

Band Substance

As a wise old man once said to us, "I've seen all good people turn their heads each day, so satisfied I'm on my way".

Have the LMS been victim of that age-old jinx that seems to have cursed every previous Society of the Year, or can the Baird like wit and retort of this sparkling new committee put the ghost to rest?

A fresh look to the LMS set-up (which may have as much to do with a Guild merger with a multinational sandwich corporation as the desire to innovate) actually worked really well; giving space to chill and drink as well as a main arena to view the cavalcade of talent.

With a large, and ever growing crowd, the clock tolled 8:45pm; Matt Cryer took to the stage! Well, not quite, but this guy didn't disappoint at all, his angelic timbre was enough to whip the unsuspecting crowd into a flurry. With a well thought out blend of known pop songs and some self-penned croons he was an absolute treat.

In one word: Mellow

The wittily named "Unnamed" are a new collective who certainly opted for the 'quality over quantity' policy, playing a very short set. We were very impressed with how tight they were, steamboating two very competent examples of their chosen genre. Look forward to seeing them later in the year.

In one word: Admirable

A low key entrance for the five piece Jazz

Quartet. This was a bit of a jam, quite pleasant, with some good musicianship. Rumour had begun to surface amongst the horde that this was the first time they had all met each other, if this was indeed the case then we can be very excited about what is to come!

In one word: Varied

The Fuzzy Warheads were on next – word is they are the band to beat this year – and they didn't disappoint. Nice to see a band enjoying their music and a front man who built a good rapport with the crowd; he also had an aptitude for athletics, parental advisory for the shouting though.

In one song: War

Team 19. After some self-defecation the band reeled off a varied range of pleasant cover songs from both sides of the pond. Nice to see Will carrying the baton of the Trice legacy that has brought LMS pleasure for so many years.

In One word: Safe

Legend X then treated us to a set in what seems like their 36th year playing the same songs at Aston. Amongst the highlights were the inevitable costume change and cheap gimmicks by Stephen Abbotts, which almost made up for his lack of talent. Sadly this was the farewell gig of outstanding guitarist Paul Quinn. Hopefully this will spell the demise of these cod-rockers. They claim to be the best band in the world, just the worst at it, I think even that is a bit optimistic.

In many words: Humdrum, foreseeable, avoidable and banal. Nice lads though. X

Next up was 6 degrees. Sporting a new singer

who has improved the band tenfold since last year - she's also a fiddler. They offered a new sound to the guild, whilst maintaining the same flair that won them the band of the year 2004-05.

In one word: Rootsy

Fulbright. And another welcomed return for a former guild legend, in the form of drumming maestro Remy. The performance from the bassist was also out of this world, especially considering he was absolutely positively definitely sh*tfaced. All in all a very tight unit who held the weary crowd to the last chord.

In one word: Charisma

Last up was Nimbin. The crowd by this time was as thin as the front three members, but the tunes were as cool as the drummer's look. Vocal duties looked more settled with Damien Rice taking priority, however 'Nature' Nurden showed off his newly acquired vocal ability on a heartfelt tribute.

In One word: Late.

This first showcase really went off with a bang, and with such little preparation time beforehand, the bands all showed magnificent aptitude. The next night (Thursday 10th November) promises to be even better! It's way too early to predict who'll win week 9's battle of the bands; although the bookies have stopped taking bets on Young Dresser.

Donald Becker and Security Fagan



HUNG UP ... MADONNA

In spring 2003 Madonna unleashed her long awaited American Life album. The album's concept and title single saw Madonna questioning what it is to be an American in the 21st century and was supported with some very political imagery, perhaps most famously Madge sporting a beret and brandishing guns and grenades to the camera.

The pinnacle of the new gritty political Madonna was the American Life video; a piece of hi-concept-post-millennium-post 9/11-armageddon-post-postmodern-post-post work in which models wear guns and middle eastern dress while scenes of explosions and war show behind them. It was all quite exciting but within a fortnight of the single's launch Madonna's homeland declared war on Iraq, bombs were

being dropped, people were dying left right and centre and suddenly American Life became a bit too real.

This time around things are different; the first single from her new album, Hung Up sees an orange haired Madge return to what she does best; making great pop music, the grenades dropped in favour of glitter balls. The track is made with the hook from Abba's Gimme Gimme Gimme, one of the best known disco records of the late 70s, which is brought up to date with some thudding dance music and the singer declaring "Time goes by so slowly". Not with this record though, it's instantly in your mind and you'll still be dancing and wanting some more when it's finished. This is the perfect blend of pop and dance music, combining the danceability of Gwen Stefani with the stomping disco sounds of the 70s, Madonna (or Oldfrapp as she's sometimes called by critics) is about to storm into the charts and our playlists over the next few months.

beNcooKe

