

# THE McALLISTERS

LIVE

DUE SOUTH



The McAllisters - Third Side Club, Bournemouth/"Too Much Money Propaganda E.P." (Jolly Good Records)

"Brutal", says Chris Martin, The McAllisters twitchy bassist during our conflag about their press write ups to date. "They always say we're brutal or something". Perhaps having witnessed this Bristolian band twittering excitedly about having their current E.P played on Peely I am missing out on part of the rock mystique. These are genuinely good and likeable people, (not hollow icons) and it shows when they're playing: an enigmatic vocalist who wraps himself around vertical objects whilst drawing meaningfully down the mike; two guitarists, one languid and indifferent, the other (a sometime native of these parts going by the name of Andy Wallace) pogoing in a frantic but an endearing manner; a (review cliché no 134) solid but dependable drummer and of course Chris darting to and fro like some sort of demented chicken. What really distinguishes them from the ranks of po-faced posers who make up an alarming proportion of the rock community is their propensity to smile inordinately. All this in the face of adversity.

Why Southern audiences are what they are is one of life's great imponderables but suffice it to say that Bournemouth just ain't Bristol. The Macs are part of a west country musical heritage that stretches back to The Pop Group, The Only Ones and beyond and who's immediate contemporaries include the mighty Blue Aeroplanes and Chorchazade. The common denominator is an emphasis on innovation and a rejection of trivial preoccupations with the blight of fashion. Thank Lord for a band with a bit of substance.

The McAllisters are no musical muggers: the sound is intense rather than brutal. Here we have subtlety and force. The words and especially the combined guitars swathe themselves around you whilst the rhythmic and percussive twists and turns head straight for your nervous system. This gig was no languid stroll along the promenade, instead the effect is more akin to a car chase through the streets of Bournemouth ending up with the McAllisters just evading capture by outraged Third Siders unable to tolerate anything more vibrant than an afternoon constitutional.

And the songs? "Terry and June Will Eat Themselves" no not more unwarranted publicity for those overrated grebo dickheads, an anthem for disconsolate sitcom addicts. Some T.V. dinner (pass the Rennies). "Mother Confessor" intro: "this is one's about Thatcher", a piece of sublime political analysis cunningly disguised as a phenomenal Fally style ditty that positively roars. The Third Siders realising that they've bitten off more than they can chew head off to surburbla with their tails between their legs. Me? I leave grinning with a handful of tunes and a copy of one of the finest singles this year. Fetchrissakes buy it. (Adam Green)

The McAllisters are just as brutally compelling and are the nearest thing Bristol has to The Fall. Hypnotic, repetitive and attacking, they're a band you'll hear a lot more of as the year winds on.

The McAllisters Brutal, down to earth and powerful, they've got a lot of attitude and even more talent

## The McAllisters

*Cactus Club, Bath*  
Detective instinct took me down the discreet streets of Bath and into the subterranean ambience of the Cactus Club. Inside it was dark and nocturnal like an upmarket version of the Dugout. The atmosphere was friendly, relaxed and casual. I was looking for the McAllisters.

They were there all right. I grabbed my notebook and decided to go for the process of elimination. They weren't a garageband from

ghettoland (who is?) but I couldn't discern any pop sentimentality either. They patrolled their patch with brutal efficiency, transcending any clichés with a raw determination and sense of purpose lost by most bands in the early 80s post-punk mire. If they'd been around when Pere Ubu went soft in the head and opted for the funny farm, or when Wire split into segments and disappeared individually up their own backsides with their self-indulgent avant-garde work-outs, The McAllisters could have cleaned up.

Unapologetically serious and unpretentious, they roughed up the residue of all those wet, weedy, smug and sickly indie bands who prefer Smarties to illegal substances and just wanna have fun (FUN! A middle-class word if ever there was one). There was nothing cute about the McAllisters and nothing to laugh at either, unless you align yourself with the band against designer defeatism and apathy. Bassist Chris Martin bled impressively after cracking his head against a low-lying beam. He didn't miss a note, but then he probably didn't even notice.

There was plenty of cold anger, frustration and artistic stropiness, but there was also a certain... yes, naivety to be found in the McAllisters pure motivation. Before they finished, they engulfed us with feedback as Dave McAllister demanded: "Do you hate us?" It was a funny question to ask someone you've just beaten the shit out of.

The McAllisters whipped 'em good. I decided not to mess with them.

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VENUE ■

*Tropic Club, Bristol*

Judgement from on high (the N.M.E. in this case) has deemed that The McAllisters - along with 'nearly every other Bristol band' - are 'precious and boring'. According to my dictionary this means they're 'affecting distinction'. Fair? Let's see...

Something in the atmosphere recalls the heady days of punk - dark, delightfully seedy clubs which were the ideal backdrop to bands which could confirm your worst fears or open up fresh avenues of pleasure. The McAllisters dress the part, look very serious, but actually balance a commitment to their music with a tongue in cheek approach to this thing called rock 'n' roll.

Despite the rumours they are not The Fall/The Pop Group mark two, and, over the past few months, they have developed a sound on which their own hallmark is firmly stamped. A solid, choppy rhythm underpins a much more melodic and integrated harmony than was present when I last heard them. This tunefulness is evoked in particular by the use of keyboards, harmonica and distinctive lead guitar. Another plus is the vocalist whose lyrics are increasingly upfront (unusually, even more so than on the E.P.), though still not as clear as they deserve.

Poses are struck which simultaneously show their debt to rock's clichés, whilst mocking its excesses. It's worth seeing the band for the bassist's grimaces alone

This is a band which is growing, developing, with new material emerging. Precious? Nah, but pretty valuable nevertheless. (Sian Davies)

Much more hypeworthy are the McALLISTERS whose next single 'Too much money Propaganda' is imminent and brilliant. so sez a source close to the band, sorry that should read 'in the band'... well I reckon they're going to be the next local crew to get the attention nationally they deserve. so there...

■ The McAllisters/God Bless You Tropic Club Bristol. 9pm. 2am. 12 A fine double bill for this Hunt Sabs benefit. The McAllisters are frighteningly good and fast-improving with the ability to bypass the superfluous and hit the central nervous system where it really hurts. Direct but never simplistic, they're a brutal band with plenty of bite