

29 April - 2 May 2005

music

Mumbles Mostly Jazz and Blues Festival

"Let the rhythm warm your soul...as a summer wake up call...in Mumbles." So read the glossy green and red festival flyer, and the weekend more than lived up to it's suggestion. This new annual festival set up by Mumbles Development Trust in partnership with Tunetown and Swansea Jazzlands was kicked off in style with a packed SA3 gig. Arriving at 8.30pm to a near- empty room, save for the festivals' project manager extraordinaire Huw Rees, we had barely got drinks and a table before the masses started to pour in.

The venue was soon full to the brim with Swansea hipsters, all retro Hobo's cool to mimic the band they had ventured out of Swansea city centre to see, quirky charting popsters and adored local lads The Caves. For with their busy schedule of touring gigs, radio shows and debut album promotion it is quite a rarity to see this up-and-coming band play locally, let alone for FREE, so it is hardly surprising the word got out.

The Working Man Club setting took me back to the very first Caves gig in a back room (read glorified cupboard) of The Green Baize snooker hall in Swansea Uplands way before Tunetown had turned it into



the purple-walled gigging regular, The Inferno. There were red velvet curtains as a back drop there too, all very Twin Peaks. The latest gig was quite, quite different, the venue more a school hall than that broom cupboard even had a proper stage! Well supported by Baldwin's (Style Molesters, Headcase Ladz) new band, the crowd got livelier and then the band they were all waiting to see got on stage.

Often compared to Supergrass, The Caves energetic trio (Dai Godwin, guitar and lead vocals; Darren Beale, bass and vocals; Simon Parsons; drums and vocals) charged through short, sharp, super-charged set echoing their electric burst of an album, the 23-minute 'This Way To... The Caves'. From Wow Machine to the dancing girls' apparent favourite, Polymorphic Light Eruption you could see lips singing along throughout the venue and feet-tapping aplenty from those clearly new to this charismatic band.

There was a near fatality for Jarvis, ahem, Simon's kick drum, but a couple of beautiful lasses saved it from falling off stage (a regular Caves gig feature from Castle Square to SA3), and the band kept on playing. Refusing to come back on for a much-requested encore the sweat-drenched three instead grabbed beers and caught up with friends in the crowd up until the fire alarm was set off and all were forced to empty the premises as quickly as we had filled it up.

The rest of the festival followed suite in attracting steady crowds and providing high quality music from the guitar masters that are The Amigos, through slide guitarist Tom Dale to welsh folk heroes Boys From The Hill across a range of venues (The Ostreme Centre, All Saints Church, The Antelope, The Pier etc.) allowing punters to wander from place to place taking in the music, and admiring the sun-drenched Mumbles village over the bank holiday weekend. A great success all in all, and I look forward to next year.

Susie Wild