



CHICAGO RESTAURANT WEEK

FEBRUARY 1-10, 2013

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Jamaica + Via Audio at Schubas | Live Review + photo gallery

Posted in Audio File blog by Gavin Paul on Apr 25, 2011 at 1:20pm



Jamaica + Via Audio at Schubas Photo: Erica Gannett

Comments (2)

Categories

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Keywords

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- The Lists: Top 10 dance clubs, Top 5 sexy DJ lounges, Top comedy clubs, Top places to Booze and View, Drag nights for gender-benders

There's a trend of sorts in the land of indie-pop lately one might call embracing the cheese. First came auto-tune. Then the ukulele. And now the cock-sure blazing rock solo is en vogue.

Certainly there's a sparkling wink of a joke they're all in on, felt something fierce as opening Brooklyn crew Via Audio parked aside Schubas last night in a big purple conversion tour van (once emblazoned with the word "SNOB," we're told). The hipster mystery machine did not try to hide its arrival.

To Via Audio's credit, those winks are charming most of the time, inciting a room full of skinny jeans and inhibitions to raise the roof to a Prince-slathered funk of a mid-set get-down called "Babies." There was reciprocated band-to-crowd sentiment that sure, "the world is overcrowded," and why not, "I want to make babies with you."

Or their Unicorns-esque ode to Godzilla, "Lizard Song," they followed this with, scattering flash riffs and handclaps about four-part huff-and-puff syncopated harmonies bending the line between kook and pop as hard as they could. "You wanted a monster/Here I am," drawled out lead guitarist Tom Deis.

Though earlier the four-piece made fans endure a throw-away called "Digital," wrought with robot-crunched vocals, an impassioned Cake cadence and the veritable icing - a neon guitar bit lifted straight from "Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure" cache. Color it a satirical monster all you want. It still put a sour taste in this reviewer's mouth.

An odd thing for this band to kick out, even with their quirks worn proudly on their sleeves. Especially when they whipped out closer "Happening," keyboardist Jessica Martins glistening a soulful sing-along - "This is what we live for/This is where we ought to be" - before the band erupted in hip-popping key.

So the same story went for headliners Jamaica, a French power-pop duo ironically spawned on the condition that they threw any synth tricks out the studio window, or heavyweight Parisian natives, Xavier De Rosnay (Justice) and Peter Franco (Daft Punk), wouldn't produce their debut.

The two took the stage sans synth, indeed, rounding out a rhythm section with touring drummer David Arknin, but orchestrated a shit-show of pedal-clicks to hit moment after moment of gleaming "rawk" bridges and impassioned lyrics about being a "Gentleman" and the glory of all things "Short and Entertaining."

Likened to peers Phoenix in the blogosphere, this is not to say the trio did not own their cheese. A pocket of girls near the stage ate up every "gar pareee" drop that lead singer Antoine Hilaire filled banter time with. And the viral rockumentary "I Think I Like U 2," an actually clever stab at their own power-chord rise to fame saw some similar swoons, phallic guitar positioning and all. It just got placid after a while. Half the room emptied out by the time they capped their 10-song set.

Which is somewhat of a shame. Because "When Do You Wanna Stop Working" is one case where all their flash and power posture is ditched all together, Hilaire taking a moment to channel some garage rock roots. If only honesty came back in style.

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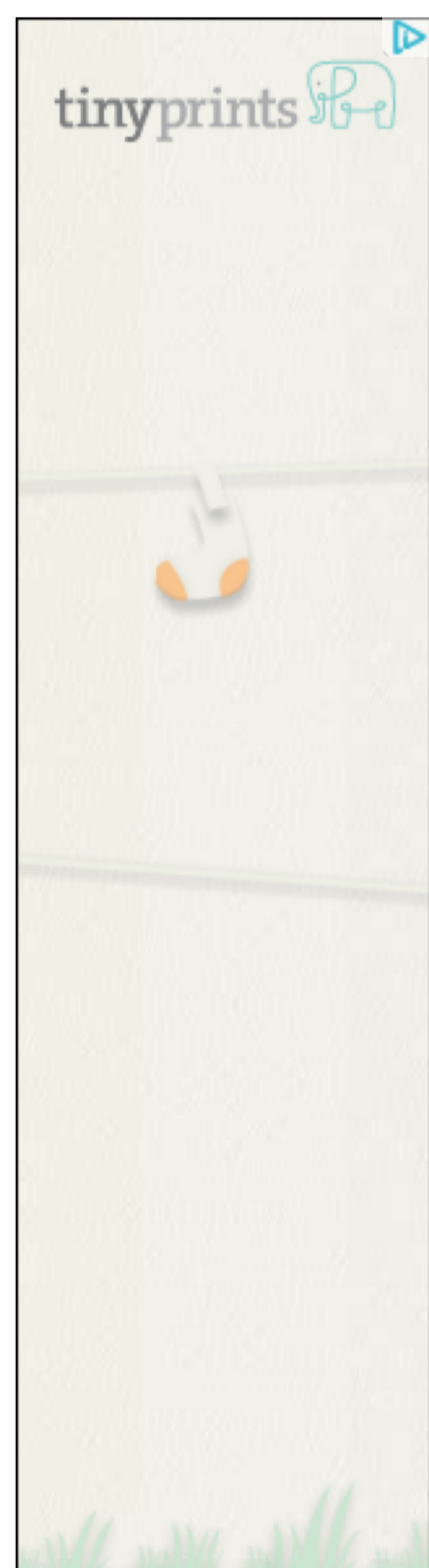
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Comment by Caleb Palma 623 days ago: Hi, I'm Via Audio's manager. Thanks for writing the review and saying some nice things about the band. We really appreciate it. I'm curious, though, about you mentioning the band's van saying snob. The story of the van is that it's street parked in Brooklyn and is a white van - so it gets tagged all the time. Eventually, the band decided to just have someone do a cool piece of art on it instead of there being a bunch of little sharpie tags. The artist did the "SNOB" piece you make mention of. BUT - It hasn't said snob for about a year now. They had someone do a new piece last June. So, how did you know that and why did you mention it out of curiosity? It happens to be discussed in the pitchfork review of the band's last record. Might that be where you did your research?

Comment by Jessica Martins 623 days ago: Hey, this is Jess from the band. Not only has the van not said "Snob" in almost a year, that very day we played Schubas, the van was off getting yet another paint job, the second since the tag you mentioned. Not that it matters but just seemed weird. Anyway, thanks for the review!



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