

Doll and the Kicks @ the Concorde 2, Thursday October 8th 2009

The first thing that got me to this gig was the North Laine Benefit CD put out a couple of years ago. A great CD with lots of local bands on it including Two Spot Gobi, Bad Science, the now sadly defunct Drookit Dogs and others I'd not heard of then or heard anything about since. I listened to the CD fairly regularly, not really aware of who was who on it, and one summer's evening one track stood out from a lot of very good tracks. I wondered who is this woman singing? She has an amazing voice and a rock-out band to boot. Doll and the Kicks doing 'Angel Eyes'. The last time a new female voice, that wasn't Patti Smith or Kate Bush, had captured me that much was when I first saw Johnette Napolitano of Concrete Blonde do a solo gig at a record shop a long time ago. Add to that, their van was regularly parked on my street with posters advertising their gigs, that Morrissey was interested in them, that there was a connection between him and Concrete Blonde via very Kate Bush-like Kristeen Young (support for Concrete Blonde at the Underworld a few years back) who has also been a Morrissey protégé and they were definitely a band - through my penchant for following synchronicities - I wanted to see. Finally, our paths were to cross.

A half-full C2 but everyone's inside and the reception for Doll and the Kicks is good. Doll thanks us for not being at the Speech DeBelle gig at the Coalition which would perhaps explain a few absences. I'd seen in the press comparisons to Blondie but that really goes no further than the set-up, female singer with male musicians - so what? In terms of her vocal style I was hearing different singers at different points but really she has her own voice which changes from song to song and within songs - it would be misleading and unfair to say she sounds like anybody but herself, and it's a great voice.

Doll dances frenetically and she has the looks to take the pop road a lot further and will undoubtedly pick up a lot more fans on the Morrissey tour. I would have liked the band to come to life a bit more - I felt they were leaving too much of the 'show' to Doll but that's a minor complaint. The music's powerful. There's not much that's like 'Angel Eyes', the full-on song that got me there, and it's not in their set. They go through a short set, under an hour, playing most, if not all, of the songs I've been listening to on Myspace, finishing off with 'He Was A Dancer'. They tell us to follow them down to the Playgroup's 'speakeasy' with Los Albertos and lots of good Brighton stuff down at the Music Library. Early rise for me but maybe next time...

Jay Bee