

THE REVIEWS

... of yesterday's best performances

Franz Ferdinand: vote FF

You don't actually realise how much you have missed a band like these four young blades until they walk onstage and throw out a song like *Michael*. You also don't realise just how many bands have subtly ripped off their style until they pull and tease through *Matinee*.

Sharp as a pin and bright as a button, this is bespoke pop which is as timeless as the sight of Stradbally Hall bathed in floodlights.

Alex Kapranos says it's two years since they've visited Ireland, a time spent writing and recording new songs. On the evidence of the untitled newbies heard tonight, album number three is going to be the hit of next season.

Jim Carroll

Cathy Davey: sexy back

If you were one of those in line outside a heaving tent straining to catch Cathy Davey, we apologise, but you missed a cracking gig. Single-handedly bringing sexy back to

the Crawdaddy in a backless black dress, the Wicklow songstress rocked a die-hard crowd with perfectly pitched renditions of all the hits from her recent album, *Tales of Silversleeve*, adding a few oldies and some newer numbers that bode well for things to come.

Though an Electric Picnic first-timer, she was instantly in charge, with a voice that took over and an impressive ability to make tambourines and howling look cool. Kids, don't try this at home. **Fiona McCann**

The Kills: two's a crowd

Striding onstage, all skinny jeans and strident guitars, The Kills made it clear they meant business as they launched full blast into *U.R.A. Fever*, the opening track from this year's release, *Midnight Boom*. In case you were in any doubt about how bad-ass they were, vocalist Alison 'VV' Mosshart did some convincing stomping and growling from behind a mane of long dark hair, while Jamie 'Hotel' Hince's garagey guitar riffs let rip.

With just the two of them, the stage seemed a little bare for all that attitude and noise, but Mosshart had plenty of presence to pull it off, though her pouting and prancing at times veered a little too close to Steven (or Bonnie?) Tyler to be taken altogether seriously.

The sound quality didn't do them justice, but The Kills still managed to pull in the punters with their raw, rocking clamour and seriously sexy sounds. **Fiona McCann**

Grace Jones: bumper outfits

She kept us waiting, but drama queens are allowed to do that, aren't they? Opening with a slinky, slow-motion, dubbed-out *Nightclubbing*, Jones turned the Electric Arena stage into a catwalk. Indeed, every song necessitated a costume change. We liked the hat she'd obviously left over from last year's Hallowe'en party, though we'll reserve judgement for now on the leotard, tails and whip.

No arguments with the music, though. The hits *Pull Up To The Bumper* and *My Jamaican Guy* boomed and bucked with sleek panache, while the new tracks from forthcoming album *Hurricane* slotted right into place, shoulder-pad to shoulder-pad. Yes, we all became slaves to her rhythm. **Jim Carroll**

Duffy: oh mercy, mercy me

She may be only 5'3", but the diminutive Duffy had no problems taking over the main stage yesterday, armed with a big, belting voice and a little black dress. With an enviable, old-school grace and some

Welsh supreme: souls star Duffy light up the main stage yesterday



microphone-swinging moves, she brought a little Ronnie Spector, a little Dolly Parton and a lot of her own brand of dusky, soulful pop to the masses, and they loved it.

Though her heels were high, her set seemed short, but a pretty Welsh lilt and a polished performance rounded off with a rousing version of her smash hit *Mercy* were adequate compensation.

Fiona McCann

Somadrone: big-up Small

It was all *Small Hours* on the Body & Soul stage yesterday afternoon. Today FM's Donal Dineen was in charge of

proceedings and had picked his line-up more carefully than a Kerry football manager on All-Ireland day.

Vyvienne Long's quirky tunes, James Yorkston's lovelorn folk and Matt Elliott's wayward electronica and, of course, Somadrone's sweetly pitched electro-acoustic melodies all featured.

Neil O'Connor had a couple of musicians onstage to help him flesh out those slender, subtle Somadrone songs, from the albums *Of Pattern and Purpose* and *Fuzzing Away To A Whisper*.

It was a lovely set of blissful, slow-motion sounds, the perfect soundtrack for a cup of coffee and a slice of chocolate cake. **Jim Carroll**

Don't throw it all away: Isn't it only beautiful to be out among the muck and the hay in lovely green Ireland? Course it is. So don't sully the site by dumping rubbish. Please use a bin

from *Hey Venus* to *Sensitize* - band members grinning at each other as the crowd responded - it was clear that the mojo is still very much working. This could well be a reunion to go on and on. **Jim Carroll**

Josh Ritter: oh mercy, mercy me

Josh Ritter's fans are a festival phenomenon, astounding with their near-miraculous memorisation of every lyric and the indefatigable energy with which they holler them at him as soon as the first chord sounds. The darling of the festival (he had appeared at the Hot Press Chatroom and the Literary Tent before returning to his perennial picnic home at the Crawdaddy), Ritter still managed to make it all look like a whole lot of fun when he kicked off his set in a three-piece suit and mile-wide smile.

He played the old favourites - *Kathleen* is a Crawdaddy classic at this point - with his usual verve and delight, and tagged on enough from his latest, *The Historical Conquests of Josh Ritter*, to have added something new to an already winning formula. **Fiona McCann**

That Petrol Emotion: no fuel crisis here

Watching That Petrol Emotion turn back the years on the Crawdaddy stage made you wonder just what would have happened if they hadn't called it a day in 1994. After all, the elements are still as magnetic and alluring as they were back then: infectious rhythmic grooves, tough pop hooks and Steve Mack whirling like a dervish centre-stage. As they switched

GOOD STUFF

- The mysterious dumping of talcum powder into many portaloo bowls. Thank-you, kind stranger.
- Poppy's Parents' Place: a tent that looks like your Granny's front room
- Programme maps that double as waterproof seats
- The sexiest Picnic crowd ever - well done, boys and girls

BAD STUFF

- Inconsistent security: punter one gets the third degree, punter two gets a red carpet
- Complaining about the toilets - it's the new complaining about the weather
- The Bacardi Stage - branding OD, dude
- Long queues for food stalls reviewed in Daily Ticket!

TANGO FACTOR

How do you rate our fake-tan index? Check our chart ... from healthy glow to heavy trowel

From beyond Picnicland:

- Barrier-free tolling on the M50 kicks into action this weekend: over to you, tomorrow-morning rush hour
- New Orleans goes on alert as Hurricane Gustav decides to follow the path of Katrina
- Tibetan exiles stage a symbolic 12-hour fast for peace in Tibet. The Dalai Lama, hospitalised on Thursday with "abdominal discomfort" also joins in.
- Premiership big scores: Arsenal **3-0** Newcastle, Everton **0-3** Portsmouth, West Ham **4-1** Blackburn, Hull **0-5** Wigan

Star spotter:

- Supermodel Erin O'Connor
- Big gentleman on campus Patrick Bergin
- Musos Paul Noonan and Fionn Regan



They came, they saw, they killed: The Kills on Crawdaddy

feast your ears at the picnic

hmv get closer

WHEN ALL IS SAID & DONE...

...The Ticket pullout in tomorrow's IRISH TIMES gives you the last word on the Electric Picnic 2008.

THE TICKET
THE IRISH TIMES
irishtimes.com