



CHERRY RED

DR. FEELGOOD



G T MOORE AND THE REGGAE GUITARS

MALVERN WINTER GARDENS

TUESDAY 4TH. NOVEMBER

£1 ADVANCE

£1.20 DOOR

CHERRY RED

Dont Forget
THIN LIZZY

NOVEMBER 28 TH .



Chris Charlesworth

ON PAPER Saturday evening looked to be the least attractive evening of the festival but it was, in fact, a triumph for Dr. Feelgood, who received the biggest ovation of any act through the three days.

Unfortunately, I missed John Martyn's opening set, but the general consensus of opinion was good by the time I arrived and the Feelgoods took the stage.

The band, who had flown over in a small plane chartered by the festival promoters, were an absolute knock-out, providing an object lesson to bands who flounder in complexity for complexity's sake.

The Feelgoods were so damn simple you just had to prick up ears and listen as three minute (!) songs were punched out with fire and drive and a certain amount of self-parody.

The crowd erupted as they thundered along, never hesitating for a second, like an express train on a quick inter-city route. "Doctor Feelgood" itself brought the audience to their feet, and they stayed up for the closing sequence of "I'm A Hog", "There's A Riot Goin' On" and the closer, "Route 66".

For five minutes they cheered, but the Feelgoods never returned, and when the crew began to dismantle the equipment the cheers turned to volatile jeers and whistles.

Procol Harum had the unenviable task of following, but the immediate danger was forestalled with a seemingly interminable pause between the two acts.

Thus, when Procol finally appeared, well over an hour after Dr. Feelgood left, they were welcomed with a certain feeling of relief.

FEELGOOD

ON THE ROAD

DR FEELGOOD: an absolute knock-out

Yes, what about the Feelgoods? The success of the day. The one band to come to terms with the ambience of the Reading Festival. Identify its physical attributes and then ignore them completely.

When Dr Feelgood strolled on, second on the bill and confident of their ability to blow anybody and anything off stage, they saw before them a field crammed with rather cold, partially drunk, windswept festival-goers.

When Dr Feelgood stamped off they had, within an hour, transformed this alfresco association into a tiny, sweaty, steaming r&b club. Charisma is too weak a word to describe what the Feelgoods had going for them that night.

One expected something special following reports of Wilco and the lads destroying all opposition at France's Orange Festival — but they surpassed all expectations.

Admittedly they didn't have much to compete against among the previous acts — UFO, Kokomo, Wally and Judas Priest (more of these later) — but they came on like contenders for rock's heavyweight crown.

"Down By The Jetty," "Don't You Just Know It" and "Going Back Home" blasted us into alertness. In the first ten minutes all the trademarks were there, to be repeated without any hint of tedium through the rest of the act.

Wilco Johnson snatched a solo and scooted round the stage like he was on casters. The first time he took the trip a thunderous roar erupted from the audience. Was there ever such a one as Johnson? He was the archetypal oddball guitarist. His head seemed physically capable of being in just two positions — looking straight forward and jammed hard to the left. He wielded his guitar like a weapon, a wand, a wild, wanton whip.

"I Don't Mind," "Back In The Night" and "She Does It Right" consolidated the Feelgood power. Take a look at Lee Brilleaux. White-suited, taper-trousered with his black shirt, striped tie and razor-cropped hair. He was like Prometheus Bound, rivetted to the spot with just his hands and arms to communicate.

Wilco takes the lead vocals on "I'm A Man" and hits bum notes by the score, but no-one's worried. They wind up with "Roxette", "Route 66", "There's A Riot Goin' On" — which sees searchlights raking the crowd like it was prison break-out time — and they encore with "Great Balls Of Fire".

It was cold and the bitter wind swirled chill around our thighs as Oil City began to turn on that old power machine. All around, visible signs of the Doctor's now-massive popularity — such as the many home-made banners ("Feelgood", "Wilco" *et al*), the rapturous reception, the sea-of-waving-arms and so on. Onstage, the legendary stage ritual of the Wilco/Brilleaux/Sparks roustabouts' ballet, greatly expanded in scale and venom. Either side of the stage, Lee Brilleaux, homely and menacing both, filling the vidscreens, white-jacketed, much larger than life and large enough to start with; cameras closing in on Johnson's cobra stare, the audience rising like a Tsunami each time the lever got pulled and the Black Robot self-launched on yet another foray into the badlands of stage front, stage centre. In the audience — no less than six NME writers, five of whom were at Reading for no other reason. But who the hell cares about that?

It would be unfair (though not, I suspect, untrue) to proclaim the Feelgoods the Hit of the Festival — simply because I didn't see any other act and anyway I admit to a heavy bias towards the F. Goods. But anybody who went down better (and I accept these may exist, as long as no one tries to tell me it was Robin Trower) would have had to have shifted ass to keep up.

The Feelgoods are now, in the (admittedly rapturous) words of a certain well-known NME Reporter With Three Initials And A Penchant For Marvel Comix, "on the same level as The Who, The Stones and Zeppelin" in terms of a stage band. All they now have to do is concentrate on Wilco Johnson's songs, find a good single (they've already made a curiously-good album) and... no, I won't predict: it's bad luck to price the unborn calf.

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