

REVIEW – Eliza and the Bear at Electric Circus



'I got friends, I got family here' rings out the first lines of Eliza and the Bear's vigorous set at Electric Circus. Beginning with arguably their best known song – solely because it has featured in the Bulmers advert for the last few months – it was a bit risky, but predictably the band pulled it off. Why? This was their first gig in Edinburgh since the [initial Scottish date of the Communion tour](#) when their performance was described as “emphatic, hard-hitting and insistent”. It hasn't changed in seven months. If anything, their live potential has improved a great deal.

Lead singer, James Kellegher, explained that the show would be half-filled with 'around six new songs', and that the road-testing would give an idea of what Eliza and the Bear's new, yet unannounced, album would roughly sound like.

Certainly it all sounds unreservedly promising, and due to the band's excellent studio-to-live transition, that makes things all the more compelling. An acoustic number that Kellegher and Martin Dukelow serenaded the crowd with sounded a bit like a simple, four-chord Oasis track, which might sound even better with a backing choir or even full band. Apart from that song, the other new tracks will keep their fans happy– casual and hardcore – with captivating hooks and fist-pumping melodies on hand to add to their already impressive assortment of songs.

There was an evident contrast in terms of band and audience with the crowd awkwardly dotting themselves around the venue with next to no energy. Deja vu occurred as Kellegher had to convince the crowd to come nearer the stage last time they appeared at Communion, although this time he was more

forceful: 'Come down, we won't bite. You can bring your friends too,' as he talked to teenagers who had moved to the comfortable seating area.

As for the band, the intensity was phenomenal: both Kellegher and Dukelow frequently headbanging and bouncing along; the rest of the band bopping along with keyboardist, Callie Noakes, taking his enthusiasm slightly over the line, amusingly yet admirably.

Essentially, this has been a gig for Eliza and the Bear that has allowed a lot more curious music fans to branch out into less familiar territory. Maybe they're now a fan, surely they're now a fan.

As for the band's next tour, Electric Circus, or any other venue they play, should look a lot busier.