

Teddy Boys from the Crypt/B-sides

After Dark club/June 20, 2008

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“Glorify,” is a word that Jim, the lead singer and bassist of the band Teddy Boys from the Crypt, likes to use quite often. In our phone conversations, e-mails and interview he informed me that I must glorify his band to no end in this article. I don't know if I can accommodate the Teddy Boys' thirst for immortality to the extent desired by Jim, but I can give their performance at After Dark club last Friday a very positive review.

Their clothing style is a mixture of '65 Brian Jones meets '66 Brian Wilson. When it's time to play, they take the stage like they own it. There are no shy, retiring, Ian Curtis type musicians in TBFTC.

For the first half hour, they played layered, in-your-face, Farfisa-fuzz rock with a monster backbeat and extremely tight song arrangements. As their set progressed, the pieces became more spacey and open in their constructions. The guitar faded in and out, background vocals became dominant and more moody, atmospheric instrumental soloing took precedence in the material.

Near the end of their program the music evolved into a full-blown, Phil Spector-style, electric wall-of-sound. The nearly sold-out crowd at After Dark club appeared to be quite pleased with the band's playing and two encore songs were performed with lots of sweat and, dare I say, glory.

The only complaint I have about the show is that Jim, the singer, is a bit verbose with his between song bantering. A couple of times while he was gabbing-on about some incoherent nonsense I felt like calling out, “can *w*esing while you're talking?”

The evening's program began with the five-piece band, B-sides. They played a solid set of swirly-organ power-pop and the singer's vocal stylings were quite compelling to hear. Her strong voice varied between Joan Jett style panther screams to B-52's signature whooping and wailing with no visible effort on her part. Also, her Pat Benatar meets Dandy Warhols hairstyle and Jackie Kennedy-era one piece frock blended perfectly with the band's indie-alternative image.

The overall sound presentation for both bands was quite good. The After Dark club is one of the few remaining quality rock and roll venues in the city. Nikos, the owner and manager of the club, is an excellent sound engineer and he mixed both groups' music with technical competence. Nothing was ever too distorted or muddy for the audience to endure.

During our after show interview I discovered the TBFTC have a great range of musical and non-musical influences. Tassos, the band's drummer, gave me an insight into the group's creative psyche.

"We're all into 60s bands like the Sonics, Standells and Chocolate Watch Band. As far as film goes, Italian exploitation movies and the early work of Wes Craven, Roger Corman and Greek director Dyanides top or list of favorite viewing material. And, of course, the E.C. Comics graphic novel masterpiece series "Tales from the Crypt," are essential to our artistic being."

The band also has a nowadays uncommon strategy for marketing their material. Chris, the organ player, holds a stoic view of modern technology and favors a more traditional approach to getting the band's music to its listeners.

"I want people to actually go to the store and buy a record that has meaning to them. These days it's simply too easy to download something from the web and then forget about it the next day. That's why our releases are still vinyl-pressed and our web site has no downloadable songs."

I did not have a chance to speak with Tolis, their guitar player. On stage he is the least animated member of the band. I would categorize him as a quintessential rock guitarist with a, "let the music do the talking," personal demeanor.

My final opinion of TBFTC is quite an enthusiastic one. They are four guys in their thirties who play the music they love with competence and passion. Sometimes they are kind of cool; sometimes they are kind of nerdy; sometimes they are kind of nuts. However, every note delivered to us this night was absolutely genuine and driven by clean adoration for the 60s Farfisa-rock sound. They're a pretty good band. You should check them out.

www.myspace.com/theteddyboysfromthecrypt
www.myspace.com/fuzzoverdoserecords