

Michael Head & the Red Elastic Band, Voodoo Rooms

Michael Head could easily have disappeared from view like his Liverpool contemporary Lee Mavericks of The La's. Five years after *Adiós Señor Pussycat* the Scouse poet returned earlier this year with *Dear Scott* perhaps the most complete long-player of his long career including much-loved bands *The Pale Fountains* and *Shack*.

Fronting also *The Strands* and now *The Red Elastic Band*, *Dear Scott* nods to the golden thread throughout the many well-crafted and memorable songs he has written over four decades. Tonight's opener *Kismet* suggests the essence of *Shack's Mood of the Morning* while the *Red Elastic Band* create their blend of alchemy on the jazz groove of *Gino and Rico*. The bond between the audience and Head is obvious, sharing in jokes about the amount of time it takes for him to make a record creates some good-natured banter.

The Human Race had a solid Liverpudlian rockabilly groove before *Pull Together* from *Shack's HMS Fable* album encourages an audience singalong. Head's sister Jo performs lead on a stunning *Daniella*, some members of the audience are emotional by the end of the track, you could hear a pin drop during the

performance where not one person left to go to the bar or answer a call of nature.

Freedom tips its cap to Donovan's Colours with some beautiful fingerpicking and vocals from Head and guitarist Nathaniel Laurence. A double of Byrds Turn To Stone and As Long As I've Got You from Here's Tom With The Weather is a nostalgia-tinged step back in time. During Comedy, we're reminded that Shack wrote some of the best tunes of the 90s but went largely unnoticed, as Head tops end of year polls in the rock monthlies it's clear he is in the form of his life having given up booze and fallen in love with songwriting and performing again. As Mick would say "Is Right".

