

Quaker Gun shoots to thrill

C.J. Ciaramella

The Clackamas Print

Patrons of Mississippi Pizza were treated to more than a good slice of pie when local band Quaker Gun took the stage for their CD release party on Feb. 5.

Quaker Gun burned through two sets of their patented mix of indie and country rock to celebrate the release of their new, self-titled album, revealing a talent for catchy songs that break out of the standard rock format.

The band was confident and tight as a group. The lead singer kept things steady with his Tele- and Strat-style guitars, while the second guitarist, Jake Spears, played his Gibson hollow body with just the right amount of bite. To his credit as a musician, Spears knew when to lay back and add some six-string shimmer and when to rip into a crowd-pleasing solo.

The other members weren't slouches either. The rhythm section knew how to lay down a groove, filled with punchy bass and clean, tight drumming.

Quaker Gun's sound reflects mainly the alt-country styling of Wilco, modern indie, and some of the laid back rock of yesteryear. On some tunes the band even threw out soaring harmony lines that sent the listener into '60s

jangle-pop heaven, not to mention a spot-on cover of "Last Dance with Mary Jane" by Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers.

Although they are firmly rooted in their particular style, Quaker Gun's songs managed to run a gamut of sound, from slow, country shuffles to up-tempo barn-burners.

The band refuses to stay put lyrically, either. Some songs were sad and whistful, while others had tongue firmly placed in cheek, such as the epic "Meathead and Barbie," which recounted the tale of a vapid, mall couple. The song also included one of my new favorite lines:

"So the saga goes/ it runs on and on like panty hose"

But perhaps the best feature of Quaker Gun isn't their carefully-crafted country-rock or their weaving harmonies, but simply their attitude. The band is devoid of the indie pretentiousness that is currently clogging up thousands of college kid's iPods. No shoe-gazing introspection. No art for art's sake. Just easy-going rock and roll.

In between songs, and sometimes during them, the band bantered with each other or broke into laughter. They even threw out an impromptu "Happy Birthday" and a polka-ish joke song towards the end of the show. As the singer explained:

"Our rhythm section thinks it's

funny to play the second verse of that song differently every time to see if the can mess Jake [Spears] up."

Listening to Quaker Gun makes one nostalgic for the early and mid-'90s, when being indie was about the music you made and the chances you took (not to mention having a good time), rather than how ironic and detached you appeared on stage.

So if you are a fan of indie, country-rock or pop music in general, give a Quaker Gun a listen. You just might find yourself pleasantly surprised.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Abe Pines (drums), Andrew Tucker (lead vocals, guitar, keys), Matthew Thomson (guitar, backing vocals), and Jake Spears (lead guitar, backing vocals)

Save minutes - hang up on 'Stranger'

Tayo Stalnaker

The Clackamas Print

Horror movies have progressively gotten worse over the years. Horror fans have been waiting a while for the next "The Shining" or "Evil Dead." Unfortunately, "When a Stranger Calls" will have them waiting longer.

The plot to this unnecessary Hollywood remake revolves around Jill Johnson, an oppressed upper-middle class white teenager. She has it rough... seriously. She went over her minutes on her cell phone, and daddy grounded her from driving her Benz and talking on the phone. Now she has to go baby sit some rich doctor's kids at his million dollar lake house instead of going to a bonfire and getting loaded with her friends.

When Jill arrives at the lake house the rich doctor's trophy wife gives her a walking tour. The trophy wife makes sure to show

her the security system, the mini-bird refuge in the middle of the house and the guest house. I'm a fan of foreshadowing, but this movie goes overboard.

The rest of the movie consists of Jill talking on the phone to her affluent friends, then getting prank called by a guy who just breathes on the phone. She calls the police and they trace the phone call and find out, "It's coming from inside the house!" That line will probably go down as one of the worst lines in movie history.

When the killer finally shows up, it's not some crazy guy with an axe. The killer is dressed in a jumpsuit and looks like a German gay-porn actor. At least most bad horror movies have a good villain, but this guy is completely worthless. The audience doesn't even get a back story or know exactly why he's killing people.

Some of the worst aspects of this movie are the incredibly overused horror clichés. The film

has everything from "the car that won't start" to "the cops that show up in the nick of time." Not to mention that all the "actors" look like magazine cut outs and have no personality.

The most annoying part of the movie was the constant ringing of the phone. Every five minutes there's another grimace-inducing phone call, along with the sound of the audience grinding their teeth. Honestly, if I wanted to watch 90 minutes of a teenager talking on the phone and yelling, I'd go back to high school.

"When a Stranger Calls" is a movie that everyone must avoid at all costs. The movie will cause an immediate drop in I.Q. and a constant ringing in one's ears. An immediate spinal tap is highly recommended after viewing.

However, parents may want to take their teenage daughters to this movie to show them what happens to girls who go over on their cell phone minutes.



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