

What You Should Have Seen on ECMA Weekend

THE ALTER-CASES: DAY 2

Saturday afternoon at Brennan's Pub ended up being one of the most special moments of ECMA weekend for me. It was Day 2 of the Alter-Cases, and I should have been sleeping after a long and memorable night at the Barn. The concept of this show was going to be a brunch/concert with an assortment of unknown Atlantic Canadian artists.

Unfortunately the timing of this show and the venue proved to be detrimental to attendance, but, thanks to the bands and some really supportive fans of the Sydney music scene, it turned out to be one of the most special events of the weekend.

The Butterfly Effect from St John opened the show with a wonderful ambient set. Andrea Curry and Perfect Blue from Sydney were up next. The band's jazz influences combined with Andrea's folk style make a compelling and unique pop sound.

The Jody Chapman Band were like a more mature polished version of Perfect Blue, but lacked their warmth.

In my opinion, the noises made by The Rudy Huxtable Project created the most excitement of the weekend, and they gave everyone in attendance a sneak peek into what the evolution of rock music can be. They were true originals, and played their instruments in innovative ways that I could never imagine possible with tremendous punk energy.

3 Piece Suit, a surf-rock outfit from Industrial Cape Breton were a ton of cool fun with their set of sunny instrumentals that almost made me forget that it was February.

GuiltTRIP defied all expectations and played one of the best

sets I saw all weekend. I'm not sure whether I was more surprised at how much energy and passion this band hammered into every song they performed, or that they actually opened my mind into enjoying heavy metal music as much as I enjoyed them.

Charlottetown locals and ECMA nominees, Flush, did an excellent job rocking out with their typically tight set, and emotional energy.

Coping were a perfect, quality pop rock band from New Glasgow that did a great job representing mainstream music among such a diverse crowd.

Stumble were a unique folk act with a trippy vibe.

East Coast rock veterans, Madhat, who were nominated for best alternative band at the ECMAs, played a great rocking set of pop music.

I was happy to see the return of Summerside's punk/power pop group, Lending Jane, who did a great job entertaining the audience with their aerobic stage presence and catchy punk tunes.

Due to a misunderstanding with the bar, we had to wait an hour after Lending Jane's set before Port Citizen took the stage to wrap up the Alter-Cases. I went home and tried to get some rest during this break, and ended up missing Port Citizen's set. But having seen them pay several shows this weekend, I think it's safe to say that the best rhythm section in Charlottetown blew everyone away with their repertoire of mellow reggae and dynamite rock songs.

-SML

THE GOODS

I'm not sure who felt worse, DJ Gordski from the Goods, or their

roadie who dropped and broke Gordski's mixer. Things got off to a bad start for the Goods because of that accident, and a few technical difficulties, but that didn't prevent lyricist, Kunga 219, from giving a memorable performance Friday night at the Barn. Kunga's spiritual reflections combined with Gordski's dreamlike prerecorded beats and samples exposed the audience to a higher level of intelligent entertainment and some of the best independent hip hop in Canada. Despite the lack of a mixer, Gordski managed to entertain the crowd by mimicking scratches and DJ actions during Kunga's set.

-SML

FERMENTED REPTILE

Watching Pip B Skid of Fermented Reptile perform is like seeing the genetic splicing of Chuck D and Flavor Flav into one man. He's got a lot of serious things to say, but he is also aware of the value of entertaining a crowd with his twisted sense of humour, dance moves (which included a reference to MC Hammer at one point), and skills on the mic. He exposes issues that people do not feel comfortable talking about (rape, racism, minimum wage), and forces the audience to seriously contemplate these things with a captivating performance that never comes across as being too preachy. An artist with a conscience as big as his talent is a rare find. Not only did he give me a lot to think about, but after seeing how his performance affected the people around me, I felt hopeful that Pip is spreading awareness of huge issues to audiences that never would have given these things much thought otherwise.

-SML

BUCK 65

Buck 65 is easily the greatest hip hopper in Atlantic Canada because of his skill and innovation as both a DJ and a rapper. At Baba's Lounge on Sunday, Buck also proved to be a first-class performer. Mostly performing songs from his upcoming album, *Man Overboard*, Buck was obviously having a lot of fun in the small venue. Buck's songs can sometimes be hard to wrap your mind around, but he has a way of making them accessible. In between songs he engaged the audience by talking to them in his own subversively mocking way. One of the best moments, however, was his crowd-pleasing song, "The Centaur," to which he altered the lyrics on the spot out of respect to the youngsters in the room (it was an all-ages dry show). Another great moment was when he rapped and DJed in a sort of game that required extreme concentration and coordination. Buck has, once again amazed, me.

-JC

COLLEEN POWER

Colleen Power, Newfoundland songstress and occasional House of Rock tenant, gave a beautiful performance. Her songs were heartfelt, and her voice was strong and true. She demonstrated an unexpected amount of originality, which is no small task when forced to compete with countless other female singer-songwriters crowding the airways. Power certainly has lots to say, but had too little time to say it all. A smaller, more intimate, venue would also have brought her performance to near perfection. Power has been featured on *MuchEast* and in *Reverb* magazine.

-SKM