

THE ZOO: 19.08.10

Launching the similarly titled lead single of forthcoming sophomore album Let's Get It Straight, Axxonn's Tom Hall opens tonight's proceedings with the kind of set that, in an ideal world, would garner the one-man-band's idiosyncratic noise-pop an entire slew of new converts. Hall has decided to focus on his more melodic material this evening and, in doing so, delivers one of his most unique sets this year – effortlessly combining blistering noise with beat-driven synthesiser vignettes. Unfortunately, an early start means only a handful of potential converts actually manage to observe Axxonn in action.

Sydney trio Seekae represent the inverse scenario – a significant crowd of onlookers bearing witness to a set of decided insignificance. The three-piece's organic electronica is certainly well-crafted, imminently listenable and presented with a lively spontaneity and enthusiasm far beyond most electronic acts but the trio's combination of subdued melody, glowing synth textures and loping glitch-hop rhythms is severely lacking in regards to originality. The occasional stab of live instrumentation (drums, melodica) occasionally staves off monotony but it isn't until the violence of the band's almost-industrial closer that one is genuinely impressed. That said – any supporting act was going to struggle for relevance this evening. The advent of PVT's new name and sound (following the success of the Sydney/London trio's work under their original Pivot alias) was always going to ensure the headliners were tonight's main attraction. Audiences have all been asking the same question since the doors opened – will the sedate and synthesiser-driven sounds of PVT's Church With No Magic release compromise their legendary competence as a live act? The impeccably delivered arpeggios and slow-build dynamics of opener Timeless, however, provide the ideal response.

PVT's penchant for minimalism may not be to everyone's liking but, as a live act, the band remain superb. The trio's musicianship has only grown more exceptional over time and the band's improvisations are now effectively focussed as opposed to frustratingly inconsistent. The lush melodics and austere rhythms of newer numbers like Crimson Swan, The Quick Mile and Circle Of Friends, meanwhile, actually serve as a remarkable counterpoint to the complicated arrangements of Pivot classics like Sweet Memory and In The Blood.

Indeed, the only fault one could ascribe to the band is their insistence on gilding the lily – delivering Only The Wind Can Hear You after presenting the perfect closer with O Soundtrack My Heart.

MATT O'NEILL