

FDR label acts, sharing an aggressive, loose, punkish, Replacements-like style. The Bastards' design, in fact, could be summed up by their three choices of bitchin' covers this evening: **NEIL YOUNG's** "Rockin' in the Free World," **THE MC5's** "Kick Out the Jams," and **GUIDED BY VOICES'** "Motor Away." They were energetic and grinning, with leader **PAUL CRANE** and local mainstay **ED WINNICK** trading guitar leads on 2010's *Hurry Up and Wait* tracks. Meanwhile, singer/guitarist **MICK CHORBA's** Failures had a new album to support, so they played the entirety of the excellent *Here I Am* in sequence, the generous crowd wishing they knew the words to "The Real Defenders," "Clifton Mills," and "Turn it Down," they're so sing-along-able. Fans got their chance afterwards on a brace of older album numbers and a cover of **NADA SURF's** 2010 *If I Were a Hi-Fi* guitar-centric reinvention of **DEPECHE MODE's** "Enjoy the Silence." Splendid!

• VERONICA FALLS

SOUTH STREET SEAPORT PIER 17, JUNE 29

A problem with (even free) outdoor shows is they can always be undermined by weather. This time the problem wasn't rain, lightning, or wind—it was horrific heat. On a mid-90s, sweltering eve when two million lost power in Ohio and Indiana, the air was thick and insufferable, unbearable even as dusk approached. The unfamiliar-with-the-elements band drowned in sweat, and the intense discomfort wasn't even relieved when darkness finally arrived, late set. Somehow, the Scottish/English four persevered; how their strings stayed in tune, we'll never know, though they admitted afterward it was a losing battle. Those guitars, from singers **JAMES HOARE** and **ROXANNE CLIFFORD**, managed to duke it out on nearly the whole of their eponymous debut *Slumberland* LP's tracks, plus their cover of **ROKY ERICKSON's** 1975 b-side "Starry Eyes," the first rate new single "My Heart Beats" (the heat?!), and the unrecorded "Bury Me Alive." With tall ships to their left and Seaport complex balconies of perplexed punters to their right, they looked as picturesque as their setting, too—whatever the challenging conditions!

• THE ZOMBIES AND THE LEFT BANKE

HIGHLINE BALLROOM, AUGUST 6

If I told you I saw two '60s bands, one with their original singer, the other without, which would you guess was better? Strangely, New York's Left Banke remains *magnificent* even without **STEVE MARTIN**, as **MIKE FORTALE** convincingly handles the role, harmonizing with originals **TOM FINN** and **GEORGE CAMERON**. (Three months prior at BB Kings, pianist/songwriter **MICHAEL BROWN** also came out of serious seclusion, to play on their 1966 #15 "Pretty Ballerina.") With full string accompaniment, the baroque orchestral pop pioneers (of 1966 #5 "Walk Away Renee" fame) are so beautiful, still, a reviewer has no words. Whereas London's Zombies are, too... half the set—mostly when they broke out six-straight 1968 classic *Odessey and Oracle* numbers, causing swoons and the loudest applause. And just to hear menthol **COLIN BLUNSTONE** croon earlier R&B gems, such as bassist **CHRIS WHITE's** "I Love You," has serious value. If only seminal keyboardist **ROD ARGENT** wouldn't let his later, bombastic hard rockers **ARGENT's** values into so many selections... Oy! That said, when they're good, they're still so very good... ✪

ZOMBIES / LEFT BANKE



LEFT TO RIGHT: GEORGE CAMERON, ROD ARGENT, TOM FINN, COLIN BLUNSTONE

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