

Crackhouse Event @ Guildford



Harry Hammond checks out a new venture by the ACM Crackhouse team.

On Tuesday 21st November, I had the honour of being invited to review **Crackhouse Records'** debut show at the Boileroom in Guildford. This was the first show that the all-ACM collective has put together and I sincerely hope it won't be their last.

Harry Betts took to the stage adorned in the Springsteen-esque combination of a white tee shirt and blue jeans. He held an acoustic guitar, accompanied by a drummer and a bassist for much of his set. Harry wasted no time in showcasing his extraordinary vocal ability in the original track dumb luck. An assuredness seemed to emanate from Harry throughout the whole set, despite technical issues at certain points. This confidence was perhaps best exemplified when his band members left the stage and he did a solo piano-accompanied cover of Exit music for a film by Radiohead. This cover is also displayed for all to see the self-professed Radiohead lover's influences.

Dressed all in black, Boy Blue's confessions of fancying his friend in year eight in Spell It Out were delivered with a playful authority that epitomises the bedroom pop/indie approach. Boy Blue is unapologetic about his influences, even throwing in a Boy Pablo cover and saying that he derived his name from that of the Chilean-Norwegian singer-songwriter. Underlined by gut-punching basslines, chorus-drenched, jangly guitar lines perpetuate the high energy and engaging performance of the whole band which peaked in *I Want You*, an original which put into practice the hypothetical idea of what would happen if *Let's Dance* era Bowie was backed by Mac DeMarco's band. A frank and creative lyricist, I would be extremely surprised if this was not the last you heard of Boy Blue.

Standing in the middle of the stage in his seventies-cut suit and shirt, Semwanga screams "*Wake up!*". The pure performer and bandleader, he flits effortlessly between rapping and singing, all whilst exuding supreme confidence as the stage is the only place he has been his whole life. Backed by a killing band, he provided a super high-energy performance throughout

that if anything built and built as the set went on. A particular highlight was the impromptu cover of I wanna be (500 Miles) by the Proclaimers which somehow was born from a dissonant, jazzy guitar line. Influenced by noughties hip hop and old-school funk, Get Outta Your Seat was filled with all the swagger of a classic funk band leader such as James Brown whilst simultaneously being vocally reminiscent of Andre 3000. *Five foot ten* displayed another side to his music drifting into the world of indie-pop.

An indie sleaze revival is set to take place, with Danny Marriott helping to carry the movement forward. Packed with references to indie bands The Hives and the Streets, Danny and his band's jagged guitar riffs, woolly bass lines and funky drum beats underpinned a stylistically energetic and fun performance. Danny's vocal performance was powerful throughout, fitting in effortlessly regardless of whether they were playing high energy, funky bloc party-influenced *Japan*, or one of the slower songs that were dotted throughout the set. Ghost was a true highlight of the set. A rock and roll banger pumped with attitude and packed with classic indie tropes combine to form a nostalgic whirlwind that takes you by the hand and gives you the experience of seeing the strokes on the way up, with its jagged guitar lines and assured vocal performance. Marriott is one to keep your eye on in the future and support relentlessly in the present.

Crack House Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/crackhouse.records?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet&igsh=zDNIzDc0MzlxNw==

Crack House Website: <https://crackhouserecords5.wixsite.com/crackhouse>

Live videos: <https://www.youtube.com/@crackhouserecords5/playlists>

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