

Autons @ Pressure Point

Contributed by Elz Russell
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On Sunday night, I saw - finally - a band who I've been waiting to see for two years now. And while the promoter had done a pisspoor job (I'm not kidding - the audience never went higher than seven people in a 120-capacity venue), it was one of the best shows I've ever been to. I wish Autons could play Brighton every weekend.

I'm fortunate enough to be friends with the frontman's wife, DJ Spangly (whose birthday it was), so an enjoyable forty-five minutes were spent in the venue's bar with her and two out of three members of the band. We then headed upstairs to the venue, only to be shocked by the sheer emptiness of the place. The venue staff hadn't even bothered to open the upstairs bar, so we sat down in a booth vacated by the first support band and tried to enjoy ourselves.

Kick! are a very, very young band who seem to be jumping onto the "nu-rave" bandwagon, whatever that is. That's not to say they aren't good; they have a lot of potential, even though no particular song stood out to me as being a possible favourite. However, the lead singer's voice began to grate very quickly, and it was a blissful relief when he ditched his guitar and climbed behind the drum kit for two songs. When they finished their set, they dragged their equipment off and left, because they had exams the next day. Like I said, very young.

The next support act, EJ Norman, was actually rather brilliant. Her bassist looked like he'd fallen directly out of Mick Jagger and EJ herself has the most stunning Alison Moyet-esque vocals (with just a hint of Kate Bush). The song in the set that DJ Spangly and I most enjoyed, 'Genevieve', is sadly not on their Myspace, otherwise I'd recommend you all go and listen to it right now. That doesn't mean you shouldn't check out the rest of the songs on the player, especially if you like electronica that sounds like it was stolen straight from the eighties. I think she played for around half an hour, and then at least was nice enough to stick around to bulk out the pitiful audience for Autons' set.

After EJ's set was done, DJ Spangly and I returned to the downstairs bar to buy drinks for everyone and fuel the drunken dancing that was to come. Oddly enough, it was when I was carrying a Coke for David Auton that the security guard decided to ID me, not when I was drinking in the bar previously. We then returned to the venue and positioned ourselves directly in front of the stage. Yes, we were the only two there. No, I don't think either of us cared.

Autons opened with 'The Devil in Me', the opening track of their debut album (released in America and the UK on June 4th), Short Term Manifesto. I'd never heard it before and I was unfortunately far too drunk to remember how they introduced it, but needless to say, it was brilliant. As the audience was so small, the band decided they would dedicate a song to everyone there. Current single 'It's A Strange Thing' was dedicated to me, to much drunken "wooo!"-ing from DJ Spangly and I. More "wooo!"-ing followed her birthday dedication. They then played the first song I ever heard by Autons, 'Different Eyes' (which is included on the debut album, to my delight). Even more exciting was that Autons are one of those bands that keep their studio work as similar to the live show as possible, so what you hear on that CD is exactly what you get live. By the last few songs, everyone came up and joined us for - you guessed it - more drunken dancing to first single 'Snakes' and album closer 'Words She Said'. Oddly enough, that made it feel even less like a gig than it had when it was only DJ Spangly and I up there.

There was a brief quest to steal a poster, but alas, the venue staff had already taken down the only one I was likely to peel off the wall without ripping into several pieces. The evening ended with some impromptu (drunken) roadie-ing, if that's a word. Not, as DJ Spangly would have had everyone believe, drunken groupie-ing.

By the way, the album's fantastic.

Setlist:

The Devil in Me
Spartacus
It's A Strange Thing
Different Eyes
Recondition
Sleepwalker
Snakes
Words She Said