

arts and entertainment MUSIC REVIEW

by Justin Hensley

Tenement Halls *with* Portastatic



After getting lost, on my way to the venue I arrived thirty minutes late to find out that the show had not started. It had been scheduled to begin at 9:00 PM, but did not get started until 10:00 PM. The wait was time well spent.

The audience at the Grey Eagle in Asheville consisted of approximately 35 people, while the venue could hold more than 200. A slightly disappointing turnout did not hinder either bands performance.

Tenement Halls first took the stage with little fanfare. But as the lead singer, Chris Lopez, sat down at his keyboard the excitement began to build. The upbeat and slightly poppy sounds that emanate from this group were vaguely familiar, yet entirely new. As an indie rock group with a darker Beatles feel, their lyrics spoke of doomed relationships that anyone could relate to.

Lopez did not look like he was dressed for a rock show, wearing a polo shirt and a pair of khaki shorts. But the minute he began singing you become entranced by his amazing melodies and song-writing skills. During the songs, the two keyboardists traded their keyboards for guitars, and Lopez opted for the twelve string guitar instead of the basic six.

Throughout the set, Tenement Halls proved to be one of the most impressive groups around. After playing nearly every song off of their new album, they called it a night.

Next up was Portastatic. The female singer was the most intriguing aspect of the band, as she played the violin, acoustic guitar, tambourine, maracas, and synthesizer. Obviously a talented group was about to begin their set.

From the first notes of the first

song, my previous notions of the band were smashed by the amazing guitar work of the lead singer Mac McCaughan. Playing long and technical guitar solos throughout entire songs and an array of distortion pedals made the performance enjoyable.

Lyricaly, a majority of their songs were about how depressing it is to live in America. McCaughan's voice and facial expressions were effective in showing pure emotion while singing. Often I worried that he would blow out his voice because of how much he was straining when he sang. The bass work and the drum playing were also extremely well performed. The band really knows how to work with each other and look to have an incredible future.

Both bands did an amazing job, but Tenement Halls blew me away. Both of the bands are



on Merge Records, which is also the home to the bands ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead, The Arcade Fire, and Dinosaur Jr. The future of indie music is in good hands with this record label.

For more information, visit these sites: Tenement Halls, www.mergerrecords.com Portastatic, www.portastatic.com The Grey Eagle, www.greyeaglemusic.com

Grillin'...

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that come to get food this can become very expensive (up to about \$25 a week), so financial support is much appreciated. I would also greatly appreciate prayer that God would continue to lead us and guide us in this ministry.

Q: Have you met any crazy awesome people? Any stories?

A: I have met a lot of awesome people. A few weeks ago I met a guy named Roy that lives in a tent in Asheville. Roy has traveled all over the states and is part Cherokee Indian. He told me a lot of amazing stories and also really opened himself to me and spoke of his struggles.

Roy also told me that he has a

son that is in the National Guard and is currently based in Iraq. I was amazed at Roy's dedication to our country though homeless and attempting to survive in a capitalistic society without a job or car. I was touched by his friendship and inspired by his unbelievable kindness.

Q: Anything else?

A: I feel very blessed to have the time and financial ability to provide this ministry. I hope that some of you will feel led to join me in this venture and can be used by God to serve others.

One of the saddest things I see in Asheville is when people come to us for food and immediately begin to question what Christian group we are with and show skepticism. We are merely people serving other people because we care for them, not to force our religious beliefs upon them. I believe that many of the homeless and hippies in Asheville have been hurt by Christians and the church as a whole. Asheville is a very open society, and when Christians come in and are judgmental of

that aspect of the society it can really hurt people.

My desire is to rebuild trust among those that feel alienated by Christians. If Montreat College as a body of believers united by Christ takes the time to give up ourselves sacrificially to God and others, imagine the trust that we can create among the hurt and broken in Asheville and truly show them the love of Jesus Christ.

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