



ABC on stage at the De Montfort Hall.

If you can picture Frank Sinatra, Rudolph Valentino and the London Symphony Orchestra rolled into one, then you will have an inkling of how extraordinary last night's ABC's performance at the De Montfort Hall really was.

After a year of spectacular record successes lead singer and mentor Martin Fry and his three accomplices, have rounded off their meteoric rise to fame and fortune with a string of live dates.

Fry promised a show and the sell-out audience certainly got one. The house lights dimmed and a six-piece string section began a brief overture that would have been more at home at the Royal Albert Hall.

As the classical introduction reached a climax, ABC and a further six musicians took up their positions and exploded into Show Me, the opening track on their debut album, Lexicon of Love.

Spectacular show ends 'meteoric' year

Tall, lean and blond, the familiar frame of Martin Fry bounded on to the stage robed in sequined tuxedo and patent leather shoes. His casual manner and effortless singing captured the audience at once. It was more like Sinatra at Caesar's Palace than the latest teen idol going through his paces.

The set was a virtual straight run-through of the album, except for a brief interlude mid-way, when Fry indulged his crooning fantasies to the full, singing a couple of numbers while seated upon a bar

stool, accompanied only by piano.

Then it was a quick change into gaudy gold-lame suits and back to the big brass sound that has carried ABC to the top, with Fry's crystal clear vocals telling tales of loves found and lost carrying to every corner of the auditorium.

ABC's performance was a fitting end to what has been a breathtaking year for both themselves and their fans.

—Richard Wallace

Water strike threat

A national strike by Britain's 29,000 water workers has taken a step nearer with rejection of a four per cent pay offer by unions at talks with the National Water Council.

The three unions involved want an increase of about 15 per cent, to bring water workers in line with manual workers in the gas and electricity industries. Negotiators will now ask their executives to ballot members on an all-out strike in the New Year.

Mr. Peter Smart, regional organiser for the General and Municipal Workers' union was at yesterday's talks. "The four per cent is an insult and will probably harden the resolve of water workers in Leicestershire to support a strike," he said.

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ianlharris

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