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Review: Dwarves and Nashville Pussy at the Bluebird, 9/23/11

By Tom Murphy Sat., Sep. 24 2011 at 12:16 PM

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There were no costumes on stage until near the end when some silly fan got up with a shirt over his head like some low-rent imitation of HeWhoCannotBeNamed and sang into the mic. And yet somehow The Dwarves created a spectacle even without the cheap theatrics last night at the [Bluebird](#), with the sheer exuberance of its performance.

Somewhere early in the set, singer [Blag Dahlia](#) tried to crowd surf and did so briefly and then told the crowd, "I'm going clear to the back of this room and you're going to take me there." Near the end of the roughly 40-minute show, Blag finally went for it and indeed he did crowd surf to the bar of the Bluebird and then back along the east wall to the front of the stage again. Talk about keeping your promise.



Tom Murphy

Blag Dahlia of Dwarves crowd surfing to the back of the Bluebird

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Karen Cuda and Blaine Cartwright of Nashville Pussy

Earlier in the show, taking stage to the strains of Nugent's "[Stranglehold](#)," Nashville Pussy went straight into "Say Something Nasty," and rolled directly into "Come On, Come On." This is a band that pauses between songs most of the time but one of the things that makes the band never boring is a great sense of controlling momentum.

Before playing "I'm So High," Blaine Cartwright announced, "This is the last night of the longest tour I think we've ever had and we mean business." Running through some of the band's best material including "The Late Great USA," "Go Motherfucker Go," "Hate and Whiskey," "Speed Machine" and "Raisin' Hell Again," Cartwright and the rest of the band played with the comfort and assurance of a band that knew its material extremely well and didn't have to think about a note of it anymore.

Sure, Cartwright and Ruyter Suys have been doing that reinvention of Southern rock thing since the '90s, but it was never a fashion statement like it seems to be with so many bands that have taken up that flag since. There was nothing phony about any bit of this performance. Nashville Pussy remains one of the only bands that can throw in a guitar solo and not seem like self-indulgent wank-rockers for doing so, because you feel like it's all meant to further the song rather than show off how obviously great a blues rock player both Cartwright and Suys happen to be. Maybe this was the last night of a long tour but Nashville Pussy managed to play like it still absolutely loved its songs.

There was plenty of violent thrashing about in the pit in front of the stage during Nashville Pussy's set so everyone who didn't want to take their own lives into their hands got out of



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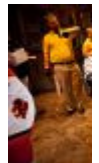
Blaine Cartwright and Ruyter Suys of Nashville Pussy

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Dwarves

there before Dwarves played. It got a little hairy and chaotic, people threw cups and ice on stage, but mostly it was just people dancing and having a great time. A few crowd surfers and, later in the set, a woman got on stage to dance and lifted up her shirt, no bra, before being escorted away.

You hear stories of Dwarves shows expecting something like The Mentors or [GG Allin](#) and some of the band's pictorial history bears something like that out. None of that happened last night, which made it possible to focus on the band's music and the natural charisma and raw power of the band live, in a way that doesn't translate as well to its albums.

The Dwarves was at times like some kind of rockabilly punk thing, at others like hardcore with a better sense of humor. At other times these jokers sounded like the early Blue Oyster Cult.



Tom Murphy

Dwarves

Amid all the spectacle and the chaos, Dwarves put on one of the best punk rock shows you're likely to see for a long time. More like a hardcore version of The Cramps than musical cousins to GG and The Mentors. Dwarves played songs across a wide swath of its career including the profane "I Will Deny," the surprisingly melodic "Everybody's Girl," "Fefu," "We Only Came to Get High," "Better Be Women," "Let's Fuck," "Fuck You Up" (anyone sense a theme?), "Blood, Guts and Pussy," and the especially raucous "We Must Have Blood." The song that was a bit of a surprise was the intro to "The Dwarves Are



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Still the Best Band in the World" with its pronouncements of hippie ideas before launching into its usual mixture of eruptive energy and humorous disdain for social convention. At the end of the show some fool got on stage and nearly pulled off one of the guitarists on to the floor, guitar and all, but he was saved at the last minute by the stage crew and his band mates. After all, would a Dwarves show be complete without some kind of mishap or injury or at least a near miss?

Critic's Notebook:

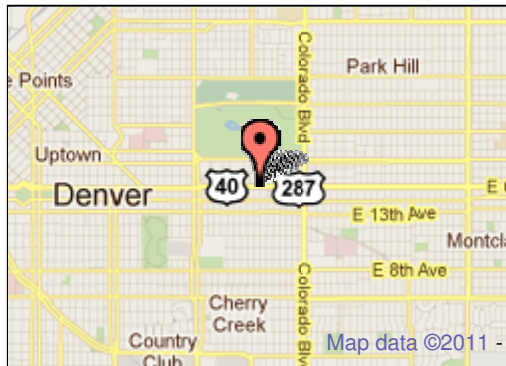
Bias: Been a fan of Nashville Pussy for years.

Random Detail: The guitarists in Dwarves had notes tapes to the backs of their instruments. Probably a set list or crib notes of some kind.

By the Way: It's still funny that crypto-fascist punks would go see a band like Dwarves. Maybe there's hope for them yet.

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Location Info



Bluebird Theater

3317 E Colfax Ave, Denver, CO

Category: [Music](#)

Tags:

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