

Intro-week gig highs & lows

Family GoTown, Keynes JCR

By Nat High

Considering that it was the VERY first day of term and that everyone SHOULD have been in the bar asking each other about their A-level results, it really could have gone very horribly wrong for Family Go Town. Luckily it didn't.

Two singles into their career, FGT are carving a happy little niche for themselves as purveyors of Hammond Organ Genius. This is thanks to Kath Ludlow. I think Kath Ludlow is ace. Oh yes. With her static body and flailing arms, she looks like a 'Thunderbird' or 'Stingray' extra, and yet, beneath that 'comedy' exterior, she drives this band. No Kath, no FGT, it's that simple. That said, the rest of the band do chip in with WAY more than

their twopennorth. Jokes? We got 'em. An air of shambolic wonder? It's here. Oh, there's also plenty of room for 'twixt song malarkey. These are not normal people. Lucky, too, really, or else they'd be horribly crap. As they're not, however, we can all breathe easier.

The 3-minute pop gem fused with more energy than is humanly possible is what Family Go Town are about. When their inevitable chart glory appears, rejoice, for the rest of the world will have woken up to nuggets like 'Box', 'Turtle' and 'Can't Stop the Tide'. Fun, energy, a healthy streak of self-deprecating humour and more supports for other bands than anyone else. Oh, and then there's ... enough!

They'll be back. The rest of you should come along next time.

The Popinjays, Eliot JCR

By Fabian G Ironside

The opinions of others should be treated with suspicion, always. An embittered old journalistic warhorse from the battlefields of Rock advised me that I needn't even turn up at the concert to review it. "What about my journalistic integrity?", I icily demanded, a question his cynical war-ravaged mind couldn't comprehend. "You're acting like a first day greenie, son. Wait until you've been in a few fights and show me integrity then", he might as well have said. Another associate seemed to be arguing two diametrically opposed theories on the merits of live performance, simultaneously, and worse, so was I. I got the hell out. It's true that I was preparing my review before the concert, as advised, and I remembered the Oscar Wilde quote: "One always suspects he has a secret

vice... or worse, he hasn't!". The Popinjays would probably be as bad as I expected.

The support band were atrocious. In a moment of journalistic articulation I might say, "They were as bad musically as I am at writing reviews. The right people will know what I mean, the wrong ones will miss the point. Ciao now, baby". I was accused of lack of Teen Spirit during their set, when I complained of losing my seat. "Pussy", sneered a couple of headbangers. "What's a seat?" Anyone who'd headbang to a Popinjays support band would headbang to their mother singing in the bath.

I fell into an impromptu conversation with the Popinjays lead singer before they went on. For a bottle of beer, she said, we would have to name the son of God. Rather than

play accomplice to her blasphemy, I played the wag. With quicksilver wit I pulled a killer reply out of my funny bag which met with a resounding flop. "David Icke", I said, wild-like. "Don't be silly, don't you know? It's Jesus", she said, ignoring my joke. Their music is what Everett True might describe as 'Prepost-foxcore-lo-fi, I wept like I hadn't since I was a child. Or at least the last Pavement gig!'. Greil Marcus or Lester Bangs, educated bastards that they are, might call it 'Post-Alan McGee C86 revivalists, pre-baggysound'. But me, I'd say never mention Sique Sique Sputnik lest we remember Strawberry Switchblade too. You know what they say about stones and greenhouses. We all remember the 80's with a vengeance and we can only grit our teeth and pretend it never happened.

Eskimos and Egypt, Rutherford JCR

By Martin Coward

What a catastrophe. Just as E 'n' E sounds are about to reach orbit and simultaneously fry all our brains they storm off into the distance; the culprit, a glass or two (plastic, of course). Then after we've coaxed them out of early retirement the fire alarm goes off, for a moment it's the perfect accompaniment, then we have to leave, utterly unsatisfied. Me, I'd have rather burnt alive in a frenzy of guitar driven hardcore.

E 'n' E sound is most neatly summed up by their extravert, energetic frontman as "What happens when hardcore meets guitar". Unfortunately, the hybrid is really only a new form of hardcore, not the razor sharp ton of lead sound that the likes of Ministry have developed. And, also unfortunately, the whole enterprise is limited to a few twisted samples, beats and riffs. If you've heard "Welcome to the Future" you've heard it all.

Don't get me wrong, this was a stormer of a gig, but hardcore isn't really varied, is it? The E 'n' E experience is a dance moment: it's when you shut your eyes and lock into the trance like groove. Then it's sublime. And there's a white boy rapping, and not doing it too badly either. So E 'n' E must be doing something right. Tonight is difficult to assess due to aforementioned disasters, but it's plain to see that the Eskimos are powerful and deserved better.

turn of phrase, and there's no reason why you should, is in the epistolary nature of the handwritings within. Mostly by Laurence Remila, Hullabaloo's metamorphic editor, the variety of material bewilders: a chocolate bar survey, superb literary juvenilia, reflections on angst, the films of Yoko Ono, a film of an autopsy, rock 'n' rollin' in Paris' red light district. Other things by other people. Humble in the long shadows cast by Lester Bangs and Jean-Paul Sartre, Remila yet covers all your variegated concerns; which is, I guess, why it's good. Get it for 30p. from 31 Bishop's Way, Canterbury. "Psychotic builds a castle; a neurotic lives in it" - Yoko Ono, 'O Sanity'. "Consider carefully the reviewer" - Ezra Pound, "Mr Nixon".

Exposed

The Cranberries: Exposé, The Penny Theatre, Canterbury

By Martin Coward

It's almost painful at times to see such fragility, such naked emotion. The hesitant and almost mistrusting glances Delores throws into the audience betray a band truly uncertain about the depths which it can display. It's as if they fear their beautiful, raw compositions will be bragged about by the audience, taken away from them and abused by those who listen. It's like a tentative lover, scared their secrets are not wholly safe. This fragile

tension is the over-riding feature of their set tonight. Between-song changes are hurried, intros mumbled, thank yous a shy whisper. Where Delores should ooze sensuality she becomes a dissipated presence by virtue of her hesitant non-communication with the audience. All that is left is that sturning voice and the feelings it evokes. At times The Cranberries are so introspective that their mid-song breaks are lost in their own decay of emotion. Where the break in "Dreams" soars

on vinyl it is shy and faltering tonight. All this makes The Cranberries so much more beautiful and meaningful.

And I'm reminded of four great women, Kristin Hersh (who Delores reminds me of the most tonight), Sinead O'Connor (her voice mostly), Alison Shaw (of The Cranes) and Harriet Wheeler. The Cranberries aren't a hybrid: they're their own entity. But one can't help comparing such a strong rhythm section to that of Throwing Muses, such soft, often indecipherable lyrics to

the scarred, lush sound of The Cranes, such clear guitar to that of The Sundays' Gavurin. But mostly I'm just lost for words. As the earth spins I feel myself wanting to say "Yes I feel that too". The articulation of uncertainty and trepidation is like nothing anyone else has ever achieved.

Tonight's high points are many: perhaps it's the fast paced, gutsy "Not Sorry". Or perhaps it's the number after "Dreams" with its tough, primal drum rhythm and low vocals. Although I think it's

probably the encore which sees an acoustic guitar alone with Delores' voice followed by a fuzzed up race through "Liar". I leave knowing that there are still those who can strip away their flesh to show their skeletons; those who don't need to hide their inadequacies and fears in the bluster and grunge of metal. Tonight was a fragile and truly precious moment.

Nevermind

Reading Festival 30th August

By Neil Harrison

Still reeling from the brilliance of Mudhoney and the indifference of Nick Cave, I lined up with a mere 40,000 others to await the phenomenon that is Nirvana. Coated to the knees in mud and soaked to the bone, I really needed something to warm my cockles (as Frankie would have said), and was I disappointed? Yes...

Catapulted from tentative fan to 'Teen'-hype sceptic last year, I was fearful of the worst. We do hate it when our friends become successful, so I could only hope that commercial recognition had tainted a most promising act. Playing as a way of life is a totally different kettle of fish to playing for real money and to say that nothing short of an A-bomb

could have lifted the event is not an exaggeration. It's a sad, sad sight to see a band going through the motions, dollar signs glinting in their eyes, still riding on the crest of a year old album.

Musically, the performance was competent enough, ploughing it's way through the three singles, a large chunk of 'Nevermind' and a liberal splashing from 'Bleach'; condemned to something more like 'Tepid Urine' in this case. One false start and a totally incompetent rendition of 'Teen Spirit' almost made me want to get up on stage and give Kurt a push; instead, I popped off for a coffee ("50p!! You must be joking..."). A short set, and a more than half-reasonable Greatest Hits selection was followed by a lengthy interval and an encore

from hell.

The band returned on stage just as the sympathy shouts of "More!" had died down and unleashed the utter dregs of their repertoire. Did the encore really last longer than the main set, or was it just my recurring nightmare? To cap it all, we were treated to 10 minutes of feedback, a rendition of 'The Star Spangled Banner' and the destruction of instruments; pur-lease... do Nirvana really have to plagiarise Hendrix and Townsend to make a musical statement? Saturday night had already seen the Manic Street Preachers bashing-up guitars, as is borne witness by a security guard, 16 stitches and a possible law suit.

Maybe I'm going a little over the top; Nirvana were good for 40 minutes and recent go-

ing-ons on the family front and sense of occasion may have contributed to an impotent performance by the Seattle trio. There was no raw power in a show that was as threatening as a Notts County striker, and which, at the blink of an eye, could quite easily have been Bon Jovi rather than the crown princes of hardcore. "Nevermind", eh!?



Nirvana - Tepid?

Review

By Hamish Ironside

Hullabaloo Magazine

Hearing Madonna's "Erotica" for the first time, digging Ezra Pound's "Mr Nixon" for epigrams and simultaneously burdened with the desire to express the merits of Hullabaloo magazine for all you crazy Kred addicts, I'm forced to admit once again that life is absurd. In the face of this banal revelation, Hullabaloo suffers from my sudden urge to call it "bijou". It's 30p, right? What can you get in the library basement for 30p these days? "That's not the point", you say. That's exactly the point. Thank you. Getting more specific, Hullabaloo opens with the face of Yoko Ono, black and orange. It closes with a crap cartoon. The meat of the sandwich, if you'll excuse the nauseating