

# Live

**Sneaky Feelings, Rupert E Taylor & Chris Matthews, Screaming Pope, Crunchy Something, Chris Knox, Ape Hangers, Jack Pudding Gluepot, Easter Monday**

I often hear people complaining about the state of the local music industry. They say the record companies are slack, only the "independents" make any effort to release local product. The radio stations are boring, only the student stations play decent local bands. Me, I'd like to complain about audiences, the few people who go to see local bands.

Easter Monday at the Gluepot had the potential to be an afternoon to remember. It's not that the bands weren't good, most of them were very good, but the audience — about 180 people — seemed uninspired by most of it. Have people forgotten how to create, for themselves, a good time? Sure, it was the end of a long weekend, but apathy is boring. I suppose

some of them were looking forward to getting back to work and having a good rest — bloody boring.

First on stage were Jack Pudding, who played that kind of contorted rock that you either like or you don't, lots of guitar and beating rhythms. Not really my thing, but some one even dared to dance, so they can't have been that bad. A good performance from the singer, dynamic vocals and lots of moving about.

One of the better bands of the afternoon were Screaming Pope. A relatively new band who play well, with clever songs, sounds ranging from ragey pop to precise punk and lots of energy. Not a bad audience reaction too. The Apehangers are not serious about anything except having a good time. They play acidic 60s covers by bands like the 13th Floor Elevators and the Rolling Stones. How Rod Alley can sing like Robert Plant and smile at the same time is pretty amusing. Audience reaction was good, most people clapped, some even laughed at the good fun performance.

Next up were three young men and a young woman who call

themselves the Battling Strings. They are changing as a band, developing more of their own style, especially in the newer songs. Influences ranging from the Yardbirds to Goblin Mix. Although they didn't play that well, one memorable song was the first one, a moody ditty sung by bassplayer Rachel and drummer Mike.

Chris Knox is a solo performer playing and singing his own songs, and usually damn inspiring. Maybe it was an attempt at some audience reaction, but I find making jokes about your friends, who just happen to be in the audience, irritating gossip column mush-cough. Crunchy Something had a resonance that on first hearing sounded good. But with the lack of dynamics and similarity in most of the songs, it is not enough to sustain much interest. Maybe a frontman would have helped but neither the guitarists nor the bassplayer made much effort in that direction.

Rupert E Taylor seems to have come into his own as a performer and singer since the split of the Birdsnest Roys. Those who saw him at the recent Happy Accident

shows will remember his wit as a comedian and talent as a vocalist. This time he made up half of a duo with Headless Chicken Chris Matthews. Chris played some tasteful guitar with Rupert and himself taking turns at lead and backing vocals. Great, thoughtful, songs — very good to listen to and not unpleasant to hear as a background. Both, given the right amount of support, should do very well together as a duo or on their

own individual projects.

By the time the next band came on stage the audience were looking decidedly worn out. Shame about the lack of enthusiasm, because Sneaky Feelings gave one of their best performances I've seen in ages. The Sneakys play the kind of pop that doesn't go in one ear and out the other. The sound is more sophisticated, requiring the listener's attention in order to appreciate the subtle

blend of harmony and rhythm that they're known for.

You may have heard that the local music industry has resolved to make more effort promoting local music. There are heaps of good local bands who'd love to play for you, so why not get out and support them. It's not difficult, and they're much more fun than discos.

**Laurence Landwer-Johan**

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