

STORMCHILD & SPRINGFIELD LIMIT

Whilst the Parochial Hall at Astley Bridge does not exactly stand out as the ultimate "get yer rocks off" venue, due to its dismal interior (not unlike a row of cinema seats inside an old piano - well that's what it smells like) and lack of a bar (not even Coke and Mars bars tonight), Springfield Limit at least put a bit of life into the place as they opened the proceedings. They even threw in a version of Joe Walsh's "Rocky Mountain Way" which the lead guitarist handled fairly well considering he wasn't in possession of a Jimmy Bean Voice Box (What? I can hear you say...). They seemed to go down fairly well in front of what appeared to be predominantly Stormchild's audience and with their distinctive sound and material could develop well in the future; the only cause for criticism was the frequently out-of-tune vocals. Maybe he just couldn't hear himself properly but in places he was definitely er, off.

After a short interval spent ignoring the unpleasant background noise (music?) emanating from a cassette deck next to the mixing desk, and watching 14-year old girls trying to hide behind AC/DC t-shirts, Stormchild took the stage amid intro tape, smoke and flashes. Cliche perhaps but noisy and always good fun. Having seen the band a few times before, the first thing I noticed were the improvements made by bassist Joe Rodmell and keyboardman Neil McCurley, the latter having improved soundwise as well as technically. Drummer Chris Mitchell was always pretty good, even if he does insist on playing "Motor City Madhouse" on the bass drum throughout the quieter numbers, and Ian Bridge's vocals have a range and maturity which belie his youth. New addition Reg Norris (ex-Poseidon, Medusa, Mad Racket) on guitar and silly haircut, whilst being a fine guitarist in his own right, didn't quite seem settled in yet, as well as being a little quiet on the mix. The PA, by the way, was provided by Roy & Co. from T.A.S. I estimated it to be about 1 1/2 kW; it was certainly the only decent sound I've heard at this venue.

Stormchild seem to have got their act together recently, probably as a result of their recent forage to the Land of Southern Jessies. They all strut around quite confidently and the music is tighter too. More original songs are now featured, in fact I only detected one cover number: Ozzy's "Crazy Train".



Overall, I was fairly impressed with the new style Stormchild (despite the keyboardist's jacket), and with a little more dynamics in the slower numbers (Chris - cut yer feet off!) and a little more prominence given to Reg's guitar, they could be even better.

Ted.

Reg Norris in Medusa days.

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