

Review: Haddow Fest



Squeezing the excitement of an entire weekend festival into one exhilarating burst, Haddow Fest returned for its triumphant third year.

Kicking off the mayhem early doors were local duo The Gold Lions, who combine De Stijl power with hooks The Stooges would be proud of. On stage the two-piece perform with a beautiful ferocity, with Rupert Lee's sledgehammer drumming the perfect foil to frontman Owen Robertson's delta guitar lines. Their songs reverberate flawlessly around The Caves 18th-century caverns as the venue proves to be a fitting setting for the intoxicating light and shade of their sound. 'Dark Side' bristles with muscular emotion while set closer '1000 Ships' leads the crowd through a musical maze of aural brilliance. Up next was eclectic five-piece The Stagger Rats with their startlingly beguiling blend of dream rock pop. New single 'Sleeping Off Ecstasy' is a maudlin masterpiece, with a subtly catchy guitar hook and an abundance of painfully honest lyrics. They bring their half hour set of alluring harmonies to a close with the anthemic 'Fuzzy Fuzzy', which is as enchanting as it is brilliant.

Later in the day local favourites The OK Social Club took to the stage at The Liquid Rooms. Playing to a geed-up home crowd and with an ever growing arsenal of hits, the vibrant four-piece wasted no time in raising the roof. Their debut single 'The Shape Of Things To Come' is a four to the floor indie gem whilst 'The Late 90s' boisterous guitars and singer Raff Eragona's animated vocals crown a glorious performance. Along at the HMV Picturehouse Haddow Fest organisers and main

support act The 10:04's have the prime slot of opening for The Cribz. Already cemented as one of Scotland's finest bands, the four-piece match the expectations of the crowd with an accomplished set that few would relish following. The stunning 'Lights Out' is an unashamed hit, with the perfect ratio of indie angst and driving rhythms providing the base that allows Stevie Bolton's vocals to sparkle on top. 'SOS' showcases the band at their harmonic best, with Paul Haddow's rapid drumming and some high end guitar lines proving irresistible to the near capacity crowd.

✘ And then it was time for the Jarman brothers to take to the stage and do their thing. Five albums in and the Wakefield three-piece are sounding better than ever, with the departure of guitar guru Johnny Marr helping reinvigorate their slacker-rock sound.

✘ Opener 'Come On, Be A No-One' sums up exactly why The Cribz are one of the country's most beloved bands, with the tune's infectiously synchronised guitars and dead pan lyrics causing hysteria in the crowd. 'We Share The Same Skies' and 'Chi Town' have some of the finest indie riffs of the past decade whilst 'I'm A Realist' still bristles with the same exuberance as when it was first released five years ago. Ryan Jarman is on top form throughout, with his uniquely Northern voice sounding as emotive as ever on mid-noughtie classics 'Hey Scenesters' and 'Mirror Kisses'. The venue is awash with crowdsurfing and energy tonight as The Cribz dispense a dynamite performance that has been honed through almost a decade on the road. 'City Of Bugs' is a fitting way to bring the curtain down on their set and the day as a whole, with its slow burning brilliance a tribute to the music showcased across the city and the commitment of the fans and bands involved.

All photos by Scott Guthrie.