

Red Light Driver channels '80s new wave, history

By JOSH FLYNN

Staff Writer

"Gone are those days that we never cared for anything," Derek Osgood sang as Red Light Driver opened their set late Friday night at Big Car, an art gallery located in Fountain Square's Murphy Arts Center. The sentiment was carried throughout their set, which was full of music influenced by 80s new wave and lyrics reflecting on the past.

Wedge into a performance space between a desk and a wall, a set of overcrowded shelves their backdrop and a table lamp their only spotlight, the band sped through nine songs that kept their small but enthusiastic audience dancing.

Drummer Drew Reed set the tone early, creating a driving tempo and forcing his bandmates to keep up. Jonathon Harmon's guitar work often sounded like tinkling crystals sprinkled through the music, similar to The Cure, circa 1985, and bassist Mike Shimmercore layered the instrumentation with deep rhythms that contrasted with his pleasant harmonies on backing vocals.

Meanwhile, Osgood entertained with frequent thrusts of his fist in the air, even taking his microphone in hand, knocking the stand to the cracked wood floor, and staggering around the stage. Piled upon a sound so dependent on the past, it all could have come off as one big rock cliché. But there was earnestness behind the animated Osgood's movements and the audience loved every second of it, stomping and clapping along.

Red Light Driver's songs, like their sound, often linger in the realm of distant memories. During "Third Grade Disaster Plan," Osgood sang of growing up during the Cold War back in the eighties. "Do you remember those days?" he asks. Even a cover of "Reptile," from the 80s Australian band The Church, stuck with the theme as Osgood sang "But that was long ago" in reference to the song's story of a love affair gone bad.

Red Light Driver's examinations of lost loves and troubled realities that clash with the idealism of youth bring a comforting familiarity with it. Listening to their music



Press Photo Courtesy of Red Light Driver. Visit their websites, www.myspace.com/redlightdriver and www.redlightdriver.com.

is like going back to a day when lost loves and troubled realities were just songs on the radio, and you could sing along merrily, oblivious to the meaning or that the very same problems were awaiting you in the future. While their songs may not be the happiest in the world, it is happiness they evoke, like a well played single from years ago that never lost its luster.



SHOWTIMES:
TUE. 8PM (\$3 Pro/Amateur Show)
WED. 8PM (\$3 Ladies Night)
THUR. 8PM (\$3 College ID)
FRI. 7* & 9:30PM (\$15)
SAT. 7*, 9:30* (\$16) & 11:45PM (\$12)
*Non-Smoking Shows

LIVE STAND-UP COMEDY

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Feb. 14th - 17th

Feb. 21st - 24th



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