

SEE JANE LAUGH AND PLAY

LIVE REVIEWS

**Rosser**

For a musician, winning over a cynical listener is the supreme challenge. I saw Rosser play recently on a Saturday evening opening for The Young Antiques at The EARL and found myself yielding to their set. Pros all around, they set a solid energetic tone from the beginning. These guys are in complete control of their delivery.

Their sound draws from so many derivations: Talking Heads, The Cars, U2, Devo. But with even such obvious and strong sources, Rosser's songs themselves are undeniable. I just don't care if the influences are obvious. Normally, bands that might cater to more accessible rock are a turnoff for me—I seek the unusual or the challenging and difficult. But Rosser got the better of me against my defenses.

How, you ask? Well, foremost the singer can really deliver. There might not be a more confident or stronger singer in this city. He does what he wants and hits every note. The other guys better build a wall around him before some wayward A/R guy from Warner Brothers stumbles into one of their shows and throws a bunch of money at him to join the Next Great Constructed Band.

And the grooves are sure-footed and steady—the rhythm section is true and tight. Both guitarists work nearly perfectly together. I can go on and on with superlatives and most of what can be described usually turns me on my heel and sends me out the door. This is arena rock-ready music being played out in a small venue. And maybe that is why it hits home. I can see and feel that the songs and the performance are real.

I thought they might have played one too many songs for a compelling set but that's a small nit to pick. "Leave them wanting more" is a sound philosophy.

All gushing superlatives aside, I was thoroughly entertained. And it might be a good idea to make it out to see Rosser at a small venue... before you can't.

—KT

TRENTE CINQ

Gray Kiser

Matthew Pendrick specializes in a fractured, dusty, psychedelia masquerading as a country song, or a folk song, or—do people still use the term “Americana”?—an Americana song. Sometimes spare and vulnerable, sometimes carried atop a full band's-worth of warped honky-tonk, even in the quietest moments, it's an uplifting proposition. It's the kind of thing you could listen to with your father, sharing a beer on a porch somewhere (assuming you still speak to your father, or he is still alive, or you know who he is). Pendrick reaches for

inspiration across decades of source material and pulls together a timeless assembly of memorable songs that take you through his sly songwriting vagabondage. He keeps a community of like-minded musicians rotating in and out of his Slow Parade project, which released one of the best records of 2020, “Hi-Fi LowLife,” that you should find and get familiar with. Or, take a chance November 11th at the EARL when Slow Parade unfold their hazy collage for you live and in person.

1. Who is the best band or artist there ever was?
Joe Strummer

2. Will there come a time when the music you have created is no longer relevant to your life?
Yes, absolutely.

3. Assuming you are not famous, why are you not famous?
Because more people don't know me.

4. Should the drummer ever be the lead singer?
Sure.

5. Which band or artist, past or current, do you wish you could be or be in?
(whispers) All of them. I would be in Tom Waits' band. I would kick Marc Ribot out of Tom Waits' band, and I would take his fucking spot.

6. What has been the most expensive record or piece of gear you have ever purchased?
I have an old, old Fender amplifier down here to my left that was a deal, but it has just required lots of work. So it's been the most expensive, the 1954 Fender 5C3.

7. What is your current state of mind, and is it conducive to writing your best music?
Currently, at 7:00 p.m. on this day I am sober. It can be, I don't think it's necessarily the best, but I would say it's generally better than being inebriated.

8. Who is the most overrated band or artist of all time?
Journey?

9. How do you tell the opener that their set was good when we all know you didn't pay any attention?
“Hey man, can I use your amp?”

10. If you could be as handsome as Glenn Danzig, what percentage of your wardrobe would be mesh?
The 30% that wasn't sparkly.

11. If you could punch one musician in the face, past or present, who would it be, and why is it Don Henley?

That guy from Rush. (Record Plug points out that he has three “guys from Rush” to choose from and one is currently deceased.) Oh, definitely the dead one.

12. What is your favorite quality in Rod Stewart?
Probably his ears. His physical ears. No. No, I'm going to change that: his forehead.

13. Have you ever met a woman who liked Rush?
No.

14. What subject matter, sound or trope do you most overuse in your music?
My own voice.

15. Is there anything worse than someone who writes about music?
No.

16. What is the best show you have ever seen, and was it the best show you ever played?
The best show that I have seen...I saw Sean Costello one time at The Graveyard. That was the last time that I saw him, and it stands out in my mind. It was pretty great. The best show that I ever played...I've played some pretty fun gigs at the EARL. I don't remember how I musically I felt about it, but I did a bill at the EARL with T. Hardy Morris and...that Canadian guy, Daniel Romano. That was cool, it was a bill of people that I was into.

17. Is there a better front man than David Lee Roth?
Yes. I mean, what about Prince?

18. What is the easiest position in a band to swap out, or should the integrity of the original lineup be defended to the death?
On the second question: no. The easiest person to swap out, besides the triangle player, would be the bass player.

19. What is the best song or piece of music you have created so far, and would your mother approve of it?
My mother would approve of it. I think that my favorite one is a song called “Baggage Claim” [from “Hi-Fi LowLife”]. I can only go with the thing that I am into, I don't know what the rest of it is.