

Music review: Laibach, SWG3, Glasgow

Published: 11:54 Thursday 07 March 2019



Milan Fras of Laibach PIC: Jure Makovec/AFP/Getty Images)

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If there is one thing to be taken from their 40-year career, it is that Slovenian industrial rock legends Laibach like to subvert expectations. So, in some respects, their decision to cover the songs of The Sound of Music was the most Laibach move they've ever made, even if it was one forced upon them by North Korean protocol.

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As related in the fascinating music documentary Liberation Day, the band were invited to play Pyongyang in 2015 only to find that their Teutonic tendencies were viewed with some suspicion. Most of their material was jettisoned in favour of the culturally acceptable sounds of Rodgers and Hammerstein and this so-wrong-it's-right production was born.

Guest vocalist Marina Martensson could set the heather alight with her soaring, angelic vocals, while the practically subsonic frontman Milan Fras joined in on a suitably craggy Climb Every Mountain, a trippy Do-Re-Mi

and a frankly disturbing Sixteen Going On Seventeen.

The original melodies just about survived their creepy synth rock makeover. The cutesy nursery rhyme spirit of So Long Farewell was juxtaposed with footage of North Korean pomp, while Maria/Korea (as in “how do you solve a problem like...”) was an inspired piece of political pun-ditry.

With the popular entertainment proceedings out the way, they returned to their earnest gothic industrial roots with a second half set of early doomy predictions of Balkan conflict, rounded off with a demonic Sympathy for the Devil, the symphonic The Coming Race from their Iron Sky soundtrack and a truly bonkers cosmic country music ditty just in case anyone was getting too comfortable. - **Fiona Shepherd**

