

Brainwashed - Githead, 25 September 2005, The Sugar Club, Dublin

Written by John Kealy

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What surprised me most about Githead was how light hearted they were. Sure their name should hint at some sort of humour but their studio work has a seriousness about it that made me imagine four people on stage staring at their shoes. Thankfully what I found was a friendly, funny band that interacted warmly with the slightly anaemic looking audience.

The underground supergroup (consisting of Wire's Colin Newman and Robin Rimbaud a.k.a. Scanner on guitars and Malka Spigel and Max Franken from Minimal Compact on bass and drums respectively) is on their longest tour yet with a stint around Europe.

Support for their Irish show was provided by the Dublin band Crumb. To me they sounded quite dated, they're obviously influenced by the meeker British indie rock of the eighties. They had no real presence on stage. They would have passed for entertaining if not for the guitarist's terrible tone, he had the treble turned up so high that everything he played was masked by a grating high pitched noise. This is a shame because from looking at his fingerwork he had a nice technique.

Githead launched into the instrumental track "Antiphon" from their *Profile* album. Spigel's bass was the most prominent part of this song and indeed most of the set. Her tight, fluid playing drove the band all evening, except for "My LCA (Little Box of Magic)" where Newman played bass and Spigel took to the mic and guitar. Counter to this strong bass presence, both Newman and Rimbaud set up a rhythmical shimmer of guitar. At times their playing blended together as they weaved in and out of each others' riffs. Rimbaud looked very comfortable with his instrument considering he's best known for twiddling knobs. In fact, the highlight of my evening was his playing during the final song "Raining Down" (another Spigel vocal moment) where not only did it sound good but the poses he pulled were very entertaining. Another memorable moment was "To Have and To Hold," which sounds tremendous live. Newman's whispered vocals were just audible enough over the band. The addition of Franken's live drumming to the pre-recorded drum machine beat fleshed the track out into a truly memorable performance.

With any luck Githead will make a return to Irish shores sometime soon.

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