club features performances by American soprano Danielle De Niese, young Lithuanian violinist Diana Galvydyte and classical music mixed by a DJ.

Phone: 0207499 8581

Website: www.theartsclub.co.uk

Email: ian@theartsclub.co.uk

Trains: Tube: Green Park

Times: Feb 13, 7pm

Price: £10

MODERN MIX

By Barry Millington, Evening Standard 14.02.08

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Great idea: The new Harmonic club

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What to wear? When to applaud? How to behave? These, we're constantly told, are the insuperable "barriers" to the classical experience for ordinary folk.

The gear sported at the new Harmonic club was barely distinguishable from that usually seen at the Festival Hall - a couple of outre outfits apart. Perhaps the Arts Club in Mayfair is too upmarket to attract the clubbers, though it was certainly a more informal experience than the Wigmore Hall.

The evening began in a splendid oak-panelled bar, with deafening classical music mixed by a "live" DJ, interspersed with what the classical world really understands as live music.

For the star turn - the stunning Danielle De Nisse, heroine of Glyndebourne's Giulio Cesare - we were shepherded into another room.

De Nisse was showcasing her new album of Handel arias on Decca and you could not hope for a more alluring mix of dazzling virtuosity and sexual chemistry - bizarrely carried over into an encore from Messiah.

Part of the idea is to bring in the young floating audience prepared to give classical music a try but happier if they can text friends while its going on.

To be fair, the live events were listened to respectfully. But then these looked like people from the media world.

Maybe the venue isn't quite right. It's a great idea, though, and I hope it takes off. It will never replace the true classical experience, but it can broaden it - and maybe put an end to all that sartorial angst.

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