

PVT / Seekae / Axxonn

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The Zoo - Thu Aug 19

Early arrivals to The Zoo this evening are greeted with the sounds of local Tom Hall, more accurately AXXONN, weaving keyboard-produced sounds into a rich, murky melody. The set shifts in volume and density, layers of sound crushed by more layers coming in over them. Detached percussion adds backbone to Hall's noisily satisfying keyboard drones. Hall crashing his hands down upon the keyboard is akin to a wizard sending bolts of lightning to the earth below. It's a strong, palette-cleansing set.

On next are Sydney trio Seekae, whose set-up comprises of drums, a melodica and half an Apple store. These guys may well be the lost children of Four Tet, but the similarity in style isn't as striking as the fact that they pull it off so damn well. Their sound is lush and detailed, incorporating the clipped and chopped up vocal samples of dubstep, grinding 8-bit chiptunes and glitchy splatters of programmed beats. Bouts of live drumming in combination with those beats make their sound even more dynamic. It's a versatile and confident set, with an impressive showing of new track Blood Bank guaranteeing my purchase of their forthcoming second album.

Shortly afterwards another Sydney trio get underway, this time headliners PVT. Laurence Pike is buried somewhere at the back of the stage behind his drumkit, his brother Richard perched between microphone, guitar and keyboard, and Dave Miller has an array of electronic equipment even more impressive than Seekae's. It comes as no surprise really, but it's immediately apparent as the elements of opening track Timeless coalesce that PVT are extremely tight and extremely polished, a fact they reinforce with each track. It doesn't take long for the band to dip into their older Pivot material, with Pike's slashing riff duelling with Miller's sonic gunfire in Didn't I Furious. The precise, mathematical rhythms are executed with militant perfection throughout the set, Miller's beats and synths interlocking beautifully with Laurence Pike's scattershot drumming style. Richard Pike's vocals shine, especially in Crimson Swan and the tightly rendered Church With No Magic. The set is sewn together beautifully by Miller's electronics, shifting the band through tidy transitions between tracks and some neat extended intros, particularly the droning jam that explodes into In The Blood. Poor old Laurence Pike can barely be seen but his contribution is nonetheless significant, his drumming powerful and propulsive. The band are highly energetic, the songs intensely enjoyable, and the audience, except for the pack of dicks to my right yammering through the whole thing, are thoroughly engaged. After finishing the regular set with Battles-esque crowd pleaser Window, the band quickly return for an encore of ambient album opener Community. They follow it up with the colossal O Soundtrack My Heart, which would have been the perfect end to the set, but the band finish with the more down-tempo album closer Only The Wind Can Hear You. Nonetheless it's a superb set and a great night thanks to three first-class Australian acts.

MICHAEL PINCOTT

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