

immaculate from the off. With quality vocals across the band, Paul Manzi led with a rich, clear tone and bassist Jeff Brown shared lead duties, the combo creating lush harmonies on memorable tunes like *Mr Heartache* and *Only In Vegas*. Add pleasing bonhomie and, aside from the misstep cover of Slade's *How Does It Feel*, they put in an excellent performance. Catch them before they hit bigger venues. *Ian Sutherland*

Primal Scream

Manchester Victoria Warehouse
24/9/16

View: standing, stage-right
Straight out of the traps with *Moving On Up*, Bobby Gillespie was on fine form, though taped backing vocals were less impressive, and vocalist Hannah Marsden, appearing on *Where The Light Gets In* and *Jailbird*, offered more style than substance. *Accelerator* and *Shoot Speed/Kill Light* also left those not au fait with Primal Scream's darker side dumbfounded, but none of it mattered as Gillespie and co moved into *Screamadelica* and the beautiful *Damaged*. The ease with which they jump from psychopathic krautrock to country-blues says everything about their eclectic nature. A mesmeric *Higher Than The Sun* followed, before an extended *Swastika Eyes*. Loaded was predictably loved-up, while *Country Girl* drew a wonderfully goofy grin from Gillespie as a mass singalong erupted. Rocks closed the set before an euphoric encore in the form of *Come Together*.

Not vintage Primal Scream, maybe, but the Glaswegians remain as relevant and unpredictable as they've always been. *Michael Halpin*

The Good Life Experience

Hawarden Castle
18-20/9/16

View: all over
The sun always shines on the righteous (*and aHa - Ed*), and it beamed for *The Good Life Experience*, a family festival of arts and culture, located in a picturesque setting. Children played on fairground rides and took in butchery demonstrations (well, mine did), while the musical entertainment was inspired in part by co-founder Cerys Matthews, with a diverse range of artists from the Flint Male Voice Choir to Hooton Tennis Club, Diabel Cissokho, Mike Garry/Cassia Quartet and punk poet John Cooper Clarke. All were in fine voice and kept the masses

entertained throughout.

If you're looking for a festival that's a family celebration and offers immersion in just about all art forms, amid a stunning setting, then *The Good Life Experience* is one for Toms and Barbaras everywhere. *Richard 'Jerry' Hogg*

Rachael Sage

London Troubadour
23/9/16

View: near front
Rachael Sage greeted her hip audience by wishing them "shabbat shalom" ("peace on the sabbath"), immediately engaging, and the quirky Jewish New Yorker followed by opening her set with *Heaven*. She performed most of the tracks from her extensive catalogue (a dozen-plus studio albums) on the keyboards, accompanied by solo violinist. Tracks new and old were gently emotive, her sound often shaped by Irish and Middle Eastern influences.

A wonderfully alluring and comical stage presence, in between tracks, Rachael regaled some hilarious anecdotes about personal relationships, family, and her first love, ballet, the inspiration for her new *Choreographic* (out 11 November). Its lead single, *Try, Try, Try*, was enchanting, with a feel-good factor that, like much of her canon, got feet tapping, as the dancer in her would have wanted. *Ruth Hockman*

Sharks

London Borderline
30/9/16

View: caged in
Cult 70s supergroup, Sharks, were revered and rated at the time, yet major success eluded them. Here, they hit a London stage for the first time in 40 years for another crack of the whip. Sadly, one founder member, Free's Andy Fraser, is no longer with us, but guitar legend Chris Spedding and charismatic vocalist 'Snips' Parsons remain, and were joined by Sex Pistols' Paul Cook, who provided a consistently rock-solid backbeat.

The venue was packed for this much-anticipated return, with members of Sex Pistols and Roxy Music in the audience. Sharks sit somewhere between the blues-rock, pub-rock and punk of the 70s, with original nuggets like *Sophistication*, *World Park Junkies*, *Cocaine Blues* and *Revolution Of The Heart* rolling back the years in fine style. With a new album imminent, new material aired included *Ya Ya Pop* and single, *One Last Thrill*, which

impressed hugely and blended seamlessly with the old classics. Spedding remains a consummate professional, and Parsons, his great voice intact, oozed charisma. An outstanding show, these Sharks still have plenty of bite. *Jim Rowland*

Mystery Jets

Leicester O₂ Academy
3/10/16

View: through nostalgic eyes
Mystery Jets are still releasing tunes for millennials' iPods, a dramatic voice-over accompanying the foursome on-stage, before *Flash A Hungry Smile* reverted to early years, along with *Half In Love With Elizabeth*. New material shone brightly too, with a new dark funk element through their *Curve Of The Earth* tracks. After an abundance of new tunes, the Jets played the heart-wrenching *Moonlight Satellite*, bringing the main proceedings to a soothing close.

The crowd were kept waiting for the encore number that stole every female drummer's heart: *Two Doors Down*, which brought the crowd back to life and allowed them to revel in nostalgia. Flakes followed, bringing the set to a heady close. *Mollie Mansfield*

Aynsley Lister

Burnley Mechanics
30/9/16

View: standing, middle
Aynsley Lister and his band calmly gave the assembled a great evening of classy blues-rock – the sound, lyrics and feeling – reminiscent of the style of Bill Nelson. A quite marvellous guitarist of passion and strength, and with a fine distinctive voice, his youthful looks bely a sensitive, mature soul. His singing and guitar-playing were masterful and controlled, his band by turns gentle and relaxed, then soaring dramatically and beautifully rocking out. Lister's solos are also equal to many of the greats, displaying taste and appropriateness, feeling to the fore.

From start to finish, over two hours, the crowd was awed, especially in the last quarter. During *Muddy Waters' Champagne And Reefer*, the togetherness and drive of the band was palpable. Great new songs, *All Of Your Love*, *Dishevelled* and *Il Grande Mafioso*, were introduced from *Eyes Wide Open*, and hearing *Andrew Price* on keyboards match Lister over the solid, empathic *Dryden* and *Amadeo* rhythms, made this an A-listener of an evening. *Andrew Mather*



Joyce

London Camden Jazz Cafe
3/10/16

View: front, left
Brazil's greatest female singer-songwriter, Joyce Moreno, was at a revamped Jazz Café to promote new album, *Cool*. Released on *Flash Out*, it features covers of the *Great American Songbook*. Her heavily Brazilianised reinterpretations of Cole Porter's *Love For Sale* and Peggy Lee's *Fever* sounded even better live, with a crack band of musicians (including husband percussionist, Tutty Moreno) given license to extemporise around well-trodden melodies.

A perennially engaging stage presence, she regaled the audience with background details to the Brazilian standards that made up the rest of the set, alongside works from her own remarkable 50-year career. Of the former, there were superlative takes on Johnny Alf's *Ceu E Mar*, Baden Powell's *Canto De Yansan* and Jobim's *Agua De Marco*, though, ultimately, it was her own songs that stole the show – the gorgeous ballad, *Essa Mulher*, demonstrated her vocal prowess, while *Feminina* was welcomed as the classic that it is, deserving of a place among the country's greatest music. *Paul Bowler*

Circus Maximus

London Camden Underworld
27/8/16

View: standing
A wallet-friendly four-band bill featuring futuristic prog-metal started with London-based *Looking For Droids*, who mixed psychedelia with heavy slabs of bass and guitar. *Memoreve*, from Leeds, showed promise with a gothic sound complimented by double-kick drumming, the single *Falling Further* hitting home. Rising locals Gabriel

delivered a stylishly atmospheric, hard-hitting set, with the chilling *Death Awaits* and weighty *Author Of Pain* speaking volumes.

But the night belonged to Norwegian headliners, *Circus Maximus*, who go for the kill with diverse sounds ranging from pop to full-on metal, akin to *Coldplay-meets-Metallica*. Vocalist Michael Eriksen held the audience in his grasp throughout and, in a career-spanning set, three tracks from new opus, *Havoc*, were aired, while favourites like the epic *Chivalry* displayed more movements than an erupting volcano. Their UK profile may be dormant, but after this performance, they're ready to explode. *Mark Taylor*

Meilyr Jones

London Village Underground
6/10/16

View: da iawn
Meilyr Jones and his band's set remains refreshing, from loud renditions of pop anthems like *How To Recognise A Work Of Art*, to fan favourite, *Featured Artist*, while the theatrical arrangements of *Olivia* and *Return To Life* brought his spectacularly diverse debut, *2013*, to life with panache. *Bowie's Rebel Rebel* neatly segued into *Strange Emotional*, before we were treated to calmer, stripped-back moments such as *Refugees*. The softly-spoken Welshman radiated warmth and intimacy, angelic at times, yet down to earth, thanks to his endearing songs and banter.

He ended unplugged, with the classical *Be Soft*, the band bathed in white light. Meilyr struck a commanding pose as the song built, before leaving with strings softly echoing in the darkness. The perfect end, and an intimate moment that's unlikely to be repeated for much longer. *Geoffrey Taylor*

Photo/John Cooper Clarke: Richard Hogg