

Astrid Young and friends move the crowd with music



By Nate Smelle

The Arlington was alive with sound Saturday night as Astrid Young and friends brought their blues-infused rock n' roll to Maynooth. This is Young's second performance of 2015 in the Bancroft area, following up her show at the 4R Music Retreat on Dickey Lake in Gilmour this past February. Warming up the crowd on May 9 was a roster rich in talent featuring the soulful wailings of Alan Saxby, and Andy Mason and a slew of other surprise musical friends.

With the audience eagerly awaiting her first note, Young hit the stage just after 10 p.m. with her bandmates Matt Davies and Matt King sharing duties on guitar and bass and her former iST band member Dan Cornelius sitting in on drums for Young's husband Ray Farrugia who usually plays with the band. Playing a number of songs from her latest album, *One Night at Giant Rock*, Young identified one song called Integratron that is especially personal to her. She originally wanted to call the album Integratron, however its current owners already trademarked the name.

?The song represents many lifetimes of memories which came crashing down on me, one night out in the desert,? said Young.

?This is what the album explores for the most part, karmic relationships that come in and out of our lives. You may think that a chance meeting or friendship is trivial, but in the universal scope of things, that trivial exchange could be the thing that sets you on your life's course. It's like a wind-up toy - you set it down and it goes until it runs into a wall and then it turns and goes another way. Those walls are a more solid metaphor for what I mean: the twists and turns of our everyday lives bring us to these intersections, and we go this way or that way, and we don't really think about why.?

The Integratron itself is a dome-like structure found in the Mojave Desert, near Joshua Tree, California and the ?Giant Rock? Young sings about on the album. Built by George Van Tassel in the early 70s, the Integratron was rumoured to have the capability of cell rejuvenation, anti-gravity and time travel. Van Tassel claimed to have been given the instructions on how to construct the technology by an alien entity. Although he died in 1978 before he was able to finish building it, the strangeness of this structure continues to mystify and inspire those who visit it to this day.

As well as helping to inspire Young to create the album *One Night at Giant Rock*, her experiences in and around the Integratron also encouraged her to pay closer attention to her interactions with others and the world around her.

?I think it's important to give respect to each of our interactions, because you never know where they might take you,? she said.

?Could be your heart's desire, could be a ditch, but it's all relevant. You must embrace each moment, because you really don't know, and ultimately, you always end up where you're supposed to be, no matter how you get there. Sometimes a small distraction may set you back on the path you need to be on. You have to give the universe some credit, and get over the idea that you have some sort of dominion over your life's purpose.?

Young is returning to the 4R Music Retreat in Gilmour this August for the third show in the area this year. To listen to Astrid Young's music visit her website at www.astridyoung.net.