

Back off Warchild. Seriously! – John Butler Trio at den Atelier

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(Disclaimer – strong language within this text)

Wednesday 02 July. Write it down. Mark it on your calendar. We know it was ridiculously hot, muggy and sticky. We are retrospectively aware that the atmosphere needed to clear. By now it is recorded that, as it had threatened to do, the sky cracked and began to fall. Lightning crashed and thunder roared. Rain plummeted. In torrents! It was also the night of, Antipodean reggae/folk/rock band, John Butler Trio's sold out trip to Luxembourg. There's patchouli oil attacking nostrils in the crowd, plenty of ¾ length shorts and a smattering of dreadlocks. Thankfully, being that Luxembourg is land locked (in case you were not geographically aware), there are not too many cardboard cut out surfers here. But, what the crowd lacks in Rip Curl T-shirts it certainly makes up for with quite possibly one of the best crowds **352** has had the pleasure to be stood with, but I digress.

Opening act Mama Kin, also from Australia, has a voice that belongs someway back in the 1960's, in the sense that it is full, smoky and rich in tone. Playing on stage with her brother Michael, a simple drum arrangement, some samples and a keyboard. She is for want of better words, captivating, entertaining and extremely talented. The crowd response echoed these sentiments. Her debut album Papoose is available now.

I'd be lying if I told you I knew the names of all the tracks tonight. So if it's ok with you, we'll stick with platitudes. Even though Butler

states, following his opening song "Hi, we're the John Butler Trio" pause, frantic tuning, pause "and this is one mother-fucking out of tune guitar!" What follows this swearsome intro is one of the most technically brilliant, awe-inspiring and downright incredulous live shows I believe the A has yet hosted.

Betterman, from Sunrise Over Sea is sublime, as is a glorious run through Used To Get High, followed by the nimble fingered riffage of Funky Tonight & recent single Better Than from Grand National. It quickly becomes clear that JBT inhabit the hinterland between Jack Johnson and Incubus while simultaneously being significantly better than both.

A 'new' song written about a 'woman' he met in America sees JBT at their most rocking, it's by far their most commercial tune, and given that it's a track berating MTV (the aforementioned woman) for the lack of music played on it's channels, it is perhaps their most ironic. The irony being that this track would be just what the station would have played when it first set out it's mission statement. This is not lost on Butler "See?!", he says "I don't think it'd be so bad, if they'd just play some fucking music videos!" Cue enormous cheers.

Butler then played an incredible steel lap guitar solo that should be cringe-worthy, but in fact held the crowd in complete and captivated awe with its astounding delivery. There were five-minute drum solos, even double bass solos. There were raise-the-roof call and responses chorus lines. Yet the best was yet to come. At the shows close, following an encore featuring Mama Kin back on stage, a monumental track saw all three members of JBT on percus-



sion simultaneously, seemingly beating their, and our, demons away.

Honestly, it was THAT good!

Now whether it's testament to JBT's sparkling live capabilities or that the fans here really are SO into it, the result is one of incredible atmosphere. I'd been told by many sources to expect a breathtaking live show. I did not expect to be quite so gob smacked. 'You've been Tango'd' to the power of 10, then.

To sum up, Wednesday 02 July will go down in Atelier legend. It'll be spoken about for some time to come. Those that were there will know that they saw/heard something pretty special. Those that weren't, well, that's your loss. There's something to be said about cookies crumbling after all.

www.johnbutlertrio.com
www.myspace.com/mamakin-music