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alternative nation

LP review -Niall Quinn

No Cult ; Gone To My Head ;(comitem records)

This is the debut album from Newcastlewest's No Cult and it shows much promise from men so young. With an average age of only seventeen No Cult have a surprisingly strong identity and theme running through their sound already. Heavily guitar laden and angst ridden 'Gone To My Head' is consistently strong from the opening title track through the tenth, final and bizarrely named "2". Sixteen year old front man Eoin Rotheray has a voice that calls to mind Davy Jangles from their fellow county Limerick outfit the drive/the driven which is ably backed by the crunching guitars of Daniel Sykes and Patrick Hunt. The band claim a wide range of influences, and the opening two tracks 'gone to my head' and 'what's to say' had me thinking of those 1980's should've been huge Dublin band The Stars of Heaven while later in the album when track 8 'alpha' kicks in the backing track reminded me of Iron Maiden's 'The evil that men do'...and that's no bad thing. As No Cult mature as musicians and songwriters they could yet be serious contenders. But for

now this'll do nicely.

'Gone To My Head' is in all good record shops from 16th December and will be formally launched when the lads play Collios, Newcastlewest on Tuesday 22nd December.



David Gray -Dolan's

Warehouse, Thursday, December 10th

The deafening cheers of the packed auditorium gave the most resonant of assurances to the singer-songwriter that they were *his* people. Taking the stage to the opening chords provided by his by-then -sedentary keyboard player, Gray opened the proceedings with "Sail Away" from his recently released and excellent "White Ladder" album. As the opening number finished, Gray declined to engage in the usual Rock n' Roll tedium of "getting the crowd going", realising, with characteristic aplomb, that the songs would speak for themselves. Playing a total of sixteen songs, Gray indulged both those who had come to hear "the hits" and those who had come along for a live taste of the new album. Sounding at all times tight and in tune, Gray and his two accompanists, at various junctures complimented by a an assortment of pre-recorded sampled sounds, managed to produce a sound full enough to put many a five or six-piece to shame. Singing with the backing of an audience who seemed as *au fait* with the lyrics of the songs as the singer himself, Gray made his way through better known tracks such as "Late Night Radio", "Babylon", and "What does it matter", familiarising the audience with newer material intermittently. Returning for his first encore, Gray still had his best cards concealed. Launching into the anthemic "Shine", it was clear that the man could do no wrong. As a few trite souls began to wave their lighters, Gray, deflating the gesture, reminded them that they weren't at a Phil Collins gig. One can only



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speculate the pleasure the Welshman took in upsetting the hordes of drunken girls and boys who presumed that "It's all over" would close the proceedings; that honour being left to "Debauchery", a far less boisterous yet none the less affecting song. As the last fraught notes of the ballad faded, the crowd meandered in the direction of the exits, wondering why they had bought those Aslan tickets after all....

Michael Hourigan

The Divine Comedy- University Concert Hall, Wednesday

December 9th

"..Tall and strong, blonde and blue -eyed, pure and healthy, very wealthy....SWEDEN!!!!"

No, it wasn't a patriotic gathering at a *Stockholmare konsertsall*, but the plain people of "Oirland", and more specifically, the patrons of the University Concert Hall to whom the far from Nordic-looking Divine Comedy frontman was professing his love of all things Scandinavian. Kicking off their very first Limerick gig, Neil Hannon took to the stage looking like an anorexic Sinatra, swaggering to his mic with the gait of a man that knows he has arrived. Success didn't come overnight for the lad from Enniskillen and so he has learnt to savour it. Having survived the Wagnerean frenzy of "Sweden", Hannon and his backing musicians do the decent thing and get the woeful "Generation Sex" out of the way, thus enabling the performance of songs that, to understate things slightly, engage Hannon's talents a tad more. A superb rendition of "Death of a Supernaturalist" more than makes amends and the next song, "Don't Look Down", in which Hannon has an argument with God whilst riding a ferris wheel (yes really), reminds us of what a formidable lyricist Hannon is when he wants to be. "Commuter Love", an elegiac and wistful account of 'love from afar' is next, it's instrumental coda reminding us exactly why musically, Hannon and his group are head and shoulders above the mediocrity that characterises so much of today's pop. The fluency of the instrumentalists is made all the more considerable given that they are contending with arrangements that were often recorded under the baton of a conductor and a full orchestra. The remains of the set draw heavily from the new album, "Fin de Siècle" and having played almost all of the songs on the new album, the band perform a brief acoustic set. Armed with accordions and nylon string guitars they tackle "Songs of Love" and the excellent "Going Downhill Fast". In good Rock n'Roll tradition they go electric one more time so as to contend with "Something for the Weekend", the song that propelled them out of student bedrooms and into the charts. To the final ovation of the evening they go out for the last time, having brought to the halls of U.C.H. a brief respite from the groans of Charlie Landsborough. Michael Hourigan

A Very Specific Notice

DRUMMER Wanted

Some influences: Talk Talk; Nick Cave; Kate Bush; PJ Harvey; Smog....

Dynamic, sparse style appreciated
To join band with full recording
and concert commitments

Should this ad appeal to you -
We hope you haven't been scared off.

For more info: 086 8314361