



*Rab Noakes played the Reid Hall as part of the Edinburgh Fringe three years in a row – 2003, 2004 and 2005. On this final performance the sound engineer, Dave Waugh, recorded the proceedings and that's what makes up the Live at The Reid Hall album. It's pretty typical of a solo show at that time and has a mixture of older, and newer, songs.*

### Track list

- 1 Branch
- 2 How can I believe you now?
- 3 Supposed to be
- 4 High and dry
- 5 Fallen ones
- 6 Too old to die
- 7 Spanish Harlem
- 8 Heart of the darkness
- 9 Over & out
- 10 Spin
- 11 I'm so tired
- 12 Gently does it
- 13 Light in my heart
- 14 Take me as I am
- 15 Living in the past
- 16 Somebody counts on me

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Recorded 13 August, 2005 at the Reid Hall, Edinburgh by Dave Waugh

Mastered at CaVa Studios, Glasgow by Geoff Allan and Brian McNeill

Executive producers  
Stephy Pordage and Rab Noakes

All songs by Rab Noakes except High and dry (Radiohead), Spanish Harlem (Leiber, Stoller, Spector), I'm so tired (Lennon, McCartney) and Take me as I am (Boudleaux Bryant).

Design: Richy Lamb, Owned and Operated

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## Review

Julian Davis, 24.08.2004  
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What a civilised way to spend a dry but mild summer Saturday evening, sitting in the Reid Quad with a wee drink admiring the architecture and awaiting entrance to a Rab Noakes concert. Rab had done the Reid Hall last year and was obviously pleased to be back in front of an Edinburgh Fringe audience, bidding us a brief “welcome” before launching into Too old to die from his debut album Did you see the lights? way back in 1970. Here is one of Scotland’s most influential singer/songwriters totally in the spotlight and without the aid of his harmonica playing partner Fraser Speirs whom I believe had been bagged first by Tam White for his show.

For the next hour and a quarter, we were treated to selections from the vast repertoire of Rab’s collection of songs and recordings, even a cover version of a more recent pop tune – Radiohead’s High and Dry. Not all songs end up as they were originally penned. Some like the debut of Daybreaking had metamorphosed from an initial attempt at writing a song on the nearness of war. I could empathise with Rab on his feelings about being a strolling minstrel and being away from his own bed a lot, although it does sometimes give quality thinking time and ideas for new songs do develop. Whilst doing some workshops in East Lothian near Pencaitland, he came up with the idea for Light in my heart, a slow reflective but melodic number. He took us back to the context of his first song for a song recorded on his Rarities Vol.1 album which had been recorded on ¼inch tapes in about 1969, but it gave us the more up tempo ragtime number Pile high.

There were some serious moments, like when he slowed it down for a reflective song called Gently does it which he had written about an old singer Alex Campbell who died some time ago of throat cancer and our thoughts were directed towards the Rolling Stones drummer Charlie Watts who is currently suffering from the same condition.

This was followed by a song he had written in Devon called Running in the Rain, an R&B styled song, and we remembered the floods earlier in the week down in Boscastle. The Red Pump Special album certainly holds special memories for many of the audience as they showed their appreciation of Branch which also appears in Rab’s Varaflames album as well. Don’t forget to cry was especially well received – an old Everley Brothers “B” side, as was the Leiber/Stoller/Spector song Spanish Harlem with its beautifully extended instrumental solo midway – which brought us full circle because the Lights back on reconnects to his first album.

This nearly brought the concert to an end but thunderous applause, whistles and cheers brought Rab back for an encore for which he performed a busker version of The fallen ones. Here was a talented musician doing what he loves best – out on tour performing live – and despite many projects with other artists and his work with Neon, we can but wish it long continues.

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Roots @ The Reid

The lone figure of Rab Noakes quickly steps out of the shadows, into the spotlight, hooks on his vintage acoustic guitar and gets straight down to business. Looking far younger than the fifty-six years he’s been on this planet, Rab has become somewhat of a cult figure within song writing circles. He chooses to perform a selection of “turntable hits” from his impressive back catalogue as well as some worthy covers – notably a gorgeous version of Leiber and Stollers’ ‘Spanish Harlem’. It would be easy to compare Rab’s guitar work to that of 1960s artists such as Jansch and Fred Neil, however it is his own unique vocal and intelligent turn of phrase that have kept many people intrigued for the best part of thirty-five years.