

APRIL '96

Two shows in one day? Not a good idea if you've had the flu all week, but as I type this, it doesn't seem to have made me any worse for the wear. Both of 'em downstairs at the Middle East, the first being a matinee with **Lifetime**, **Walleye** and other bands who I missed and the latter one a packed show with **Jawbreaker** and **fluf**. Walleye played a brief set defined by an emotional vocalist and swirling, melodic songs. In that post-hardcore camp, I suppose, but with enough energy and strong hooks to get by, although a longer set might have made things less-interesting. Lifetime mixed up the slower and faster material, also on the melodic tip, but with nods to classic hardcore sounds. The bastard children of Dag Nasty and Gorilla Biscuits? To a degree and, even if the drumming doesn't always hold up on the faster parts, the surging, hook-filled tunes and Ari's strong vocals (and Dan's crazed stage presence) make for a strong combination.

After a few hours respite and battling a long line and having to listen to the rantings of a seemingly-insane security person (walking the line and yelling like a marine corp drill instructor on crack), it was into the hot, sweaty environs for the pop 'n grunge rush of fluf and sweeter poppy/punk of Jawbreaker. One of the Lifetime guys was commenting about how heavy fluf sound for a three-piece and he has a point—a huge guitar and bass sound, with warm, but thundering riffing, mixing old Sub Poppish elements with a hook-filled indy rock sensibility. Jawbreaker were introduced by some bozo DJ from WFNX—great fuckin' station that 'FNX, who I'm sure didn't start playing Jawbreaker until their newest (and weakest) album. Anyway, too much material from "Dear You," but at least the songs had somewhat more grittiness and ferocity in the live setting and "Want" (yes!) and "Shield Your Eyes" always sound good. Blake's guitar tone is warm and stinging at the same time and the rhythm section forms a strong, melodic foundation. Blake also doesn't affect the phony-Brit accent as much, bringing back the classic rasp a good percentage of the time. Not the most pleasant circumstances to view the show, but worth seeing, I guess...