

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Seattle group sounds, looks good

Despite the fact that there should have been a larger crowd at John Henry's Saturday night and that there were some sound difficulties, the night went well for the four bands. The main act, Sky Cries Mary, gave a visually and aurally engaging performance as the last band to take the stage.

Opening band Spikenard, who hail from music mecca Seattle, got the night rolling with some straight-ahead grunge rock. The threesome (whose instrumentation consists of the three indispensable components of a rock band — guitar, bass and drums) had solid, well-constructed songs. (Hey, it worked for Nirvana.)

By John Fleischli

The group, whose songs are based around the bar-chord guitar-playing of the lead singer, was a tight unit. No sloppy endings from them. And true to their apparent hard-core roots, on a few songs they shouted the lyrics jointly. This gave the tunes a high-energy intensity. It was right on.

The next two bands to perform were made up of local talent. Flowerz, the second band, played a decent show. I don't know if it was a bad night for them or what, but they seemed to be kind of half-asleep about their material.

The dynamics interjected into their songs were refreshing, however. The vocalist for Flowerz has a sonorous voice reminiscent of the Sisters of Mercy.

The songs thundering from Two Minutes Hate were solid and well-constructed. The vocalist, who had a strong voice and yelled a lot at the audience, was entertaining to watch.

Like Spikenard, the band members shouted choruses in unison and even had a good song about thrash/hardcore band Fugazi. The movement and progression of the music itself was enough to gratify.

About midnight the band everyone in the bar wanted to see slowly emerged from the set-up area. The backdrop of the stage was dreamy. About five slide projectors displayed religious images behind the players and a hallucinatory pattern continuously shifted in the middle of it all. I imagine that one could have taken in a scene like this back in

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The visual stimuli did not end there. The two singers for the group strolled onstage wearing these huge, bizarre costumes and glided about while the music focused into the first song.

Sky Cries Mary also come from Seattle, but any attempt to categorize them as part of the "Seattle sound" is futile because they are definitely not grunge. They are: Roderick (voice and words), Anisa Romero (vocals), Joseph Howard (bass), Bennett James (drums), Marc Olsen (guitar), Gordon Raphael (keyboards) and DJ Fallout (samples and effects).

As you can see from what this last guy plays, this is a unique band. The individuals have diverse musical tastes, and it shows in the music they play. The samples and effects technology gives the band a rave-like sound on several songs. Indeed, there were many people having a good-time dancing around in front of the stage.

The male-female vocal harmonies of Roderick and Romero were ethereal. Fitting in with the religious aspect of the show, they helped transport the audience to another plane.

The group played songs from their new disc on the World Domination label titled *A Return to the Inner Experience*. Included on the album is a great cover version of the Rolling Stones' "2000 Light Years From Home."

I was happy to hear them play it at John Henry's along with the poppy "Gone," and for an encore, they played "Lay Down Your Head." It ended with an awesome drum solo by James, which was great because drummers don't always get the attention they deserve.

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