



REVIEWS



Kitty, Daisy & Lewis playing at the
Meredith Festival 2009
Photo by Damien Loverso

Meredith 2009, The Undercover Wrap

By Haylee Cashmere
Sat, 19 Dec 2009 10:56:19 +1100

Another Meredith has passed us by. Meredith Music Festival is held every December in Meredith, Victoria and marks the start of the festival season. Undercover sent Haylee Cashmere and Damien Loverso along to report on the 18th Meredith Music Festival. Here is the wrap.

After arriving five hours later than planned, we had the pleasure of cruising on through the front gates to our campsite. The long line of impatient cars had well and truly evaporated by 5pm. This pro, however, came with the con of being placed in the not-so-prime real estate of the very back corner of the festival. C'est la vie!

After setting up camp, making ourselves acquainted with our new 3 day home and meeting the neighbours, we made our way down to the action.

Witch Hats were a last minute replacement for Crocodiles, who had to cancel due to an emergency in the family. These guys rocked hard for the start of the festival and set the standards with their grungy concoction of rock.

Next up were Akron/Family. I was very interested to see this buzz band live, having thought they were overrated. They sound much better live than their recordings, which was refreshing for a fence sitter like me. They were one of the more impressive bands of the weekend. Their set was more about the music than the voice, making for a psychedelic sound scape of rock and roll.

Time for Patrick Wolf, time for drinking at the campsite.

Now for those of you who don't know – Tumbleweed are back in town, and they were certainly alive and kicking at Meredith. The huge resemblance of vocalist Richard Lewis to SPOD was outstanding, but I soon got over that and began my journey into nostalgia. Remind yourself of where you were in the early 90's – especially those of you who were at high school back then and think about how much this band inspired a generation of music fans back in the day. Their reformation was welcomed with open arms as they played their old hits 'Stoned' and 'Sundial' and well and truly kicked off the first night of the festival.

I somehow regretfully missed 9/10ths of the Royal Crown Revue show. Got to have a boogie to their last song only. Time machine anyone?

Generally the first night of a big festival ends up with way too much alcohol consumption and regrets for the Saturday, but this Meredith was an unusually tame one and we managed to get an early night. This most likely revolved around the fact that in 24 hours I was going to see Jarvis Cocker and refused to be curled up in a spew ball for this set. Sweet dreams (of Jarvis).

Saturday was a killer day of bands. Kitty, Daisy & Lewis were great for a sunny afternoon. These siblings (and friends) made you feel like you were at a hoedown in Cry Baby, dancing with Johnny Depp. They ran around swapping instruments through their set and the girls voices sounded much more impressive than their MySpace voices.

There was a healthy mix of genres in the line-up this year, including hip-hop act Pharoahe Monch. Now, I don't know too much about hip-hop. To be honest, I don't know what makes it good or bad (Though I can safely assume Akon's castrato squeals = bad). I do know that Pharoahe Monch is one of the goodies. The energy this set threw out was unbelievable. His expressions were so passionate and his 'Fly Guy' dancer was to die for. Pharoahe had a moment to remember his friend and amazing scratch DJ, Roc Raida, who passed away in 2009. Fists were in the air. Heads were banging.

Jon Spencer's Heavy Trash was great to see live as well. Smooth and rocking, Spencer's rockabilly style suits him. Matt Verta-Ray's guitar sounded amazing as it swept over the crowd. Cry Baby hoedown #2.

I'd like to raise a shoe to Mr Paul Kelly. There can't really be a better time to watch Paul Kelly than watching him at sunset. It was a beautiful set and very rock 'n' roll. It wasn't a typical quiet acoustic set and he really played up for the fans at Meredith.

Playing a lot of his hits made for a lot of tearful smiles in the audience. His shows suit outdoor arenas so much and it was an honour to watch an Australian legend at Meredith.

Animal Collective – Boring and overrated. (Sorry, but it's true).

It was finally time for the man we had all been waiting for (well I had at least), Jarvis Cocker. This man has been in the music industry for almost 30 years and still acts as energetic as any new young excited act. He came out and politely introduced himself like a nice English gentleman "My names Jarvis Cocker, but you already know that".

First up was 'Angela'. It was a great and hugely energetic start to a great and hugely energetic set. The first half of his set was all from his most recent solo album 'Further Complications' and then he started to mix it up with songs from his debut solo album 'Jarvis'. His dorky wit and amazing hip swings truly make a Jarvis show unique. Nobody can swing like rubber man. We all shared a moment when he asked us how it was to be "balancing in equilibrium" in the middle of the festival. It was apparently all down hill from there; there was probably a lot of truth in that. There was plenty of interaction with the audience – giving away a bottle (was it rum?) to a guy in the audience, so long as he shared it. He then jumped into the crowd to give all the pretty ladies a hug. What a charmer.

He left playing instruments to a minimum – other than smashing some thunder samples on his small keyboard every so often. His guitar was seen once or twice, and the encore on piano.

He filled up his designated hour, though it felt like it ended too soon. There was a huge droney break before his encore, so huge that a lot of the crowd thought these long drones were the finale and left. How could the set be over though, without 'Cunts Are Still Running The World'?. It was a beautiful sing along to sign off another Jarvis tour before he wished us a 'Merry Chrissie' and left the stage. I left with a smile in a dizzy spin of a Jarvis haze.

Earlier on I missed out on San Francisco's Thee Oh Sees, which was apparently one of my biggest sins of the weekend. Most people I spoke to couldn't rave enough about them. I also missed Eddy Current Suppression Ring because I can never seem to prepare myself with enough clothes for the country icy chill. Yes, poor excuse, but luckily they were playing at Billboard later in the week, along with Thee Oh Sees in Melbourne. Back to the campsite to have more sweet dreams (of Jarvis. And mulled wine).

Seedy Sunday was a relaxing day – pizza for breakfast, relaxing in the sun and basking in our last day of Meredith.

Honourable mentions – The Meredith Gift (always a laugh), listening to Wagons from our campsite (should have made it to the stage) and the Hare Krishna tent. Dishonourable mentions – Stinky toilets (Why was the coffee line always so big?), DJ Mafia and the amount of times they played Beyonce in between bands.

Thanks Aunty Meredith, see you in March.

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