

Welch, Rawlings Deliver Causal, Perfect Set

By JOANNA PEARSON
Staff Writer

Cat's Cradle — suffocating amounts of cigarette smoke, sticky beer spillage, drunk guys crushing into you, and ear-splitting indie rock, right? This Sunday night it was a little different.

People stood, even sat in chairs, in absolute silence, transfixed by two people on the stage with nothing but acoustic guitars and occasionally a

banjo — they were Gillian Welch and David Rawlings. When these two stepped up to the mic, the crowd practically drew in a collective breath.

Welch's voice has a beauty that is unearthly and Rawlings works the fingerboard of an acoustic guitar like no one else. Every note is dead-on, and technically speaking, these two are perfect performers.

Their recent tour is in conjunction with Welch's newest release, *Time the Revelator*.

Welch has been a tremendous force on the neo-traditionalist scene since 1996. However you choose to classify her lovely, folky bluegrass music, though, it's nothing short of beautiful.

Thanks to the movie "O Brother, Where Art Thou?," artists like Welch,

concert review

Gillian Welch and David Rawlings
Sunday, Sept. 30
Cat's Cradle
★★★★

Emmylou Harris, and Alison Krauss are experiencing a surge in popularity.

As a lyricist, Welch is a real poet, but she also has musicianship enough that her songs are beautiful even apart from her lyrics.

She sang many of her best-loved songs, including "Orphan Girl," "Caleb Meyer," and "Rock of Ages." As if in tribute to the "O Brother" movie, the one song that Rawlings sang lead on was "Big Rock Candy Mountain."

Proving the strength of her new album, Welch drew largely from newer material. One of the best was the wonderful song, "Elvis Presley Blues," in which she perfectly captures the sadness of lost American myth.

Perhaps most remarkable about Welch is the authenticity she manages to achieve. For a girl who grew up in Los Angeles, when she sings about red dirt, whiskey and Wichita, it's pretty convincing. Even her slight drawl seems straight from the coal-mining country she sings about.

Also part of the show's success was the casual charm Rawlings and Welch exuded as they bantered to one another on the stage. Their self-effacing comments and casual modesty belied the musical truth that became apparent to everyone at this show: Gillian Welch and David Rawlings are two of the finest musicians and best live performers today.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at artsdesk@unc.edu.

Butchies Embody Tough Estro-Punk

By MICHELLE JARBOE
Staff Writer

Butchies drummer Melissa York stood on her stool. Towering over her drum set, she made a proud declaration to cap off her band's set.

"I feel like Madonna ... with a little bit of Celine Dion!"

Maybe so, but the Butchies are another scene, entirely.

For the punk-queer-core trio hailing from Durham, the diva-esque sequined formal wear is a far cry from their standard issue.

Each band member was clad in black Converse low-tops, blue Dickies work pants and blue workshirts with nicknames embroidered on it like a hard-core version of "Laverne and Shirley's" factory garb.

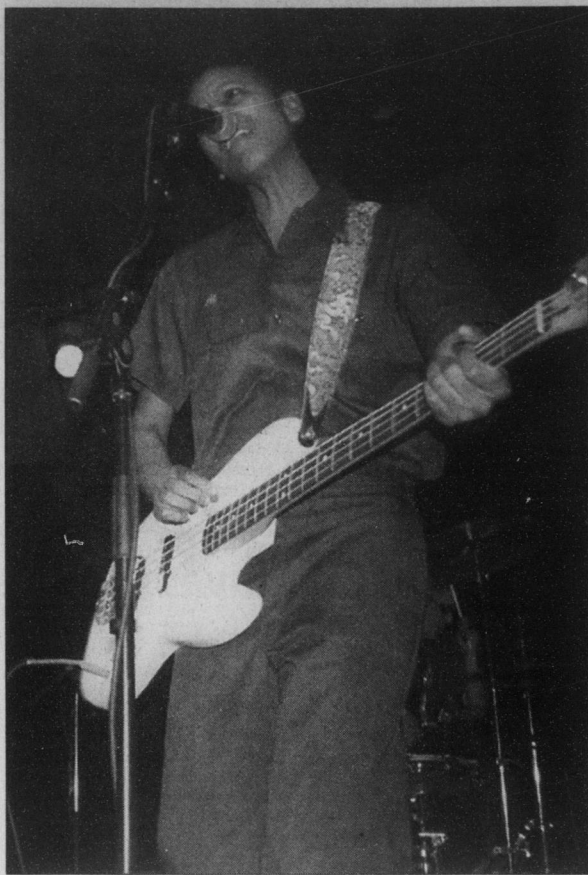
It's not a soft image, to be sure, but there is a sort of tough, beautiful androgyny to their appearance under the stage lights.

Such a look meshes well with their energetic sound, a more hard-core version of Veruca Salt, minus the angry-girl driven lyrics. Basically, the Butchies are a punk band with an astounding musical ability that permits them to blend bass, guitar and drums into complex rhythms that are complemented by strong and varied vocal overlay.

As the trio took the stage following a handful of lukewarm opening acts, a different sense pervaded the crowded room. When guitarist/singer Kaia Wilson began by saying "I'm so happy that you could be here tonight to attend the homosexual concert," that was it — the crowd was hooked.

Wilson was accompanied by bassist/vocalist Alison Martlew, who captivated with her tough-girl shaved-head look, and York, who played the part of an atypical drummer by constantly approaching a forward mic to converse with the audience. The trio was tight, and their closeness only served to add to the music.

But the band members were not there to showcase their egos or to impress the crowd with their musical prowess. Instead they were a dynamic extension



DTH/SARA ABRONS

Butchies guitarist and lead singer Kaia Wilson cranks out hard-core punk — with a gender-bended twist — at Cat's Cradle on Saturday.

of the energized crowd, which was pulled along as the Butchies displayed astounding talents. The band has a knack for fluidly switching tempo by combining softer, more vocally-focused bridges with quick-paced, bass-pumped choruses.

Most amazing was the synchrony demonstrated by Wilson and Martlew, who stood at the front of the stage at neighboring mics. Every movement that the two made was perfectly choreographed, so that the duo even moved

their heads side-to-side simultaneously. Such movements augmented the rhythm and drive of the overwhelming music.

The group's set closed with a cover of Kim Wilde's "Kids in America," which, in a surreal way, served to clinch the band's promotion of unity and acceptance.

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