

SXSW 2008 - Day 2

Contributed by Brandace Chatman
Monday, 17 March 2008

The days are short and the nights are long….

Today I got any early start and actually made it downtown and out of traffic by noon. Badge in hand I made my way to The Mohawk for The Rhapsody Rocks Austin showcase. At this showcase you had choice of complimentary Blue Moon Beer or Coors. The venue wasn't mad packed on the count it was still early, but there were plenty of people at the front of the stage to check out British Sea Power. They're a four man indie pop band from Brighton, England whose first single, Waving Flags, has been in heavy rotation even before they were announced on the SXSW lineup. I guess all the hype worked, because at the first strum of their guitars the venue went from semi vacant to shoulder to shoulder. Their sweeping guitar pop fit well with the cool weather. After their set I made my way over to the British Embassy Bar B Que.

The British BBQ is by far my favorite event of SXSW. I went last year and had a blast, so there was no way I was going to miss it. Once in you could either get in the long line for the free bbq or get in the even longer line for the free drinks. Seeing as I hadn't eaten I chose the grub. Belly full I wandered to the stage to check out The Rascals. Now NME has labeled them the band of 2008, so I was expecting a lot. After their first song, I was amazed. The sound is this dark and it has this pseudo psychedelic - 60's cult noir vibe. The set was tight and the crowd was pleased. They are my new favorite band, hands down. Throughout the festival they will play show after show, but you can't make any stone promises to see the same band twice. It never works out that way, no matter how much you love them.

On my way to meet up with some friends I stopped back by the Rhapsody party to check out Clipse. After being a no show at SXSW a couple of years ago and disputes with their label I never thought Clipse would hit this festival circuit. Once they hit the stage they were greeted with mad applause and a heavy smell of spliff in the air. They played the favorites, Grinding and What Happened To That Boy, and some new ones of their bootleg album that you could get outside the venue. We don't need no stinkin' label.

The sun was going down and everyone was going into party mode. It would all start at the Fader Fort. There Thurston Moore would take the stage with his band and play a couple of songs for a crazed crowd. The peak of his set came when he sang I'm Not A Young Man Anymore. The words and the performance couldn't have been more contradictory to the songs title. He trashed around and screamed like a mad man, a twenty year old mad man. He even made his way into the crowd via cannon ball. Even is a sea of arms and hands he never missed a note. After his set Moby took the stage with the legendary Lou Reed, who isn't a young man anymore (and I say this with all the respect in the world), and sang Walk On The Wild Side. Maybe it was the free booze or maybe the heat exhaustion, but I noticed many people becoming very emotional. The Fader Fort had swelled to capacity for the next act. N.E.R.D was going to play and every girl in the audience made her way to the front, shamefully I was one of them. After setting up loads of keyboards and drums N.E.R.D took the stage 45 minutes later. It was worth the wait. As they played songs from their new album and crowd favorites like Lapdance and Rockstar, I noticed an all too familiar smell….think back to the Clipse show. The show was full overtly sexy and a lot of fun. You can check it out on Youtube.com. As much as I wanted to stay till the end, I had to make my way to the Dim Mak party.

This party was like a secret stealth covert mission. Sansa Playground had arranged for shuttles and pedicabs to take party goers to the secret location, but you had to meet at a secret location to catch a ride. Against my will some friends and I took the pedicabs. About 15 minutes later we arrived at the Elks Lodge. I really thought it was a joke until I saw all the cars and heard the music. Once in it was a maze of activities and partying. Downstairs were live bands, 21, two pools, and an open bar. Upstairs had a mechanical bull, an open bar, and a dance floor. Music was provided by DJ MOMJEANS (aka Danny Masterson) and Steve Aoki (the mastermind behind Dim Mak records). It turned out that tonight was DJ MOMJEANS birthday, and he was ultimately surprised with a cake and all the trimmings. After the birthday song was sung the party went into overdrive. DJ Steve Aoki Kid Millionaire made way to the tables full throttle. After a couple of Red Bulls and vodkas I joined in. If you've never seen him live then you're beyond missing out. After having some cake and a couple more drinks (yeah, it was a good idea at the time) I had to say goodbye and made my exit. Next stop the Playboy party.

My main reason for attending the Playboy “Rock the Rabbit” party was to see Justice. I had seen them a couple of weeks earlier and vowed to see them again. The Playboy list was locked, if you weren't on it you weren't getting in. I tried not to make eye contact with the mass of people waiting to get in, no way bad karma was going to mess up my chances of seeing them. Before walking up to the show I had to stop by the bar first. It was a bit more taxing than one would think. The party was held in a huge warehouse that was filled with smoke and red lights. There were even the girls walking around in the Playboy Bunny outfits, but they didn't have drink trays. You had to go to the bar for that. The free beverage was…I really couldn't tell you what it was but I do remember it having Jack Daniels in it, but I can tell you that Moby is a very nice guy. After getting my drink I followed the music and

found Justice on a small stage. Before they started there were a few technical difficulties, but once sorted out it was like they never happened. There was sweat, dancing, photographers, and more smoke. After playing DVNO and We Are Your Friends a few people bailed, but the true partiers kept on partying. After another drink I noticed that the Bunnies were on the stage dancing, but then there were full on plush bunny costumes bouncing on the stage. That's when I decided to put the cup down and call it a night.

If this keeps up SXSW will stand for South By So Wasted.

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