

The Belle Angele, featuring Exit the Theatre, Ferric & The 'Xcerts

INDEPENDENT VENUE WEEK : Friday 29th January 2016

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Well I must admit I didn't think I would have spent the evening of the worst gales in Scotland listening to some of the newest music in Scotland, AND having great time. Yes, I was having a great time, despite almost being dragged along to the gig. I blamed the weather and thought maybe I was getting too old for all this 'new' music.

This wasn't just about the music though, this mini festival was trying to promote, like it said on the box, small independent, venues, and here I was standing at the back of one of the best venues Edinburgh has to offer, La Belle Angele, which was looking great.

The headliners were **'Xcerts**, who, despite being from Aberdeen and now based in London, had managed to gather quite a crowd with their online reputation with a massive 2 million hits.

I spoke to the band before they went on and I was surprised to hear that they have been on the go for more than eleven years, had five albums under their belt and at present are in the middle of writing a new one. This gig didn't seem to inspire them and I thought they sounded like they wished they weren't there.

No, enthusiastic wasn't a word I would use to describe them, and I must admit on hearing them I thought the same. Maybe they should take their time writing their next release. It was

all just a bit too safe and formulaic for my tastes and despite having the set list I couldn't quite make out much change between each song.

Lacklustre summed them up, which is a shame considering that, Murray (singer, guitarist), Jordan (bassist) and Tom (drummer) were really young guys. Yes, a real shame.

Lacklustre on the other hand couldn't be a word further from my mind on hearing both support bands. They both were jumping and desperate, maybe even a little bit too desperate in **Ferric's** case, to enjoy themselves and get the crowd enjoying themselves too.

Ferric are an Edinburgh-based four piece, who have been together for three years and still love it, everything, they love it all, writing, gigging, gigging, writing; they can't get enough.

Cal Black (vocals, bassist) might be a bit of a heartthrob for some, frontman who really wants it all, everything and he wants it now! Backed by Ross Adamson (guitar), Steven Carrol (guitar) and Chris Homan (drums) they played short, sharp songs, really well. Standout songs for me were; 'Guerrilla', a 'happy' anti-war song, 'Slice', a pop/punk classic, that reminded me a lot of early Buzzcocks and a madness-inspired, bouncy, 'Chasing Reflections'.

They've definitely got the drive to go where ever they want and hopefully after making it to this year's final of 'The Battle of the Bands', might just get there. My only advice would be to stop trying so hard, which couldn't be said of the real surprise of the night, the first band on stage. These guys, **Exit The Theatre**, had an easy and laid back approach that drew you into their songs and before you knew where you were you were bouncing along to some great songs.

Everything was played with an ease that made me think they had been playing for way longer than the headliners, but in this

case they were fresh and brand new. I was drawn into their songs about broken hearts, evil ex-girlfriends and getting smashed. This was all great with an unpretentious vitality and vibrancy that I hope will lead to the band headlining their own gigs really soon.

Andrew Brown (Vocals, Guitar), Chris Murray (guitar), Des Johnson (bass) and Mike Scott (drums) were all far too good for their years and hit the stage with a vibrancy and honest talent, right in the chest.

Stand out tunes were 'Safety Net', (you guessed it, a girl friend epic), 'Young and the Wicked', the one about getting smashed and their new release, 'I Want to Run', just a damn good song.

So there you have it, track down the new EP, titled, Matinee, turn it up really loud and get drawn into this band's world and make sure you get tickets early for their next show because I think it'll be sold out soon.