

MEGAreviews live

OK Motels: Charlton, Victoria 23/11/2019

by Michelle McGoldrick - Writer On The Road

Charlton, northern Victoria: a town where many buildings are original and need painting - and that's not a bad thing. An agricultural and farming stop, Charlton has for years drifted along as a mecca for tradition, peace and quiet. That is, until the **OK Motels** crowd started to arrive.

Founded by **Kate Berry** and supported by Melbourne Radio **3RRR**, the Ok Motels gigs series started in 2018. At the November 23rd gig, locals and blow-ins well and truly frocked and rocked to a hard core lineup of Melbourne grunge punk bands who speedily made the three hour trek up the Calder Highway.

Opening act **Moody Beaches** set a high bar with bitch bass, guitar and an accomplished drummer who plays like she has the world at her feet. This tight powerhouse of rock grunge knuckled down and cranked up with complete confidence, aptitude and attitude. A very impressive ring of noise and definitely one to watch into the future.

Second act **Pinch Points**: thrash rock, fearless and relentless. Opinionated and unapologetic for not playing the game - they perform like they're prepared to throw anything back at you. A crowd favourite. Just don't stand too close.

Moaning Lisa: If grace and grunt could ever be placed in the same sentence ... this band reinvented the phrase *owned the stage*. A rock photographer's dream; the hair-flicking, guitar neck management, and genuine ease on stage showed the crowd how post-Canberra grunge rock blasts light and dark.

Fourth band of the night, **Batpiss**, didn't waste any time in hitting a cock rock wall of self assured, blues-punk inspired force. The sound was nasty and built on an intensity that drove a domineering and unstoppable wall of exploding frustration which again prompts the question: what is it about these three



piece bands that creates such badass energy. With little time to catch their breath and refill drinks between sets, the crowd set the party floor on fashion fire with a jump and flow of fluorescent dresses, flouncy shirts, purple makeup, boiler-suits - and treads (as in shoes.) **DJ Hot Wheels** spun the 80's hits of Dragon, Big Country, 'M' and everything in between. At one point it sounded like Buggles was going to kill the video star but we were saved in mercifully good time by the onset of the next band who bid goodbye to Bucks Fizz to refocus on tunes of anti-conformity.

Main act, **Amyl and the Sniffers**, faced a crowd that were adoring and itching to pogo. This was road rock, 'burbs bangers, an ocker-not-mocker pastiche of styles which sounded like a derision from all that has become precious in rock music today. Between the singer's head banging style of a force not seen since the days of Angus Young's fame, the bass player's sharpie haircut and naked torso, and serious intentions of the rest of the band - this act is mesmerising in its' edge of hardness and lipstick smiles of lead singer **Amy Taylor** whose sex appeal, slang and stage moves lead the band into wild performance territory.

With angst and anger this band sweep away the preconceptions of music from the past 30 years as they make it clear they abhor bullshit. Their music demands truth as it tears down boundaries of isolation and the homogeneity of modern music that has crept in since corporatization, streaming and en masse home recording software took over.

It was also validating to watch Taylor stage dive into the crowd and be handled with respect in the mosh pit.

Ok, Motel: it's hip, edgy and visionary when a tribe of independent minded and free thinking groovers infiltrate a rural town to embrace original 70's decor, curiosity and smash music divides. Bonding over pool competitions, pies from the local pastry shop and meat raffles; the OK Motels weekend is now a rite of passage for many. Inclusion, defiance, and freedom from constraint fuelled by the incredible energy of the music; the Ok Motels gig in Charlton on November 23rd will be remembered for the great party that it was but also for the signalling of a rebellion in the making.

End piece: Four days later Amyl and the Sniffers won **Best Rock Album** at the **2019 Aria Awards** in Sydney.



Headliners- Amyl and the Sniffers
Photo: Michelle McGoldrick



Pinch Points
Photo: Michelle McGoldrick



Road sign outside Charlton
Photo: Michelle McGoldrick



Trendy Treads -
Who owned a pair of these in the 70's?