

THE PHOENIX

Siren song

Keating, Portugal. The Man, The Receiving End of Sirens, and Circa Survive at Avalon, August 14, 2006

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The Receiving End of Sirens, shown here at Bamboozle Fest earlier this year

If you've ever wondered what the Mars Volta, the ghost of Jeff Buckley, the Blood Brothers, and a few grains of Old West sand would sound like if they were thrown in a blender on high and lit from below by strobe lights, see Portugal. The Man the next time they come around. Thanks to three total guitars (normally a four piece, they had two extra players on stage), the songs off their latest album sounded beefy and ready to rumble, a veritable noise assault. Because this was the last day of the Twilight Army tour, slices of bread were hucked, instruments were stolen and played, Portugal men were tackled, and lights were turned off — I think for the most part by the dudes of Keating, who opened the show with underwhelming Coldplayian earnestness. It was a chaotic and fun-to-watch ending to a fun-to-watch set.

Boston natives The Receiving End of Sirens played next. Coming out to the "Cheers" theme ("Sometimes you want to go...") and the screams of a packed Avalon, it was clear that it was good to be back. Down a member and up an iPod nano (guitarist/laptopper/keyboarder Casey Crescenzo recently left the band; a friend Ross filled in on guitar, and drummer Andrew Cook controlled the iPod), the band sounded no less crisp, which is especially impressive considering they've been on the road for the last year and a half. My only complaint might be that they were *too* crisp; each song was performed almost exactly as it appears on their album *Between the Heart and the Synapse*. Which isn't a bad thing considering how strong the album is, but it would've been cool to hear them play with some of the more powerful atmospherics.

With the crowd as energized as the band (or, maybe, with the band as energized as the crowd), the lyrics from "Planning a Prison Break," proved true: "This is the last night in my body." Everyone was everyone else, a singular voice that transcended the individual. That was, until, a banner was unfurled that said "TREOS" with a picture of a cock and balls on it. More last day pranking. The banner hung flaccid though, and the crowd was undeterred.