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Meredith Music Festival

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Friday December 12, 2008 at 12:00 PM

Audience: 18 and over

Meredith Music Festival

Mt. Mercer Road, Melbourne

VIC, 3000, Australia.

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Beaches

While Meredith 2008 might go down in history as the wettest in its 18-year history, the rain was only just starting up when Beaches took to the stage early on Friday evening.

The crowd, most of whom had probably only been exposed to this band via gushing articles in the local street press, was curious and expectant. As the musicians took their positions, it was apparent that they felt a little bit lost in this setting. There were nervous glances between band members and the first couple of songs were rather tentative, until bassist Gill Tucker broke the ice by marveling at the huge projection of herself on the screen behind the band: "Oh, look! I can see the back of my new haircut. It looks good!"

From here on in, Beaches delivered a set ever increasing in intensity, with most of the material from their debut album getting an airing and occasionally being extended into cyclical jams that once again brought to mind their love of the repetitive '70s kraut-rock of Can and Neu! The crowd responded enthusiastically, proving that not only are Beaches damn good at what they do, but they are also able to communicate to a larger and more varied audience. Not bad from a band of mates that set out to achieve nothing more than having a good time.

As Gill quipped towards the end of the set: "We don't really want to leave. Maybe we'll just keep playing."

by **René Schaefer**

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Mountains In The Sky

A bedraggled looking mob of rain-soaked and hung-over festival goers gathered in Meredith's swampy amphitheatre just after lunchtime on Saturday to check out Melbourne's Mountains In The Sky. Despite the somewhat subdued mood, head Mountainman John Lee, aided by Matthew Watson on drums and Jojo Petrina on Moog synth, put on one of the stand-out performances of this year's festival.

The fusion of live beats with old-school electronica and laid-back psychedelic sounds brilliantly brought to life songs from Mits' latest album *Electron Suite*. Minds and feet were warmed by insistently repetitive grooves and fuzzed out space-age bachelor pad melodies. Adding even more smiles to the shivering crowd's faces was the appearance of first one, then two, then three dancers in giant inflatable costumes that resembled a cross between fluorescent rabbits and giant pieces of cheese. Even Lee seemed bemused, wondering aloud whether anybody else was able to see these apparitions or whether it was only him.

Somehow this seemed to embody the spirit of Meredith more than any soulless imported one-hit

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PLAYLIST

Our staff favourites to get your ookos around.

wonder (I'm looking at you, MGMT), and proved yet another triumph for our home-grown talent, rivaled only by a stunning set later in the night by disco wunderkind Muscles.

by **René Schaefer**

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Tame Impala

"If it's any consolation, I'm standing in a puddle," jokes Tame Impala's Kevin Parker while morning rain continues to soak Meredith's Supernatural Amphitheatre.

Playing at 11am on an otherwise dreary Saturday, Tame Impala are filling some big gumboots — The Devastations, Snowman and Eddy Current Suppression Ring have all occupied that slot in the past — but they reward Meredith's "early" risers with an absorbing set of '60s-inspired psych-rock. They don't seem overawed by the gathering masses either. Like their heroes — Cream, The Doors, Jefferson Airplane, Kyuss — Tame Impala realise that big riffs are best suited to the big stage.

Dressed in Modular-appropriate fluoro, the Perth trio have swelled to a four-piece for this performance. Or is the guy shaking the tambourine in a multi-coloured scarf just some random stray/a hallucination? He later picks up a sunburst Gibson to prove his credentials/existence adding some nice little flange ring-outs to proceedings.

As with all good jam bands, Tame Impala's sound is anchored by a steady rhythm section. Their blonde mop of a drummer Jay Watson knows just when to hold back, and when to cut sick. When he does, it's a thing to behold: all flailing arms, jungle toms and washes of ride. Parker's vocals, on the other hand, are used sparingly. More functional than artistic, they effectively signify when a section starts or when a song is about to end.

Their inspired cover of Blue Boy's forgotten house hit 'Remember Me' caps off a memorable set by a promising young band. It'd be a great desert rock show if it wasn't so fucking wet.

by **Darren Levin**

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Muscles

Muscles sure had a point to prove when he positively bounced onto the stage of the Supernatural Amphitheatre late on Saturday night. A year earlier, he had pulled out of his maiden Meredith performance due to serious illness, and judging by the exuberance he brought to an otherwise dismal night, he was eager to make amends.

Occupying the 12.30-1.20am post-headline slot — the ecstasy slot — Muscles brought the party to a crowd somewhat deflated by disappointing imports MGMT and two days of wild weather. But with just a light shower, things were starting to look up.

Far from his early days where he'd perform effectively rooted to the spot, Muscles worked the stage like one-man party machine Andrew WK last year. When he wasn't tinkling the keys or triggering samples, he was corralling the audience to adopt his "Peace, Love, Ecstasy" mantra. Not bad for a guy who yearns for a drug-free disco.

But Muscles did get high — from paint fumes wafting over from a neon graffiti wall set up side of stage. Later, an over-zealous smoke machine threatened to engulf him, while lasers shot out into the night sky. And just when you thought it was all over, he re-emerged backstage with his pals from Architecture in Helsinki, before re-appearing to spruik his forthcoming new album *Manhood*, his website, his blog and Meredith Music Festival merchandise.

Nevereverland's [loss](#) was Meredith's gain.

by **Darren Levin**

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