

## Brainwashed - Psychic TV/PTV3, Dreamers, Adelaide Festival

Written by Jeff Ward

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There's those numbers 2 and 3, making their calendar presence for the debut date of Genesis P-Orridge and PTV3 in Australia. Hardly a well known band here, but the name of its main protagonist was enough to stimulate at least enough interest in underground music circles for the festival organizers to offer an exclusive appearance at one of the country's more diverse arts festivals.

Psychic TV/PTV3  
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And so as the rain threatened an otherwise serene sunset over the outdoor plaza setting behind the old Parliament House, organizers handed out transparent plastic ponchos to a small crowd of less than 200, a fittingly bizarre scene : punters happily donning the sticky plastic uniforms. Odd. Now, PTV3 are no 'ordinary' band at the best of times, at least in a non-musical sense - there is a lot of history and a lot of mythology. At 62, Genesis, fresh from having issued a qualifying press release about an apparent litigation with regard to the TG reissues, arrived on stage looking a little unwell, all platinum and wide eyed, walking stick in hand - but happy, eager and smiling the flash of gold teeth: a real trouper.

PTV3, shuffling casually onto the tiny outdoor stage, none of the attitude perhaps expected of a band name with such a mythological history. This is a band that didn't take themselves too seriously, despite the history, myth or otherwise, the subject matter and material, and Australian audiences warm to a sense of casual self-deprecation. Now a team of five, the opening cover of Hawkwind's "Silver Machine" set the tone for the evening : PTV3 have slowly but surely become a cracking, tight, well-oiled psychedelic rock and roll unit.

They can lurch gently, prog-hippy, then speed up to top gear without much over-studied effort, they feel natural, relaxed, organic even. Even those with no prior knowledge of Genesis' mythology could admire their musical proficiency, snapping through some choice covers, Funkadelic's "Maggot Brain" and Can's "Mother Sky", and while Gen has the ability to charm and bewitch the small audience with the wit and banter of an old hand, it was the band as a whole, cohesive unit that gave the gold.

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Edley O'Dowd is a much under-appreciated talent, his drumming skills never labored, recalling Budgie's tribal thumps in The Banshees & The Creatures, all the while issuing PTV propaganda and film dialogue samples to direct effect (all ears switched on with the opening chant...sometimes I feel scared to live...) and occasional loops from drum pads. Jeff 'Bunsen' Berner's scorching white-hot buzzing and seething uber-psych guitar freakouts kept things at the outer-edges of this cosmic musical galaxy, at one stage operating on his instrument like a demented surgeon, knees buckled, guitar flat on the stage floor. Jess Stewart, the newest member of PTV3, is an accomplished and highly skilled classical and jazz musician, demonstrating delightful, subtle charm on keyboard (stunning the audience during Thank You & Alien Sky piano sections) and flute.

While this PTV is a new beast, still very much capable of the darkest apocalyptic laments, like Alien Sky, surely their most accomplished studio recording to date, they easily fill out the very space of darkening sky above the Adelaide sunset, now spitting with rain on the small gathering of curious festival goers, the hot plastic ponchos now dispensed. By now, most jaded hipsters may be tired of Genesis' chronic mourning of Lady Jaye's passing, now 5 years. During the double-songs of Thank You, patters of rain augmented Genesis' conversation with the late Lady Jaye, as the audience were guided through their love story, the gentle raindrops became both their tears.

At times the blending of the two was difficult to watch, as the singer caressed the screen images of the beloved with open arms, back to the audience, in trance. This not a grieving that is sentimental or cloying, or indeed easily understood by an audience without any prior knowledge of their love story - but it was a deeply felt emotion by performer and audience.

Any sense an apparent disturbance was again tempered by the whip-crack form of the band : a kaleidoscopic zillion-colored swirl of 21st century psychedelic rock and roll : bass, guitar, keyboard and drums, the standard instruments, but applied with mastery of skill by a family of relaxed, affectionate and loving players : smiling often, an affectionate touch here, a caring gesture mid-song (earlier they even did whimsy with the only old PTV track - White Nights) demonstrating that this band has a genuine affection for each other and their audience, that there is little self-importance, despite the perception of magical histrionics that so easily comes to mind with the name Psychic Television.

After an hour and a half, barely seven songs, just under half of them covers, as an encore loomed, a croaky drunken punter screamed for "Unclean" from the gathering—a song and a life long left well alone by its maker. In its place, "just to piss you off, we are going to finish with a joyful, happy song," and the band came full circle, closing with another Hawkwind song, their

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version of 1970 single "Hurry on Sundown."

Even the outer-edges of the abyss eventually might get some late cracks of sunlight. And so, it seems that at this time, even well after the sun had set, out of the darkness, some truly beautiful and yes, magical lights burnt bright in the southern skies.