

## live reviews

**The Stunt Kites / The Lovers /  
Jarvis and Saskia Cocker /  
Richard Hawley**
**@ Memorial Hall**

Anyone seeking an object example of the diversity that is Sheffield's music scene would have done worse than witnessing this truly bizarre night at a sold out Memorial Hall.

First on the bill were French duo The Lovers who have collaborated with electro-futurists I Monster recently. Christ knows what the late arrivals from the bar would have made of songs like *Feminine / Masculine* which goes on to list words according to their gender and *I Like To French Kiss* with the chorus 'whether sober or pissed, I like to French kiss'. Certainly no-one expected the female vocalist to remove her dress half way through for no apparent reason.

If Sheffield in 1978 was unique for eschewing the punk hegemony in favour of keyboards then the Stunt Kites deserve credit for choosing a different path altogether. However, the social climate of unrest in late seventies Britain may have made for an interesting historical period but isn't necessarily something you'd want to revisit again via the Stunt Kites dour lyrics that sometimes veered into the unacceptable for this day and age, 'a bitch on heat, you're just a bitch on heat' all delivered in Allen's high pitched vocal.

Whilst there's no doubt the Stunt Kites can play and still have a following 25 years on, the audience's main interest was sparked by the arrival of guests Saskia, Jarvis Cocker and Richard Hawley onstage. Whereas Allen struggled to engage the audience between songs as guitarist Nigel Renshaw continued to tape down the keyboard chord changes in a process which soon tiresome, Hawley proved a natural presence performing two songs by Lee Hazlewood and Sanford Clarke interspersed with genuinely funny stories of his time at Firth Park School. Jarvis Cocker introduced *Rock On* as a tribute to David Essex and Saskia performed a track from *The Wicker Man*.

The divide in the audience's motives for being there became apparent when the guests left the stage for the last time, prompting some to leave before the Stunt Kites had finished their set, although in all fairness, the remainder of the audience provided a standing ovation at the end.

Sean O'Keefe

**I Am Kloot / Kings Have Long  
Arms / Aiden Smith**
**@ The Leadmill**

John Branwell pauses midset and asks, dryly, if we're enjoying all these 'songs about death and misery'? He shouldn't worry. We are.

I Am Kloot are a three-piece who, a couple of years ago, got lumped in with the specious 'new acoustic movement', as if merely having an acoustic guitar on stage was enough to relegate them to the ranks of non-specifically angst, whingng, directionless toss designed to make uninteresting pasty faced, floppy fringed young men with nothing much more to say than 'um, I'm a bit gloomy, me' look moody, troubled and interesting. The point is with IAK is that their songs are so sharp, melodic and bitersweet that they can affect a deeply pleasurable dichotomy of uplifting melancholy that no-one from Manchester since The Smiths has produced. Perhaps the reason they're not bigger is that, unlike The Smiths, all the drama is in the lyrics, there's no totem like Morrissey for fans to project themselves on. John Branwell is a small man with the most beautifully pained old/young face but the band, with drummer, Andy Hargreaves, taking the central position on the

lip of the stage flanked by bassist Pete Jobson and Branwell, are visually almost heroically prosaic.

Not to say there's not the power, three songs in and they've already demolished the schindie possibilities of such a line-up with a casual drive and precision. They don't rock as such; they swing from the hips with a certain tethered rage. As they shake hands with each other between songs it's a visual democracy in action.

Tonight's set pulls in material equally from *The New* (storming) and the album. I can remember a set with a few lows, such as the consistency of the 86 TVs from the first single has never sounded better, while *From Favourite Sky* almost reaches it.

A band to love but not to worship. Support comes from Manc exile, Adrian Flanagan's *Kings Have Long Arms*. Who are about as far from Kloot as you can get. The only thing they share is a grasp of taking the stage and not giving it back until they're finished. While electroclash or whatever cobbles they're calling it this month goes to town on blank looking haircuts and half-remembered 80s clichés, Flanagan is funny as fuck, throwing half-arsed Beckham free-kicks around the stage, shaking the audience's hands and leading his great oddball electro chants. Ralph (of *Ralphettes* fame) makes his Sheffield KHLA debut and waves to friends in the audience much like a kiddie acknowledging his Mum at a school nativity play. KHLA, let it be stressed are fun. And with insanely catchy tunes like 'Who Stole My Crackerjack Pencil?' to go along with it means there's no shame in smiling tonight.

words: Jack Tractor  
pictures: David McDade

**Ormondroyd / Repomen /  
Jojo McNeil**
**@ The Casbah**

Jojo McNeil is probably best described as charmingly aware of his own shortcomings, and a better comedian than guitarist. Some flickerings of songwriting talent let down by a lack of stamina, but likeable enough to be entertaining.

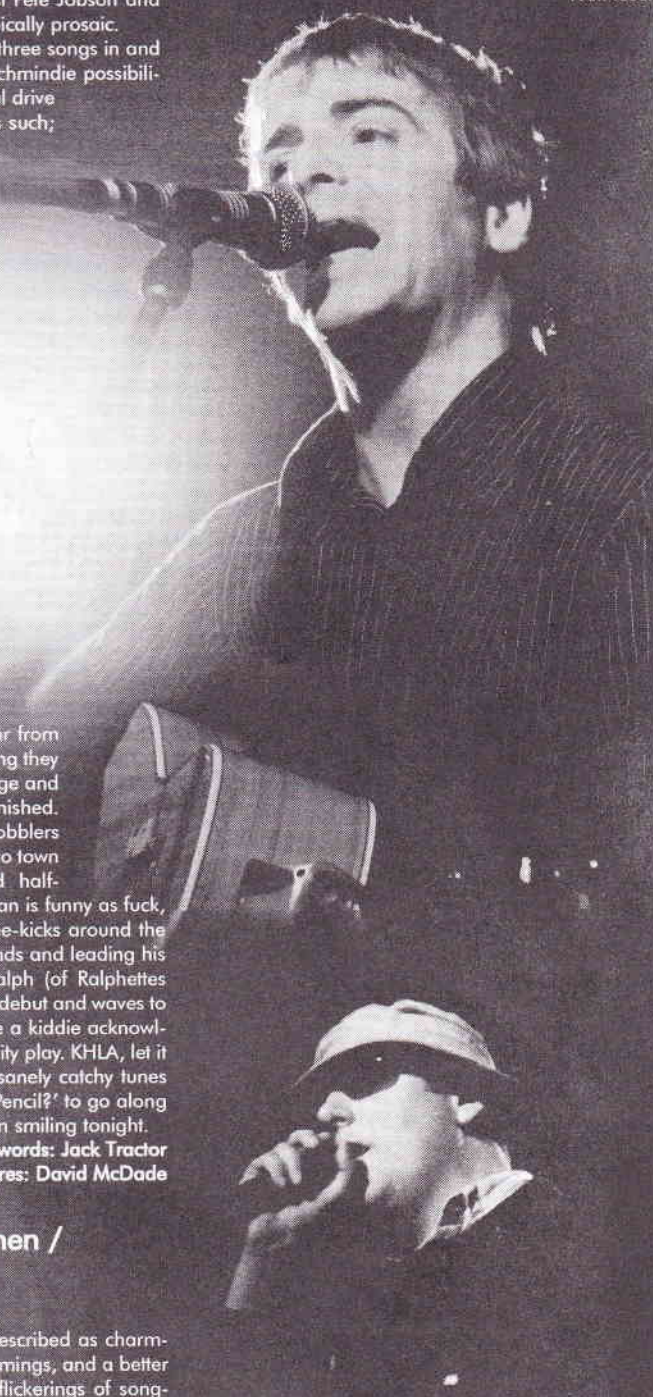
As for The Repomen - obviously Alex Cox fans, and quoting influences including Pixies and Violent Femmes - I had high hopes. Which, to be fair, is probably why I was as disappointed as I was. But - if you're going to cite such seminal sources, you'd better deliver something distinctive.

Although competent and enthusiastic, they're also uninspiring. And no amount of contorting in a confined space can make up for a sound barely rising above typically bland, 'seen-a-million-others-like-'em', terminal support band.

There were glimpses of potential, like when bassist, Simon Tiller stepped to the mic for 'Lauren Bacall', threatening for a few brief moments to convince us they have it in them to craft a memorable tune. Alas, the rest of the set teetered on the brink of tedious.

I think the boys need to go home, listen to their old LP's all over again, and get inspired. On the strength of this showing, The Repomen aren't leaving the car park.

I Am Kloot



Kings Have Long Arms

Bringing me to the revelation of the evening: Ormondroyd. One of the youngest looking bands I've seen on stage in a while (if I was behind the bar I'd have asked for ID), the 'droyd are by turns haunting, quirky and downright rockin', displaying cohesion and a grasp of songcraft rare in a band so obviously newborn. They also seemed to boast influences I'd have thought beyond their years, putting me in mind of melodic noise makers such as Spacemen3, or the more tuneful moments of MBV, without sounding too much like anyone in particular. And not just because they have a clarinet player. Chatting briefly to affable singer, Ollie, afterwards, I began to understand. I said: "MBV"; he said: "Mogwai". I mentioned Spacemen3, he nodded appreciatively, adding: "I LOVE Spiritualised." It matters not.

Wherever they got their inspiration, Ormondroyd are out there somewhere, making beautiful noise.

Simon Makin