

Hidden Door Festival ignites excitement with a press launch



Photo by Chris Scott



Photo by Chris Scott

For a festival that has so much excitement behind it and a

great deal of support in terms of numbers, at its press launch, there was a clear lack of understanding as to the purpose of this event. With a line-up of performers who appeared to be from last year's bill, it was not entirely obvious what an evening of spoken word and song actually contributes to the festival which will hit our radar late May, early June.

Beginning with spoken word by poets who don't appear comfortable, let alone confident performing this press launch seems somewhat amateur. Monotonal and with an urgent pace, highlighting nerves, there was a distinctly student-run feel to this event.

Rachel Plummer who was up for the Scottish New Writers Awards 2016 for her poetry was next on the bill. Receiving very little respect from the chattering audience, she appeared awkwardly unable to peak with her performance, which is disgustingly shameful, as the imagery within her poetry about the dark and hidden depths of Edinburgh's under layer is pervasive.

Following on from the spoken word, the audience was subjected to an artist intently looking at his laptop and twisting knobs whilst occasionally looking shifty.

To highlight that he is not in fact playing YouTube and muting explicit videos, it would be worth his time to reconsider this stage presence, even if it was just something as simple as the angle he performs.

Urvanovic, a band ranging wide in talent and instrument but actually lacked any degree of tightness. Attempting some kind of Explosions in the Sky/Sigur Ros-influenced sound the vocals lacked the poetic oomph, which was more apparent after the set list of spoken word flair. It was reminiscent of Iceland Airwaves with the obscure Scandinavian sound (except with the

head nods to Snow Patrol). Some clichés appear to have spawned from their lead singer, Gary Lightbody, as the lead vocalist glances to the venue lights, pensive whilst his badly-written ballads persisted.

Following in the same vein, the second band within this night's programme, Exit The Theatre, were implementing some rather unnerving side-stepping choreography whilst on stage. With more verve than the last they succeed more in grabbing the audience's attention away from their chat, whilst yet also having the presence of any band that we all knew from our days of hitting the open mic session at our local public bar.

Woodenbox had the edge, if there was to be a band that held it together nicely. Somewhat of a country Franz Ferdinand with trumpet, these boys, sporting some beards, woollen hats, and low-hanging jeans, screaming both hipster and yet Australian, were actually an enjoyable listen, albeit not to my personal taste.

With some further spoken word and a "hidden cinema" well sign-posted, there was a notion from some that more was expected at this event intended to launch their programme for later in the year.

With little mention from performers, or compere about the themes or art installations we can look forward to, as far as a press launch goes, it was disappointing.

However, judging from previous years, it will be pretty much guaranteed that the festival itself will in fact bode well with residents. The sheer number of people attending this event was indicative of this.