

The Spin

September 22, 2005

The Spin

Union Jack

Here at the Spin, press passes are a dime a dozen. They'll get you in to, say, Weezer, but they won't guarantee that Rivers Cuomo won't cancel the after-show meet-and-greet because he's tired. So when we got spots for the invitation-only **Jack Daniel's 155th birthday bash** at Mercy Lounge last Saturday night, we figured, hey, free rock show. But then we saw the lineup: our very own quirky rock band **The Features**, along with two British up-and-comers, **Maximo Park** and **Editors**. It sounded like a good time, but nothing could have prepared us for the bacchanalian display that awaited us. Through a contest promoted in the U.K. by Jack Daniel's, *NME*, *Uncut* and Virgin Radio, JD flew some 150 British prizewinners to Nashville this weekend for a tour of the Lynchburg distillery and a night of rock. And boy did they keep the booze flowing. The crowd danced amidst a sea of plastic black cups filled with Jack & Ginger, Lynchburg Lemonade, Jack on the Rocks and a bunch of other stuff that tasted pretty good. The drinks weren't strong, but the supply was never-ending, so you could hardly complain. Did we mention the free food? Waitresses in shredded JD tees and miniscule minis circulated endless trays of hamburgers, veggie burgers, pumpkin fritters and chicken kabobs, then finished

off with a round of fudgey goodness—all of which went quite well with whiskey.

Oh yeah, the bands. The Features brought the rock. They apparently are doing “fairly well” in the U.K. according to everyone we talked to, and it was great to watch a crowd of Brits erupt over their single “The Way It’s Meant to Be.” The funny thing is, we could tell who was British without hearing an accent, though we never quite figured out how. Maybe it was the trainers, or their complexions, which look as though they’ve never seen sunlight. Or was it the way they smoked their cigarettes? Still, they were a polite bunch, yelling things like, “You play very well!” to the bands. “Oh, it’s been amazing,” a contest winner named Paul told us about his first trip to the States. “Of course, anything free is amazing, yeah?” Yeah. Editors might as well be called Interpol Jr., dressed in black and channeling intensely moody new wave. But Maximo Park won our hearts with their tight, rally-heavy post-punk. If only all the rock shows had such enthusiastic crowds and great music, there’d never be a bad review. And that’s not the booze talking.

Gab fest

Future rap legends **Blackalicious** turned it out at the Cannery on Monday night. The minimalist stage show—**MC Gift of Gab**, **DJ Chief Xcel**, a keyboard player and a couple of backup singers—underscored the band’s no-nonsense approach to rap. This was a show for fans of lyricism rather than gangster posturing. It was a workmanlike beginning, with the hulking Gab, in jeans and sweats, plowing through cuts from the band’s new CD *The Craft* with his melodic flow. Nimble-fingered and -footed keyboardist **RV**

Salts provided most of the energy with his crazy leg dancing until it was time for Gab to freestyle—at which time he transformed into a vocal powerhouse, showing the agile wordplay he’s famous for. Energized by the hyped crowd and Xcel’s rumbling beats, Gab roamed the stage like a mad lion. Since the band are co-owners of their label Quannum, some heads will do anything to be down with them—like the blockhead who tried to pass some demos to Gab while he was onstage. The humble MC graciously accepted them...on the third try. Maybe some Nash-villain will be the next Quannum superstar. Or not.

Pyramid scheme

The First American, the new album by talented Charlotte, N.C., band **Pyramid**, is an impressive mixture of spooky Americana, funereal marching band and ambient noise. Take the dark elements of Birthday Party and Tom Waits and cross them with the fragile, shaken vocals of, say, Okkervil River or Neva Dinova, and you’ve got one of those music-criticism approximations of how this band sound. On “The Engineer,” an ominous, sepia-toned waltz taut with foreboding, a train races along the tracks to some undefined doom—perhaps only in the narrator’s mind—as the band careen back and forth between whispers and blaring horns. It’s easy to imagine *The First American* as the soundtrack to a film rendition of “Young Goodman Brown,” or a similar tale of falling from grace. Pyramid will be at the Radio Café on Saturday, Sept. 24.

Livin’ the dream

Th’ Legendary Shack* Shakers have scored a major coup—a five-

week tour across Europe this fall opening for **Robert Plant**, whose voice you may have heard on rock radio once or twice. Actually, we think it's Plant who scored the coup, getting one of Nashville's balls-to-the-wallsiest bands to up his already formidable hip factor. (In case you didn't see his show at the Ryman a couple months ago, the former Led Zeppelin singer ain't no has-been—he was friggin' brilliant.) Plant first learned of the Shack*Shakers when they opened up for him at SXSW earlier this year. Major props to Col. J.D. and the boys, and a word of advice: while you're over the hills and far away, ramble on, stay a little dazed and confused, but don't get trampled under foot, and remember, your time is gonna come. (Sorry, couldn't resist.)

Help for hurricane victims

Each week, we grasp a little bit better what it will take for the victims of Hurricane Katrina to rebuild their lives—and with that realization come more opportunities to help, including some big benefit shows happening this week. Sunday at the 5 Spot, **Musicians Organized for Just Operations (MOJO)**, the **Tipitina Foundation** and the **American Federation of Musicians** are hosting a benefit that will start early in the day and last till long after the sun sets. In addition to raising money, they'll be taking instrument donations for musicians who've lost their gear in the disaster. On the bill are some of the city's best roots and rock performers: **Mary Gauthier, Thad Cockrell, Joy Lynn White, Julie Lee, Ole Mossy Face, The Mike Henderson Band**, event co-organizer **Shawn Byrne** and many more. For more information, call the venue at 650-9333.

The following night, Mercy Lounge and Cannery Ballroom host another strong event, this one raising funds for the American Red Cross. Playing downstairs in the ballroom are **Bobby Bare Jr., David Mead, De Novo Dahl, The Features, Matthew Ryan** and **Jason White**; upstairs in the Mercy Lounge: **Bill Lloyd, Chuck Mead, Gary Bennett, Paul Burch, Robert Reynolds** and **Thad Cockrell**. Show time is 7 p.m., and cover is \$20.

The performers playing 8 p.m. Wednesdays for the next several weeks at The Bar Car in Cummins Station were literally hit close to home: they're New Orleans musicians whose homes were damaged, if not destroyed, in the hurricane's aftermath. Drummer **Aron Lambert**, who left New Orleans with \$63, has organized weekly shows featuring displaced players. Guitarist **Anders Osborne** and bassist **Dave Jordan** round out the "**504-Ever**" house band, and guests so far have included **Jeff Coffin** and percussionist **Big Chief Smiley Ricks** from the **New Orleans Nightcrawlers**. All proceeds go to displaced musicians and to the New Orleans Musicians' Hurricane Relief Fund.

There are other benefit events going on around town all week. See our music listings for more info.

All contents © 1995-2005 City Press Publishing, Inc., 2120 8th Ave. S., Nashville, TN 37204. (615) 244-7989.
All rights reserved. No part of this service may be reproduced in any form without the express written permission of City Press Publishing, Inc. except that an individual may download and/or forward articles via email to a reasonable number of recipients for personal, non-commercial purposes.

NASHVILLE SCENE: [Home](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Jobs @ the Scene](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)
OUR SISTER PAPERS: [City Pages](#) | [LA Weekly](#) | [OC Weekly](#) | [Seattle Weekly](#) | [Village Voice](#)