



Indie - Live



FOO FIGHTERS
Kings College, London

At last the post Nirvana generation gets a night out. Who'd have thought that so many hacks could get into one place at once. How many similes could have been saved from torture by a well placed bomb tonight. Damn. Half of the audience, look like they haven't got to university yet. Come to think of it, some of the crowd don't look like they've even got to secondary school yet. There are T shirts being worn that are older than some of the kids in the moshpit (thats you,

bloke in *The Clash* tour shirt...) but we're all here for the same reason- the Nirvana connection, because Foo Fighters is the band led by Dave Grohl, drummer of the last great rock trio.

On the upcoming Foo Fighters album Grohl plays all the instruments, and rather well too, but on stage Grohl is now up front, singing and playing guitar, with support from Pat Smear, second guitar in Nirvana's late touring incarnation and drums and bass from William Goldsmith and Nate Mandell, both of still extant SubPop act Sunny Day Real Estate. I dont envy the drummer. Playing behind Dave Grohl must be like coming to work at some third division football team, and finding the new boss is Diego Maradona and he wants to see you go through your tricks. Perhaps he was the only man brave enough to audition Whatever.

They're good. This is a real working band, getting experience the right way, touring with underground legend (read, has a lot of famous mates, but not much success himself.) Mike Watt in the States and surely impressing people with this excellent set of pure pop punk rock.

The opener *This is a Call* , the first single, can only have been heard by a handful of people here but it's greeted like an old favourite. Come to think of it, it sounds like an old favourite, like all the best songs do. Amazingly the set keeps up the same

standard. especially the McCartney gone punk *For all the Cows* and the neatly revolving *Good Grief*. *Big Me* could have been the Lemonheads (in the week they were any good). *X Static* is based on a drone and delightfully pre-Grunge. Foo Fighters are certainly reminiscent of the pop side of their leader's former band, but its also obvious that Grohl didnt spend his time behind the kit just hearing the sound of his own drums. These are well structured and imaginatively melodic songs. He's got a voice too, a bark like a friendlier Cobain if you want, which puts some bite into the sound.

And he knows why people are there, and is prepared to face up to it with some wit viz his first words 'none of the songs are about Kurt...I wouldn't even embarrass him like that...this songs about ...nothing at all.' Right. So now we know . We also know that we'll be back again because Foo Fighters are just one hell of a good band. See you at Reading.

JIMMY BLACKBURN

PAVEMENT/ DEUS/ BLUMFELD
Brixton Academy

Incredible! Who'd have ever thought that arch shamblers Pavement, once mainly known for getting one of their tunes covered by the Wedding Present, a kind of fame that the average government minister would balk at these days, would end up filling the joint at one of the capitals biggest venues. With a reportedly lucra-





tive trip round North America on this years Lollapalooza to follow and every major label in the world still sniffing around. This is now a band who can call their own shots, and the sight of a few thousand people ,singing along with every twisted and unlikely word, is strangely heartening. Not a sign of whiffy so-called Brit Pop in sight. Which is some of the problem with the first part of the evenings bill. Hamburg's fantastic Blumfeld do their bit for pan-European unity by being as fantastic as usual (see elsewhere for full review of their show a couple of days previous.) but unattractive Belgians Deus, makers of a promising if worryingly wacky album last year, do their level best to destroy the warm Euro feelings circulating in the room. How much do I hate you, bass player in a black vest and harem pants. You deserve to get beaten up by ugly, cherry flavoured beery men as you pluck your naff looking, chest height, Level 42, spawn of the devil bass runs (I take it you don't like this man then ? - Ed). Buy the bloody thing or leave the shop now. And as for the violinist... Gah! You're meant to be inaudible, as you hack away on Paganini's satanic tool. Pulp worked this out years ago. Appearance first, sound optional. Did the Velvet Underground lie to us all these years (answer : yes.) Did we grow out of it? (Answer : yes, but not in Antwerp, Belgium.) And as for the rest of these sad Zappa loving Flemings, thanks for destroying the good bits of a promising record with your heavy handed, quirky (spit!) , annoyingly 'humor-



ous' show. Here's a question. Name a famous Belgian. No, make that name a famous Belgian comedian. Ha! Gotcha there!...

But all this Eurorrificness is forgotten when the truly wonderful Pavement make a showing. People are smiling, babies are being made, the vibe of love and peace is in the air. Even journalists are dancing. How five fairly nondescript looking Americans should have come up with the most appealing sound of the moment is something of a mystery. This is after all, a band whose members don't even live in the same state, let alone town, and whose records are clad in the shabbiest sleeves since the Fall signed off the dole, but who have twisted various strands of alternative and native American music into the finest body of work put together by a US rock band since Husker Du. As you can tell, I like Pavement quite a lot, not least for the wilfulness that makes their music sound initially unfinished and yet, leaves you discovering new depths long after better made, more fashionable stuff passes its sell by date...like say, the Smashing Pumpkins who got a good kicking on Pavements best loved tune , the slack country number *Range Life*. In fact tonight it's AC/DC who get a mention bizarrely enough, but that's only one highlight of a set played by a band at the height of their powers. Mainly based around their last two albums, and first top 20 hits, *Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain* and this years *Wowee Zowee* the top tunes just keep on coming from semi-hit *Cut Your Hair* to *Best Friends Arm*, the singa-

long knockabout *AT & T* and this years C & W tinged favourite *Father to a sister of thought*. Hell, they're just lovely, and when the set ends up with the bands musical handyman, and centre of their soul Bob Nastanovich wearing a schwa (faceless alien) mask and yelling backing vocals (all with a bit of curly hair poking out in the collar area) as half the crowd giggles you just have to wonder if live music gets any better than this. All the time undisputed band leader and handsome WASP prince of American alternative rock Stephen Malkmus looks on, indulgent and self possessed, like he's brought some new and exotic animal back to a gilded medieval court. And thats the appeal, the wild and cerebral in the same unit. As the encore sees Malkmus on drums while both sticksmen reel about the stage yelling the Nirvanaesque *Flux=Rad*, Steve West in a firemans hat and rescue workers luminous cape, the whole thing seems the most logical thing imaginable. Absolutely fucking wonderful.

JIMMY BLACKBURN

TEENAGE FANCLUB/ ROYAL TRUX
Empire, Shepherds Bush

It's not that the new Teenage Fanclub album *Grand Prix* is good or anything, but if anyone tops it this year then I suggest, a trip to the bookies to bet your house on England winning next years European football championships with Elvis Presley scoring the winning goal. It's



also true that Simtek, the motor racing team credited for use of the Formula 1 car on the sleeve are going bust in a hurry. Hope thats not an omen for tonight. Certainly it's as likely that most of the audience tonight have seen Scotland's finest pop classicists play a stinker as a blinder. Consistency has never been their strongpoint. Still, the sense of anticipation is obvious. The band who made *Rolling Stone's* album of the year of 1991 have seen a whole host of lesser, but more astute rivals shoot past them in the intervening period. Hell, what are labelmates Oasis doing differently apart from turning up the guitars? Still, sneering is not in this bands nature, and anyone who bases their publicity on returning after a long layoff on their singers daft new red beard, must be a little less than cutthroat.

But can they rock? The answer is most definitely yes. A large part of tonight's set comes from the underrated, if unfocused *Thirteen* album, and even songs like *Escher* and *The Cabbage* get the love they never got on original release. The new stuff is topper mind, though they don't play the atrociously titled *Neil Jung*, my fave from *Grand Prix*. Come to think of it, almost all the songs have abysmal titles, as if after doing the hard work of writing the best tunes ever composed by the Scots, the act of chucking out the working title is too much. Still it adds to the fun learning that those tunes you've been humming all week are really called

Commercial Alternative (who's been reading *Billboard* then?) and



Sparky's Dream.

But moaning about a lack of style at a Teenage Fanclub show is like complaining that the local football team don't play rugby, or that the pub sells bad wine. It's just not why you go. In this case you go to see a great band playing great songs, something they do better than ever with the steady presence of new drummer Paul Quinn keeping it tight. Three great singers, no song weaker than excellent, and a general atmosphere of good times and impending chaos make up my idea of a good night out. The spectacularly unsuccessful attempt to combine the Beatles *Rain* and a Yo La Tengo song into a medley is the only reminder of Fanclub past, as the evening ends in anticlimax. So what. They were great. Which you could hardly say about Royal Trux, tonight's support. Former bandmates of John Spencer (now of the highly rated Blues Explosion) in Pussy Galore, they gained a notoriety for their drug intake as much as their music. But now with a new clean and sober attitude and a major label debut to promote, they're just well...boring. People will pay to see their lives lived through others, whether they'll pay to see something that sounds like a bad Thin Lizzy circa 1976 I doubt. The new *Thank You* album is pretty damn good but live...it's a sorta cross between grunge and sludge. Grudge. That's a good name for it, cos I'm sure they must resent the fact that everyone else has got all the good tunes. A friend mistakes singer Jennifer Herrema for a male Axl Rose impersonator. Perhaps they should take

the logical next step, and go back to college...

JIMMY BLACKBURN

BIG CAT SHOWCASE
Dingwalls, Camden

Talk about a non paying audience... I doubt if anyone here paid the advertised ticket price, but then this is just a chance for burgeoning label Big Cat records (best known for Pavement, but with an uh, interesting roster to back them up.) to show off their wares.

First up are Lotion, from New York City, at first glance a four piece made up of a couple of jocks and a couple of nerds, whose music reflects a similar clash. At their best Lotion fill the space between the bombast of Smashing Pumpkins and the introspection of REM, a seriously epic band that don't suffer pomposity. But tonight they seem nervous and uncomfortable and play a poorly judged set that dissipates the tension too often. *Dr. Link* from last years excellent *Full Isaac* album gets people nodding appreciatively, but they seem unsure about whether they should debut stuff from next months follow up. Dont worry men. I've heard it. It's fine. I've seen them play better than this and I'm sure they will again, but its a pity that the short time allocated leaves no room for the wonderful *Precious Tiny*, a free form freakout from the new record. Still, who wouldn't be miffed at being moved down for the shambling Crowdsell,



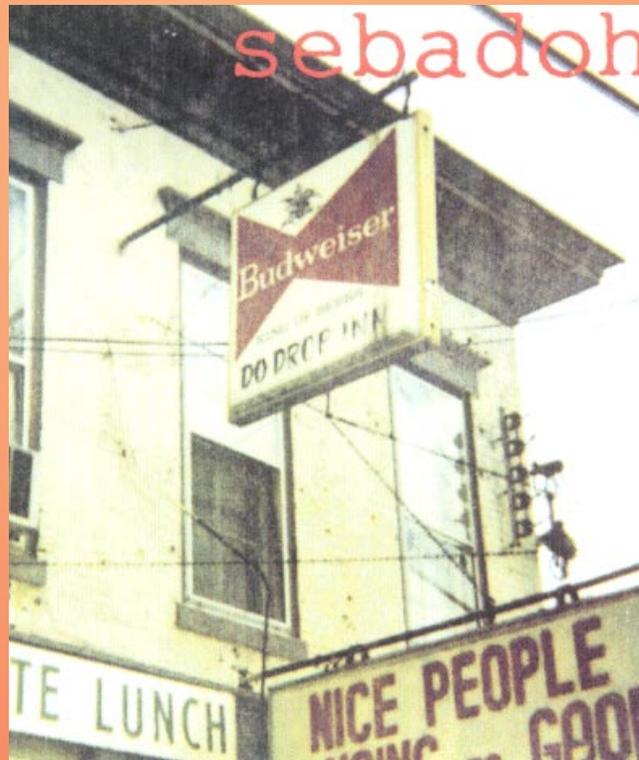
two gals and a guy from somewhere in the southern states of the USA. A mate of a mate tells me that they're the only reason he's there and they're going to be huge, but I can't see it myself, and anyway he probably paid to get in. The bass player can't, the singers voice, fine on disc, is reduced to a breathy drone. But what the hell. It's a free trip to Europe and who can blame them. They'll get better...

Blumfeld are Hamburg's contribution to the continuing debate on European rock- is it crap or what? Well, not this time. Blumfeld are the best band new to me that I've seen this year. Singer Jochen is a true star, and a bit of a crooner as well, and plays up the innocent abroad accent between each excellent song. No one's shouting 'Wo ist die bahnhof?' tonight, as they did last week when a Midlands crowd felt the need to pay tribute, and use grammatically incorrect German, but the three or four piece (their roadie adds second guitar at times.) play a wonderful set, not that far from prime time Sonic Youth, or Pavement, but with a distinct if unconscious nod to the seventies 'Krautrock' repetitious style, usually played by hairy Germans who lived on farms. Actually Blumfeld don't really sound like anything else, and the language barrier is no barrier to great music. Lovely.

Unlike Shudder To Think, whose early records were something of a cult as they combined grace, power and melody in a way rarely seen. But for me anyway, their last couple have been disappointments, ditching the directness for

the scenic route, with more stops and starts than the average metropolitan main road. Singer Craig Wedren persists with his odd if affecting falsetto, though thankfully he's ditched the dungarees he used to wear, but too often their circuitous path ends up in some musical equivalent of an industrial estate cul de sac.. Boo. Get to the point goddammit. There's nothing big and clever about funny time signatures. It's just showing off. A disappointment.

JIMMY BLACKBURN.



SEBADOH/ YO LA TENGO Shepherds Bush Empire

I've never seen a venue this size full so early than for tonight's four band extravaganza. Skilfully arriving in time to see Quickspace Supersport leaving the stage to some large applause, I can assume that the junior Stereolab act I saw the other day has progressed as hoped. Hobokens Yo La Tengo are up next. (It means 'I have it' in Spanish. Something to do with baseball apparently.) The New Jersey trio must be at least twelve years into their career now but despite their extensive and often excellent back catalogue they treat us to a two song set tonight, each over fifteen minutes. It is brilliant. The nearest comparison is probably Spiritualized, but Yo La are more physical and aggressive, not least Ira Kaplans astonishing guitar playing. They're either great or lousy in my experience mind, but get there early if you ever see their name on a bill, and marvel at how one man gets so much sound out of one guitar. Sebadoh, those other veterans of America's underground network have, by approaching commercial success, put themselves in an unusual and uncomfortable position. Always notorious for the random nature of both their shows and releases, even since their first recordings they've come up with authentic pop gems amongst the experimental fumbblings. However last year's terrific *Bakesale* album saw a disciplined approach they'd never shown before, probably as they got





TOUR - NEWS

we'll get the atmosphere, all you have to supply is the beer.

bossed around by a more serious record company. Virtually every track is a pure nugget of melody, all given a hard but not abrasive production at Boston's famed Fort Apache studio. In short, it sounds like the next big thing. And at first tonight they live up to it. The six or seven opening songs of this show are lovely. Singer/guitarist Lou Barlow has a fine line in wistful pop, sad and understated, while bassist Jason Loewenstein copes well with the shouty stuff (but best when he uses Lou's mike, oddly enough.) Top choices like *Together or Alone*, *Careful* and the fantastically hopeful *Brand New Love* sound wonderful. But just when you're thinking about getting yourself a tattoo saying *I Saw Sebadoh Play A Good Show*, the usual happens. Rabid self-indulgence sets in, as between song pauses get longer and more painful, instrument swaps take an eternity and the set degenerates into material that can hardly be described as filler. I accept that the crap is as much part of what this band is about as the good stuff, and that might even be a factor in what makes the good stuff so good, but it was no surprise that the last tube seemed so compelling to so many. Putting these men in front of an audience is like putting a drink in George Best's hands before a live TV appearance. As painfully

predictable as a sitcom. Ouch.

JIMMY BLACKBURN



Tour News

The main news for RAGE is the **Glastonbury festival**. We will be covering the whole festival, laptops shoved under our arms and mobile phones at the ready. The festival sold-out ages ago so don't bother trying to get a ticket, but you can get the next best thing by watching our coverage on the net. We'll be reviewing it as it happens, hopefully with the normal rage irreverence, we'll get the pics, and

The **Reading Festival** line up has been announced by the Mean Fiddler Organisation. As usual it takes place during the August bank holiday in ..erm.. Reading. The headliners are **Smashing Pumpkins, Bjork and Neil Young**. The full line-up reads Friday August 25th Main Stage **Smashing Pumpkins, Green Day, Hole, Teenage Fanclub, Beck, Deus, Juliana Hatfield and China Drum**. On the second stage as NME call it or the Melody Maker stage as Melody Maker call it are **Gene, Menswear, Stereolab, Marion, Royal Trux, Guided By Voices, Moist, Weknowwhereyoulive, Scarce and Heather Nova**.

On Saturday August 26 the main stage features **Bjork, The Boo Radleys, Tricky, Throwing Muses, Shed Seven, Corduroy, Little Axe, Skunk Anansie and James Hall**. The other stage, as RAGE will call it, has **Foo Fighters, Echobelly, Drugstore, Electrafixion, The Bluetones, My Life Story, Snuff, 60 Ft Dolls, Powder, Kaliphz, Purescence and Heavy Stereo**.

On Sunday August 27th the main stage hosts **Neil Young, Soundgarden, Pavement, Mudhoney, Buffalo Tom, Babes In Toyland, White Zombie Tad, No FX and Pennywise**. The smaller stage has **Carter USM, Ween, Mazy Star, Reef, Ash, Vent, Silverchair, Geraldine Fibbers and Cast**.

Tickets for the whole event cost £60 in





advance and are available at face value, for cash, at all Mean Fiddler outlets i.e. The Forum, The Jazz Cafe, The Garage, The Subterania and of course The Mean Fiddler. If you want to spend extra, all reputable ticket agencies will carry tickets too and, if Glastonbury is any guide, so will some unreputable ones. Further information can be had on 0181 963 0940.

Jarvis Cocker and his band, **Pulp**, return for their first tour in over a year in October. Catch the Pulp experience at Glasgow Barrowlands (Oct 1), Newcastle University (2), Middlesborough Town Hall (4), Leeds Town and Country (5), Norwich University of East Anglia (6), Cambridge Corn Exchange (8), Nottingham Rock City (9), Leicester De Montfort Hall (10), Birmingham Que Club (11), Manchester Academy (12), Liverpool Royal Court (14), Cardiff University (15), Exeter University (16), Brighton Event (18), London Sheperd's Bush Empire (19), London Kentish Town Forum (20) and Sheffield City Hall (22).

Oasis are to play two shows in a huge Marquee imported from China. They will take place on Irvine beach near Ayr on the 14th and 15th of July. The tickets are sold out but if you fancy your chances and think that there will be some 'spares' available at reasonable prices, the doors of the tent open at 6pm on the Friday and 5pm on the Saturday.

The Levellers are to promote their



Zeitgeist album with an Autumn tour. See them at Glasgow Barrowlands (September 18 & 19), Aberdeen Music Hall (20), Leicester Granby Halls (22), Brighton Centre (23), Manchester Apollo (25), Birmingham Aston Villa Leisure Centre (28 & 29), Bridlington Spa Royal Hotel (30), Bournemouth International Centre (October 2), Plymouth Pavilion (3) and Brixton Academy (5 & 6).

Weezer return to these shores to promote their album imaginatively titled *Weezer* in June. The itinerary reads as follows London Astoria (June 16), Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall (17), Leeds Irish Centre (19), Manchester University (21) and Leicester De Montfort University.

Public Enemy have confirmed two London shows. They will be held at Kentish Town Forum (July 10) and Clapham Grand (11).

Menswear, the next big thing or a load of media hype, judge for yourself at Sheffield Leadmill (June 26), Liverpool State Ballroom (27), Birmingham Irish Centre (29) London Marquee (July 1) and Cambridge Junction (3).

The **3rd Phoenix Festival** will be held at Long Marston from the 13th to 16th of July. The main headline acts are **Bob Dylan, Faith No More** and **Paul Weller**.

The full line up reads as follows. On Friday August 14 the main stage will feature **Bob Dylan, Suede, Van Morrison, Tricky, The Fall, Wedding Present, Chumbawumba,**



The Phoenix

Salad and Velvet Crush. On Saturday **Faith No More** headline supported by **Public Enemy, Terrorvision, Paradise Lost, Ice T, Bodycount, EMF, Senseless Things, Gallon Drunk, Shootz Groove and Pigshifter.** On Sunday it's **Paul Weller, Brand New Heavies, Warren G. and the Funk Ere, George Clinton and Parliament Funk, The Charlatans, Underworld, Spearhead, Credit To The Nation, Marion and Dub War.**

Melody Maker stage will start on the Thursday night with **Bootsy Collins and his new Rubber Band, Little Axe, Prophets Of Da City, Oui 3 and Interact.** Friday has **Aztec Camera, Aimee Mann, Edwin Collins, The Blue Aeroplanes, Lisa Germano, Dick Dale, McAlmont, Cast, The Nubiles, Catatonia, Bivouac and Sack.** On the Saturday the line up is **Spiritualized, Electric Machine, The Verve, Nitzer Ebb, Cardiacs, Reef, Alice Donut, Man Or Astroman, A.C. Acoustics, 60ft Dolls, Gorkys' Zygotic Monkey, Delicatessen and Scarfo.** Sunday has **The Wildharts, Biohazard, Dog Eat Dog, Headswim, Shudder To Think, Die Tottenhosen, Honey Crack, H.Blockx, Joyrider, Strech, Shihead and Sctum.**

There will also be a Jazz Cafe stage which features many acts including **Gil Scott Heron, Galliano, Corduroy, Guru's Jazzmatazz** featuring **Ronny Jordan, MC 900ft**

Jesus, James Taylor Quartet, Apache Indian and D-Influence.

The Carlsberg stage will see around fifty performers including **Robin Hitchcock, Martin Stephenson, Frances Black, An Emotional Fish, The Rockingbirds and Goya Dress.**

The Dance stage among others will see **The Orb, Underworld, Eat Static, Transglobal Underground Loop Guru and Drum Club.**

Apart from the music there will be a comedy stage featuring **Frank Sidebottom, Lee Evens, Mark Lamarr, Lily, Savage and Ian Cognito** plus over twenty others. If this is not enough there will also be celebrity football on all four days. Confirmed so far **EMF, Suggs, Damon Albarn, Terry Hall, The Lightening Seeds** and Brookside's **Anna Friel.** There will also be a funfair, a cinema and a circus area.

Tickets are £58 in advance for the whole weekend or £25 per day and are available by post from Phoenix 1995, Box 1707, London NW10 4LW (add 50p per ticket booking fee). They are available at face value from all Mean Fiddler booking offices i.e. The Forum, The Jazz Cafe, The Garage, The Subterania and The Mean Fiddler. Credit card booking can be made on 0171344 0044. For INTERNET information use [HTTP://WWW.CERERUS.CO.UK/CDJ/PHOENIXCARLSBERG.](http://www.cererus.co.uk/cdj/phoenixcarlsberg)

