

Review – The Drones - 24/03/07, The Annandale Hotel

Written by Punter.

I missed the first band tonight, but they were easily the highlight of the evening. Johnny Casino and his Secrets do country- blues drenched rock with attitude, humor and panache- they are a good fun, rockin band who aim to entertain, fronted by fat axeman Johnny who can also hold a tune (or this is how my booze addled brain recalls them after seeing them at the same venue some months ago- and they did a great cover of Dylan's 'Ballad of a thin man').

So they had to be a shitload better than French grunge pointless noise experts – Dimi Dero Inc.- who came on next and who should have stayed in Paris, in 1994. And they were also measurably better than The Drones.

There is nothing really drone about them (musically speaking, as in a low sustained note), but the word is apt to describe both the crowd and their champions in the Australian music industry (biologically speaking – male honeybees who do nothing to contribute to the maintenance of the colony, and whose sole function is to mate with the queen). I should love this band- I love rough, raw, passionate rock, and I should love the band that makes this music that succeeds in gaining some wider acknowledgement. But having given both their releases a good listen and found them banal, I thought I'd give them a go live, as I'd heard good things about their show. I was disappointed to find them even worse live.

I spent the whole set waiting for something to happen, then being repeatedly let down when it did. Each and every song followed the same dynamic cycle- soft verses of incoherent mumbling, then loud choruses of histrionic wailing, meaning the singer's words were constantly inaudible – could there be anything more futile in music than an inaudible ballad? Yes, twelve in a row. No singing at all really, no subtlety, no nuance, and no respite from front man, Gareth Liddiard's melodramatic, tortured angst. The only real melodies were to be found in the “na na na” of Shark Fin Blues and the ‘aye aye aye’ of Jezebel, which I admit are pretty good songs. But two Drones tunes would have sated me tonight. And Weddings, Parties, Anything have already done the story of Alexander Pearce (the convict who ate his fellow escapees), and they did it infinitely better.

To those of you who haven't seen the Drones, don't bother; to those of you who've seen them and thought 'what's the fuss about?' – I agree; and to those of you who saw them and still like them, drop me a line and let me know why – maybe I missed something (although, as my mate said – maybe I wasn't drunk enough).

Ps – M said that they played their instruments well, and I agree on that.