



Live Review: Axxonn Farewell Drinks, feat Toy Balloon @ X&Y Bar, Brisbane



Groove Magazine



Upon the surface, Fortitude Valley's live music scene has been gutted and stuffed with a Jersey Shore/Cavill Avenue crowd since a large number of recent venue closures. However, underneath the swarms of fake tan and overly intoxicated flight attendants lies a bustling and dedicated live music scene (despite this concert being a farewell show...)

Local lad, Axxonn, is heading overseas to the U S of A for an 'x' amount of time and even the man himself does not know when he will return. So for one last 'hoorah' he recruited lofty electro poppers (I nearly typed poopers!) Toy Balloon and decided to head on down to XandY who put on a free show for the masses (how nice of 'em).

Regulars at my favourite Brisbane venue (next to the {unfortunately now defunct} 'The Troubador') 'The Hangar', Toy Balloon kick off tonight's proceedings in a blaze of atypical electronica and confetti spewing drum beats and tricks. As cow bell percussion and saxophone blares away, they draw a rather large crowd and have no doubt won over new fans with songs like 'Kids NY' and 'Broken Little Nothing', and turn XandY into their own little Hangar. A great start to the night and a great local band that appear to be going from strength to strength.

In what seems like a blink of an eye it's time for tonight's headliner. Tom Hart aka Axxonn takes to the stage and I struggle to regain a prime viewing position for the stage area, as XandY is packed to the brim. Armed with only a synthesiser and a bucket-load of effects, the audience is treated to an instrumental masterpiece which I describe as 'a shoe-gazing electronic wall of sound operetta'.

As Axxonn head bangs away at ferocious speed and intensity over his synth with a sea of multi-colour strobing lights. I begin to wonder if Axxonn has any stories where this wild head-banging has ever lead to a concussion or some other form of disaster. As the night continues all the hits from his debut 'Lets Get it Straight' are there and it's mid set that we get our first taste of percussion in form of title track 'Lets Get it Straight' and with the appropriately titled 'Perfect for Acid' getting the crowd going. I begin to notice an overlap in people who were here for Axxonn and the people who are here for the nightclub business afterwards.

Still, even as my drink gets spilled on me by unruly what I presume as 'Hen's Night' drinkers that have stumbled upon the show, I marvel in the technical ability that lays underneath this wall of sound. Every note is clear and the sound is bang on perfect and really sets an awesome mood and vibe. However as I sit there in my own little world trying to pin point effects and tricks in a 'how does he do that' guessing game, the set unfortunately ends and it feels as if in a blink of an eye it was all over. Whether that is a testament to Axxonn's ability to make a continuous wall of sound or the lack of time given to him by the venue, the set does feel short.

Even with this in mind, we were by all means treated to an audio and visual feast by tonight's headliner and Axxonn's absence will be a significant loss to the Brisbane live music scene while he is away (which I'm sure will be for the power of good in the end)

Toy Balloons album 'Toy Division' (with some mighty cool cover art) is available now through iTunes and Lofly.

Axxonn's Debut album 'Lets Get it Straight' is available now on iTunes and all good retailers.

In an act which is downright decent of the man, a remix of his debut is also available now with all profits going The Australian Spinal Research Foundation. The remix album features remixes by support act on the night, Toy Balloon, along with Jonathan Boulet, Tape/Off, Little Scout and more. It also features Axxonn remixing Fever Rays 'If I had a Heart'. This great album for a great cause can be found at <http://www.sonoptik.org/store/> (<http://www.sonoptik.org/store/>)

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By *Bradley Armstrong*

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