

November 9, 2008

Hi guys-

Here's the Invisible Surfers review. Good Show. P-Man sez check them out.

Talk soon, Love on ya, P

Invisible Surfers/Down & Out
Gagarin Club, Athens
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Madonna concert tickets- 90 to 250 Euros; Jennifer Lopez tickets- 50 to 300 Euros; Def Leppard- 70 Euros. The list goes on and on. This situation isn't just overpricing of entertainment events, it's flat-out extortion of your hard-earned money. If I didn't get free tickets or a press pass to attend these things, I wouldn't go either. Pop and rock concerts are primarily for kids and teenagers. They don't have a lot of money. They're in school or university all day and maybe work a few hours in a jeans store or ice cream shop to earn pocket money. Why should they hand that cash over to greed-monster promotion companies and bloated, moronic music stars who live in their protective-bubble environments, as oblivious to outside reality as Dracula's brides?

There are several solutions to this situation, ranging from boycott to seeking alternative entertainment. I say do both. Friday night's outstanding rock show at the Gagarin club is a fine example of great local entertainment presented at a reasonable price. Two of the finest power-trios in the city, Down & Out and Invisible Surfers shook the hardboards of the club as well as any visiting, big-name bozo band who swoops into town for some quick bread and leaves the next day.

Down & Out took the stage and came out smoking with an hour long set of southwestern, bourbon-stomp-blues based rock. Dressed in early 1970s, ZZ Top style cowboy gear, they played original material and covers that ranged from 2:4 crunches, mid-tempo rockers and space jams to bump and grind shuffles and walking bass speed rock. Rick, their guitarist, played a reverse-cut stratocaster and rectangularly-shaped, Bo Diddley model axe like an arena rock champion. His playing style ranges from Johnny Winter-seque pentatonic minor scales to CC DeVille's LA glam-blues signature noodling. Also, his slide guitar playing technique is similar to Aerosmith's infamous and legendary Joe Perry, who employs a cross-handed, above-the-neck, fingering method. Bassist Tasos plays in the style of early Mott the Hoople's Overend Watts and Rick Derringer's great bassist Randy Joe Hobbs. Tolis, their drummer, plays steady, non-flashy, dependable but catchy traps that are rock solid but keep your ear moving constantly. Their set highlights included "New Single," "School boy," and "Let it all Go."

Invisible Surfers mounted the stage after Down & Out's set. They are a true surf band with a few exceptions. Most surf music is played with high-end, treble guitars with single-coil pick-ups (built-in

microphones that receive string vibrations). Examples of these guitars are the classic Fender Jaguar and Telecaster models. Invisible Surfers use more powerful guitars with Humbucking pick-ups for a more bottom-end arena sound. The resulting effect is dazzling. It's true instrumental power-surf, played in big-time, stadium-rock style.

The Invisibles do more with less than any other band I've ever seen. Song construction, for the most part, tends to be simple. The majority of their pieces employ 1-4-5 or 4-4-5 chord progressions with time signature variations and short bridges. Alex, their guitarist, plays pointilistic, ascending and descending melodic octaves all over the place that are jaw-droppingly impressive to watch and hear.

They are clever guys who know that a long set of straight surf can become taxing to those who are not devotees of the genre. They use a large movie screen behind the drum kit and project a film loop by D.S. Sebastian entitled *Hot Rod Girls Save the World*. The mostly black and white film appears to be an heroic, patched-together, labor-of-love using public domain pieces, home-made video stuff and copyright expired film footage from the 50s through to the present day. It's an endless projection of creepy, papier-mache monster masks, cheesy dancing skeletons, tricked-out stock cars and defiant looking babes a la cult-superstar, pulp-actresses Betty Page and Tura Satana. The roaring surf music was a perfect garnish to the visual assault talking place on the screen. If a couple of live go-go girls in fringed g-strings, cheetah-print bras, teased-up hair and PVC hip-boots had been available to dance on stage with the band, the effect would have been complete.

They showcased material from their new disc *'Till That Day*, and older songs from their Hitch-Hyke records release, *Dogs Killa Cat*. Cover material included the Ventures's "Pipeline," Del Shannon's "Runaway," and a scorching version on Link Wray's classic "Jack the Ripper." Not bad for an 18 Euro show. Remember, if you go to see someone like Sting or Bruce Springsteen for hundreds of Euros a ticket, you are indirectly responsible for them coming back next year and charging even more for their services. These big guys charge what they think the market can bear. They try to squeeze every nickel out of every fan, anyway they can. Wouldn't you do the same if some twit were willing to give his entire paycheck away to for the privilege of seeing you perform for a couple of hours?

You have a chance to alter their mindsets and pricing strategies by supporting decent bands at the local level. It's up to you, the consumer, to try and change things or continue to pay through the nose.