

## **WOMAD**

Written by Fi Poole

A friend once told me that Adelaide was a boring place made up of weirdos. She said that it might look normal – but once you scratch the surface you'll find that most people from the city of churches are screwy.

Well that might be true (sorry – I didn't scratch anyone's surface) but at least once a year Adelaide holds an event that is so well organised that it puts most other festivals on the circuit to shame. Let me prove this to you with three points:

1. Lots of clean toilets
2. Bars with short cues that served cider
3. Seasoned production crew – they'd put this thing on so many times... they had the production nailed.

But the thing that makes WOMAD worth going to – is the programming. You see - I don't know much about world music... and I don't have much intention to learn either – but once a year I'm down for enjoying it. So when checking out acts like Ensemble Shanbehzadeh; Etran Finatawa and Guo Yue...Its like being blindfolded, spun around, and then left standing at the front of stage wondering what the fuck?

When you've got no idea of who's on the bill - there's no pressure to make it to biggest 'The' band of the moment. You're not pissed off because Daft Punk didn't show despite the rumors. There's no decision to be made because both your favorite bands are playing at the same time but on 2 different stages. Womads easier than that. All you need to do when your there is sit on a picnic rug under a tree and wait to be entertained by whoever and whatever is next on stage.

With that in mind – unexpected blow outs included Mariza – this Portuguese / African bird whose voice was so powerful and emotive it made me cry. Billy Cobham, the drummer of choice for all the old jazz cats played solo- just him and his kit for one hour – no stops. – that's nice work for an old man... and If your into Bollywood movies then you would of loved Asha Bhosle – she's sung in over 950 films and is basically a mega star to the Indian people. As the headline act she delivered what was expected, an incredible performance... and I guess because I expected it to be good – I got bored and went searching for something else. It ended up being a strawberry pancake with vanilla ice cream.

The Womad crowd is an interesting thing – 20,000 people all smiling, all chilled, all polite. Kids roaming around, loads of wheelchairs, people of different races, ages, sizes- all loving it. It's like Peter Gabriel uses these global sounds because he has a larger intention in mind - maybe he wants to restore our faith in humanity? Crazy enough it works. As far as festivals go - I'd just resigned myself to the fact that cues, and Aussie flags, and a few knobs in the crowd was unavoidable... I was wrong.