





There's only one real way to review a British band like The Duke Spirit, and that would be to feel them in the flesh.

flashy interactive website or gawking at Leila on Youtube. If there ever was a band that should be seen in the flesh, bass booming through your veins and lead guitar piercing your cochlea – it would have to be Melodic Big Rock/Blues band Duke Spirit!

After touring the States for a few years, recording their second album in the Mojave Desert, sell out come-back tours in the UK and raving rock reviews, I doubt very much they will come and play at the bull ring. So here we are, a crumby virtual review but an important one, we need to sit up and listen to this band!

Bands like this were once a dying breed, non gimmicky (save the lovely blonde) and waging war on musical mediocrity with effortless oomph and pure talent. Reluctantly looking beyond the vixen on vocals, the part-suited five-piece deliver raw rock sound with a kind of muted ferocity that leaves you brain damaged but gagging for more. These boys, not bad looking in themselves (although Guitarist Dan Higgins does tend to face-pose like the loony keyboard player from Sparks) just don't need gimmicks, it's all there, flawless, tight, solid.

No, I'm not talking about breathy-blonde lead vocalist Leila Moss, who's easily reaching an 8.5 on the 1-10 scale, twangs like Patti Smith, smoothes it out, then growls gritty over the five-piece wall of sound. I mean go and see them live, not spend hours rummaging through their

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Setting light to their guitars, bass-necking the amps and vandalising the drums would be futile, and class 'A' drug addiction is so last year!

The blues influence oozes out from below the melodic rock rhythm. We can hear the pain, we can hear the anger, at times a touch of confusion with an eighties 16 back-beat, but most of all the passion! Amazing how much you can get from 20 minutes on Youtube!

Producer Chris Goss, of Queens of the Stone Age fame, has certainly seen the light and firmly left his stamp on the band's second album. But for me, it's hard to translate this kind of raw atmosphere on to vinyl, or even worse MP3, unless you are ACDC or someone, and listening to the new album 'Neptune' there really is something missing. It feels like the kind of album you'd buy just to remember the live gig you were lucky enough to witness.

Despite my view, which I'm sure will upset many as usual, the band are on the offensive.

Confidently attacking the live scene once more with 'Neptune' in the bag and a list of sell-out gigs on both sides of the pond. With the lovely Leila at the helm and some of the best haircuts in the rock business, not to mention the talent, Duke Spirit slides easily up to the top three 'must see' not so massive bands on the circuit. Don't hang around though; I smell big things around the corner, swelling egos, inherent rock aloofness and ticket prices to match! Bless'em. www.dukespirit.com