



Nick Oliveri @ Northcote Social Club, Melbourne (21/10/09)

Gig Reviews by deft ones, 23rd October, 2009



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For the first time on Australian shores, everywhere-man **Nick Oliveri** showcased his solo acoustic show on the back of his recently released album, *Death Acoustic*. Oliveri has played and collaborated with some of the biggest names in rock-n-roll, and the intimate setting of The Northcote Social Club was a perfect location for what would prove to be an acoustic set like we have never seen before. He brought with him **Blackie**, from Australian punk legends **The Hard-Ons**, and together they made an impressive duo of musical influence.

Blackie, a man whose fans include some of the biggest names in world music and whose reputation precedes him, kicked off the night with a somewhat surprisingly mellow set. It would be safe to say that most of the punters who turned up tonight with even a passing interest in what the Hard-Ons front-man had in store, expected a stripped-down set of his legendary group's material, and even maybe even a smattering of pioneering punk covers.

While the songs had Hard-On sounding names, such as *Glue* and *Tickle*, Blackie entertained the growing crowd with tunes written for his upcoming solo record instead. Material which, although he may have taken a conservative approach on the recording by incorporating more instrumentation so as not to alienate his fans, was mostly intended to be delivered in acoustic form. Despite the fact he was later described by Oliver as a "badass" his set was surprisingly melodious and soulful, and showed an unexpectedly different side of an Australian punk-legend.

What is there to say about Nick Oliveri that hasn't already been said? The *party-animal* of rock has lent his multi-instrumental skills to such influential acts as Kyuss, Queens of the Stone Age, and the Dwarves, not to mention a plethora of other cameos and side projects over the years, including his own brain-child – Mondo Generator. His *Death Acoustic* set promised to offer something from all of these bands, and more, and showcases just how multi-talented the goateed rock-god is.

The set kicked off with Kyuss' *Love Has Passed Me By*, and from there it was an all out assault of acoustic guitar and guttural screams. The thing about Oliveri's style is such that it is hard to see how his voice would accompany unplugged guitar, but he strums the acoustic axe with such vigour and intensity that it just works. That's not to say he can't sing, and sing well, he just chooses not to a lot of the time, and this is further complemented by his song choices.

It goes without saying that the most well received material of the night was from his two more well-known outfits. Songs such as *Gonna Leave You*, *You Think I Aint Worth a Dollar But I Feel Like a Millionaire*, and fan favourite *Autopilot* from Queens Of The Stone Age, were met with rapturous reactions from the modest but enthusiastic crowd. Similarly, Kyuss material was a hit with the punters and *Green Machine*, from the seminal album *Blues For The Red Sun*, was a notable and welcome addition.

While it was a solo show, Oliveri was joined onstage a couple of times throughout his ninety minute set. His partner, **Michelle Madden**, jumped behind a mic to first prompt the crowd into singing happy birthday to him (it was his 38th birthday), and then to assist with the singing of two Mondo Generator songs.

The feature of this was *Four Corners*, with Madden taking on co-writer Mark Lanegan's intimidating vocal part. Later on in the evening, the legendary **Blag Dahlia** from the mighty Dwarves, with whom Oliveri is playing bass on their current tour, took to the stage to sing two of his own compositions – *Dairy Queen* and *Let's Get High and Fuck Some Sluts*. The mutual respect between these two pioneers was evident, and their performances offered just one of the many highlights of the night.

This mighty acoustic set was littered with covers from some of the most significant



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artists in musical history. Johnny Cash's *Sam Hall* had the crowd singing along, and even though Oliveri confessed he had difficulty playing it, he proceeded to bust out The Ramones' *Summer Vacation*. Also included was *Outlaw Scumfuck*, a cover of self-confessed scumbag and undeniable freak of all things unsavoury, G. G. Allin.

You could tell Oliveri was having fun with this gig, as he often broke in between songs to laugh and converse with the crowd and people to the side of the stage. His story of Tasmanians trying to cajole him into smoking weed was just one example of the frivolity of the evening. The one song encore was Queens Of The Stone Age's version of *Bloody Hammer*, originally by Roky Erickson, and with that Oliveri left the stage to an encore performance of *Happy Birthday*.

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