

## Bad Tempered Zombie

Obsessions, annoyances, and ruminations of a rather mundane life.

Sunday, June 28, 2009

### crawling through a festival: Sledding at Olympic Plaza



If the free water and return of the gelato stand and the fact that only a small portion of Olympic Plaza was surrounded by a chain link fence, thereby allowing passing office workers, street people, and the assorted curious to sit comfortably on benches surrounding the festival area to enjoy the music for free, isn't

enough to convince you that Sled Island is doing something right, well then we'll just have to agree to disagree.

Friday's all ages Sled Island blowout in Olympic Plaza thrust some life into the concrete heart of the city, and proved that there are far better ways to spend a beautiful Friday afternoon than squashing onto a C-train for the sweaty jolting ride home to the suburbs. Why wouldn't you choose to sit on the tiered steps in the grass around the plaza, or even in the beer garden on site, and listen local wunderkinds, **The Summerlad**, kick things off with a really gorgeous ambient set. Adding fuel to the argument that Sled Island 3.0 was the year of the really long song, **The Summerlad** favoured the 35 minute song, which is tricky to pull off in a 45 minute set.

When the sound system launched into a selection of Easy Star All Stars covers from OK Computer during the band change, I took it as a sign that the gods were smiling upon us. Frisbee Dude obviously thought so too, as he took it upon himself to get some sports action happening on the cement plaza while we waiting for Malajube to set up.

I first noticed him gesturing into the crowd with a series of increasingly desperate "come on down here" hand signals, and then randomly tossing the frisbee to unsuspecting passersby. He managed to conjure up a fair bit of action in the half hour or so that he ran about on the cement pad in the blazing sun. And he was no youngster either, obviously in his 40s, but he managed to set the tone, so that the rest of the evening, there were a multitude of increasingly complex frisbee tournaments going on. I even got hit with one during the Breeders' set.

**Malajube** played an upbeat set, and the standing in front of the stage crowd increased from the meagre smattering of earlier.

**Biz Markie**, up next, was one great big fun guy. Evidently he does a weekly segment on *Yo Gabba Gabba*, where he teaches beatboxing, and that same rapport with the kindergarden set really came across with this group of twenty-somethings. He's like the kid who sits at the back of the room and makes funny noises with his mouth.

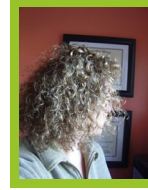


**M5** from the Congo played a short set. I was all excited, initially thinking it was MC5, but no.

During **Anvil's** set, I went for a walk, to find some sustenance, to check out the merch tent, and to get away from the bad singing. On three separate occasions during my ambling, I was approached by guys trying to convince me that I was an Anvil fan. The Resident Offspring figures that I fit the demographic, but really just because I am ancient, does that mean that I have to enjoy bad metal? Obviously I am overdue for a haircut or something.

Once I returned, I spotted our design friend from the Final Fantasy concert and invited her to sit with us. She had just returned with her dinner when **Holy Fuck** came on stage, so rather than head up to the area in front of the stage, I stayed and kept her company. I figured I would get a chance to see Holy Fuck up close and sweaty the next night at the Warehouse anyway. It was seriously hard to groove while sitting on the ground, especially when they started attacking their gear, but I did my best.

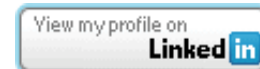
#### About Me



**Name:** Barbara Bruederlin  
**Location:** Calgary, Canada

~ never washing spiders down the plug hole ~

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#### bad tempered goes to shows...

[Calgary Folk Festival](#) - July 23-36

#### lyrics for fun and profit...

*just give me one stolen kiss and I will always remember it*  
...NQ Arbuckle

#### ohrwurmish...

*There is a Cure*  
...Timber Timbre

#### bad tempered is reading...

*What They Wanted*  
- Donna Morrissey

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- [MBLOG](#)
- [Jen](#)
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- [Will](#)
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- [Allison](#)
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- [Becky](#)
- [Leazwell](#)
- [Mellowlee](#)
- [Serah](#)
- [Karen](#)
- [Deb](#)
- [Kelly](#)

We stayed seated for Liars as well, as at that point we were deep in conversation about music and art and the joys of the internet. They were lively, and offered a more upbeat set than I remember them playing when they opened for Radiohead. But the fact that it was now the exact same time of evening as it has been when we saw them in Seattle did conjure up considerable *deja vous*.



But for the Breeders, we all headed up to the stage area, because, well it's the Deal sisters, innit? Kim was wearing a pair of big old baggy grey sweatpants, sort of like a pair I have at the back of the closet somewhere. The incongruity between those pants and that voice which could make the angels weep was quite

surreal. "*Our gear got left behind*", she explained as they tinkered with the instruments a bit more than one would expect from a band the calibre of the Breeders. "*So did my pants*", she finished with a laugh. Ah, that explains it.

Both Kim and Kelly played the entire set with the hugest grins on their faces, mockingly telling people to stop smoking pot. Kelly: "*I'm not supposed to be around this stuff. No smoking!*" There was a feeling of real camaraderie between the crowd and the stage. As Kim started the *awooo* part at the beginning of Cannonball, she started complaining that they didn't have the proper gear to make the distortion sound that it needed, and that it sounded like shit. So just like that, the audience started up "*awooo awoooo awoooo awoooo awooo awoo*" Gave me chills.

Because of the noise bylaw, the concert shut down promptly at 11:00, which was actually okay, as we then scurried over to Vern's. Jon-Rae Fletcher and his band played a set that was far too short, to a small but highly appreciative audience. With a few old songs from his pre-River solo days thrown in, the set featured mainly selections from Jon-Rae's new album, plus a handful of really bad puns. I loved the guy in the audience who stood two inches from the mics, grooving heavily during the entire set, and then later got involved in a wrestling match that evolved into a dance. There was a lot of love in that seedy little basement room for the band which had just driven in from Victoria that night, and I was really pleased to be a witness to it.



Okay, so it wasn't all love. I chuckled evilly at the girl who, judging from her shiny blue cocktail gown, was obviously supposed to be at the nightclub upstairs, when she drunkenly approached the bartender with a worried look on her face. "*How do I get upstairs?*" she asked carefully. The two bartenders looked at each other and, suppressing guffaws, replied, "*well, you go over to the stairs. And then you go up them.*"

I met with Jon-Rae after the show to have a beer and a little chat for a followup article that I am writing about him, and he was one of the most gracious and sincere people I have met in a long while. He was genuinely appreciative of my interest and of what support I was able to offer (seeing as I am a big shot journalist and all). And I was really grateful that he stayed behind to talk to me when the rest of the band were heading to Broken City for the Ladyhawk show.

When the meeting of the mutual admiration society wrapped up a short while later, we headed off into the night, the musician to another show, the two women from the suburbs to the urban assault vehicle parked in the \$41.00 parking spot, determined to get a few hours of sleep before the crazy dance party at the Warehouse the next night.

Labels: **Sled Island 3.0, staying up way too late but for a good cause**

posted by Barbara Bruederlin @ 2:35 PM



9 COMMENTS:

At 8:12 PM,  Wandering Coyote said...

You bailed on Anvil? Shocking!

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