

Confident Voices Define Indie Rock Genre at Cradle

BY AARON FREEMAN
Staff Writer

Guided by Voices is not, by any means, the original indie rock band. It has, however, absolutely defined the genre.

The definitive article, it seems, remains a mirage in the wide margins of the mainstream and the hot new single, yet the band remains an icon of the not-too-distant underground.

Icons have shows like Saturday night's at the Cat's Cradle.

Frontman Robert Pollard is the Mick Jagger of Generation X. His heavy-drinking, heavy-smoking, mic-swinging, fist-pumping, lip-pursing flamboyance wrapped the stage in unabashed, unremitting confidence. Pollard was a madman who never once let the fans down - which worked out well because the Cradle was packed to its guts.

From the start, with "From a Voice Plantation," a cut from the band's latest record, Pollard thrashed and wailed the

crowd into something like a drug-fueled golden dream.

Indeed, new album *Universal Truths and Cycles* was ever-present, delivering both hits and misses at the show. "Cheyenne," light and poppy with a twinge of Lennon vocals, created a scene of hopping, smokey delight. Heavier "Everywhere with Helicopter" used brass guitar riffs and omnipresent cymbal crashing to unmitigated perfection. Indie pop introduced itself to grunge rock with hundreds of fans to happily bear witness.

"Skin Parade," however, illustrated the downside to *Universal Truths and Cycles*, where radical rambled with unpleasantly obscure. About the time of Pollard's final screechings, the crowd - for the first time - silently beckoned for the next song.

This moment was easily forgotten as track after track of quality music strutted into the audience's ringing ears. "Glad Girls," perhaps the band's best live song, simply jubilates, "Hey hey, glad girls only want to get you high." Reckless and fun chorals resulted in hundreds of flattened cans underfoot in a scene of bliss-induced bouncing.

Also impossible to ignore was "As We Go Up, We Go Down," an appropriately placed piece of mellow pop genius.

The show ambled along this way through nearly three hours, two encores, an on-stage cooler of beer and a fifth of Jack Daniels.

No question about it - the spectacle of on-stage performance more than equaled the music on this night. For a final, wowing display of devotion, fans banded together to wail out the lyrics to "A Salty Salute" in a scene akin to a shady after-hours Irish tavern, bringing the band out for another extended encore.

Finishing the show with The Who's "Baba O'Riley" and the Beatles' "Hard Day's Night," guitarist Doug Gillard took control with lick-for-lick authentic guitar solos.

Said plainly, Guided by Voices rocked the Cradle in every way imaginable. The band got drunk, the band played enchanting music, and the band showed Chapel Hill the meaning of indie rock and the meaning of fun.

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



DTH/LUCAS HAMMONDS

Lead singer Robert Pollard and guitarist Doug Gillard of Guided By Voices perform at the Cat's Cradle on Saturday.

dive
recommends
By Duncan Pittman

abandoned-places.com

Whether you're into photography or enjoy vicarious breaking and entering, this site features hauntingly beautiful images of abandoned European castles, hospitals and factories.

"After Hours" by Martin Scorsese

This early '80s dark comedy follows a boring computer programmer's night trapped "after hours" in SoHo with a cast of bizarre characters including sado-masochistic sculptors, homosexual bikers and go-go waitresses. Cringe and cackle as the protagonist faces mohawk night at the neighborhood punk club and a mob led by an ice cream truck in his pathetic attempts to get back home.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES

The "Jackass" crew brews mayhem in an oversized shopping cart packed with a midget, "Party Boy," and a guy with one testicle.

Shocking 'Jackass' Lives Up to Television Fame

BY ASHLEY HARRELL
Staff Writer

Johnny Knoxville is living the new American dream - making lots of money with not much effort - exempt from respecting anyone, including himself.

He's brilliant. "Jackass: The Movie," a Dickhouse Production starring Knoxville and some of his sadistic and willing cronies, succeeds in everything it sets out to do. Much like the former television show, each of the unrelated scenes is hilarious, vomit-inducing or just plain absurd, stimulating a variety of reactions from the audience for all its 85 minutes.

On board are the token midget (Jason "Wee Man" Acuna), the fat man with an unusually shaped butt (Preston Lacy), the guy with a near-life-sized tattoo of himself on his back (Steve-O) and the two guys that get naked a lot (Chris Pontius and Ryan Dunn). They all have one thing in common - a love for the inappropriate.

Let's just face it, most of daily life is boring. Most people are boring, and if you really think about the world for too long, you'll realize nothing matters. It's about time someone decided to perform asinine stunts for the sake of having a good time and entertaining America's youth.

Of course, there are people who will disagree - people who think watching a grown man take a dump in a display toilet of a hardware store is "a bad influence" on their children.

People who believe hiding in a bush and repeatedly blowing a foghorn as golfers swing isn't funny but rude.

People who fail to understand why anyone would stick a toy car in his or her rectum just to see the look on the radiologist's face while interpreting the X-ray.

These people are what's wrong with planet Earth.

Sure, "Jackass" doesn't have a plot,

Merritt Comes Home With Perfected Talent, Thanks

BY ALLISON ROST
Staff Writer

Even though it was physically impossible to stop tapping your toes at Tift Merritt's concert Saturday, there's no way your feet could have missed the vibrating currents tearing outward from the guitars on stage through the floor of the Great Hall.

That's how hard she rocked. In a homecoming concert, former UNC student Merritt and her rock/country band Stillhouse set up in the unlikely campus venue. But despite the slightly off-kilter acoustics, their obvious enthusiasm for playing in front of a hometown crowd overpowered any noticeable flaws.

Merritt was capping off her promotional tour for her new album *Bramble Rose* with this stop at the University - and she had a few surprises in store for the crowd.

During one of several amusing asides

between songs, Merritt said, "I don't do these confessional speeches for other audiences." But that wasn't the only treat she had on reserve.

A longtime fan in the audience shouted out a request for Merritt oldie "Cadillac." Despite the singer commenting that she hadn't played that song during the entire tour, she and her band whipped up a rollicking version that had more heads bobbing than any other song all night.

But the highlight of the show was easily their cover of an old Delaney & Bonnie tune, which had Merritt - armed with only a tambourine - slithering and slinking in front of the microphone in a powerful demonstration of her sensual stage presence. She belted out the bluesy song with an incredible spark that left the crowd dazed.

The members of Stillhouse deftly provided excellent backup and proved they could hold their own by opening the show with a 40-minute Merritt-less set. Dave Wilson and Jay Brown were especially impressive with expert guitar playing, harmonizing and occasionally

providing comic relief.

Case in point: Merritt later made a comment about the inevitable commercial segment of their show. Brown immediately launched into a stereotypical commercial announcer's voice as he plugged the merchandise available outside, much to Merritt's delight.

Another break gave the two guitarists the opportunity to tease their frontwoman about leaving her suitcase in Washington, D.C.

But there was no question over who was the star of this show. Merritt flitted about the stage, effortlessly switching from acoustic to electric guitar or from keyboard to harmonica when the applicable mood struck her.

Even with the powerful instrumentation, her brassy, beautiful voice soared to the forefront every time. Merritt seemed incapable of delivering a vocalization that wasn't infused with energy and life.

She made her way through a set consisting of songs both old and new and mind-boggling in quality. Her ballads were just as uplifting as anything with a faster tempo.

The group's last song was the quietest it played all night - a tribute to the band's hometown of Bynum. This song only reinforced the pride inherent in Merritt's performance - if she's out representing her state like this to the rest of the music world, North Carolinians are pretty lucky.

Even as the guitars faded out, Merritt kept singing. "I'm not quite ready to go" over and over, her voice as steady and powerful as always.

Trust me, Tift. We didn't want you to go, either.

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

review
"Jackass: The Movie"
★★★★☆

review
Tift Merritt
Great Hall
Student Union
Saturday, Oct. 26
★★★★★

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