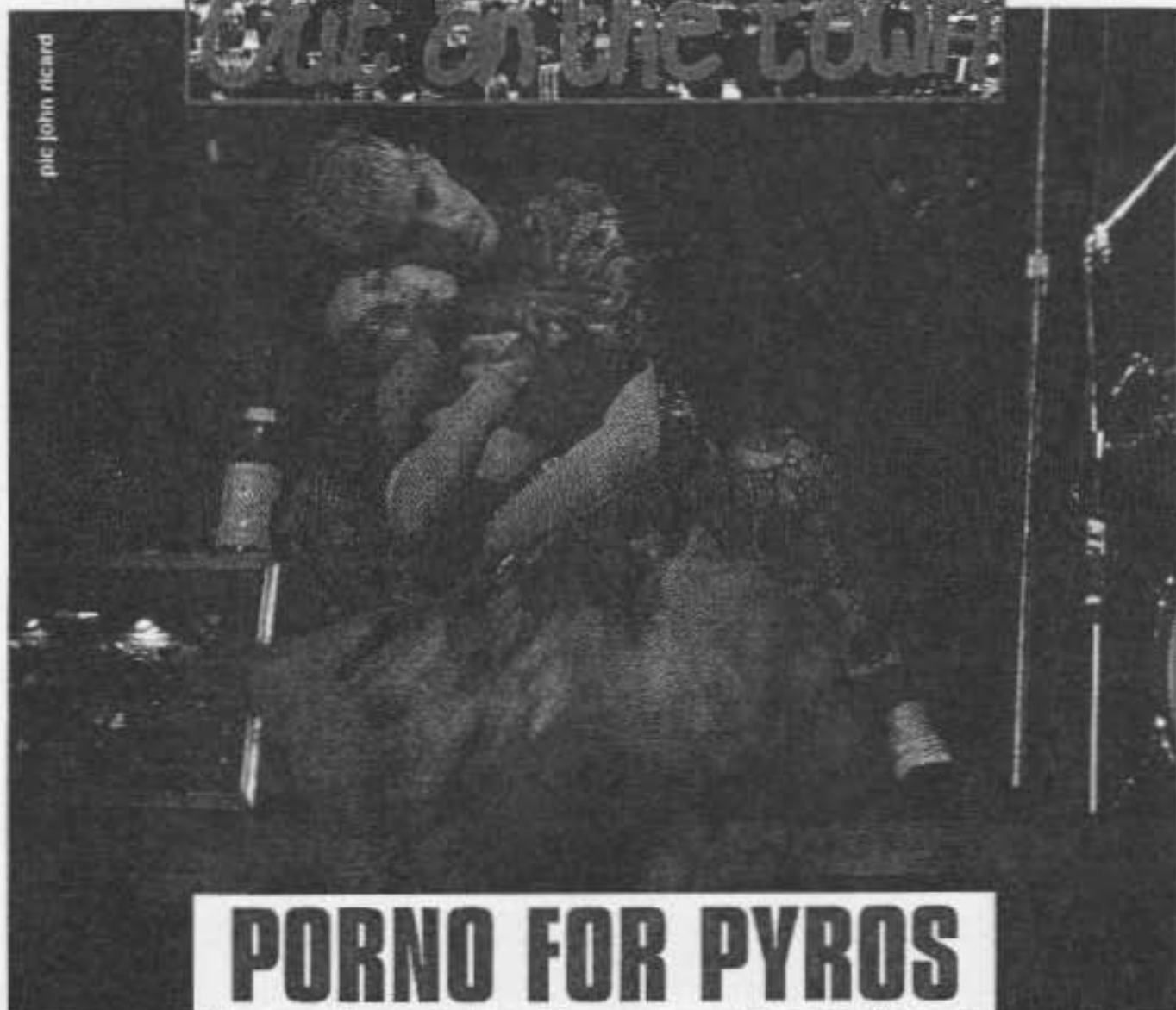


Out on the town



PORNO FOR PYROS

Roseland Ballroom, New York

Perry Farrell is an enigma. A man so obsessed with his art that he would break up a band before their peak of commercial success in order to remain pure. With Porno For Pyros, it is his (and drummer Stephen Perkins) way to preserve his sanctity (and his sanity), plying his creative juices without the public pressures that comes from being the man behind our time's most innovative groups, and the Lollapalooza, a miracle which further enhances the myth.

The logical thing would have Perry having his first real tour with Porno For Pyros on Lollapalooza MkII, since the first counter-culture jaunt featured the last performances of Jane's Addiction. It could have been the ultimate eulogy for the fallen band, but that would have been taking the easy way out. Instead, it's clubs across the states, in support of a record which has gained mostly positive acclaim. Which makes sense. As horrible as John Lennon's work with Yoko Ono, and as sappy as was the bulk of McCartney's material after the break-up, they were still revered amongst critics and fans alike, still enamored of The Beatles' sheen of greatness. And if anyone deserves the comparison, in terms of changing the way people look at music, and the long-term ramifications they brought

about, Jane's would be the band to inherit that throne.

So, Mr. Farrell is the Lennon of our generation. At Roseland, the New York City club where the band sold out two nights before the record came out, he had to out-legend the legend. He had to take that myth and not only live up to it but supersede it, making the past obsolete. The Beatles may have pulled the wool over an audience with blinkers on, but it shouldn't happen now, not in the enlightened '90s. After all, we won't get fooled again.

Perry does his best to impress. Taking cues from the Jim Rose Sideshow, a group he holds a certain kinship with, the decor featured a circus tent facade above, a crowd going nuts in anticipation of the spectacle to openers The Flaming Lips below, and whatever he could get away with in the middle.

He's a red head now. The neon hair fits the flamboyancy of his personality, and the fiery roar he was met with upon taking the stage. He wore a black outfit that could have been the off-the-rack version of that leather thing Bono sports on U2's latest Zoo tour. And besides the band, who seemed like nothing more than foils, if the truth be known, he was joined by an endless display

of characters acting out their roles as can only be found in Perry's world - a world so much different to our own.

His world has half-naked girls with a variety of roles to play. First, we are greeted with a ballerina, who actually takes the stage before the man of the hour, and then gets cradled in his arms. Then comes a fire-twirling, fire-eating femme, followed by dialogue between two girls during "Cursed Female", and a risqué strip-tease with simulated lesbian foreplay. The crowd went nuts when they 69'd, probably to Perry's chagrin. This was art. Cheap thrills could be found a few blocks away in Times Square, and the neanderthal-like reaction seemed almost perverse.

Musically, the new guitarist is more of a psychedelia freak than Dave Navarro, the Jane's six stringer, and as a result, most songs resembled the swirling mosh-pit of "Stop". "Pets" was especially indicative of this similarity, and in fact, if the Porno For Pyros LP was the fourth JA album, most wouldn't have noticed the change, except for a minor break away from the aggressive parts that helped them get the metalheads, which helped them break big, which helped them break up. Hmmm...

The showmanship could pessimistically be written off as a way to cover up inadequacies within the music. Sure, having a huge figure referred to as *Giant Louise* (who, according to Perry, had her first menstruation as 9 and 'at 12 she had a twelve inch penis'), whip out a hose and douse the crowd could be a way to defer attention. And in a small way, it indeed was, though the crowd scarcely noticed.

In the end, Porno For Pyros is good, but misses the spark which made Jane's Addiction great. Though it's a bit unfair to continue this comparison, it's justified given their premature break-up. There are groups who do much more without a track record who could not sell out Roseland even once (The God Machine come to mind, since they played a week before in the tiny CBGB's club). But there are also people without a tenth of the talents of Farrell who receive much more.

It's a two-edged sword, though ultimately, Perry Farrell is left holding the blade, cutting a swathe through mainstream America, and still inspiring the masses. You can be pissed at the man about Jane's demise. But you shouldn't hold it against Porno For Pyros. At the end of the day they more than hold their own and that's all you really can hope for.

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