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Check Out New Toys P.10





JEFF HARTWICK

NEVERWONDER

Jon Lovitz Comedy Club Universal City, CA

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The Players: Alima Soul, vocals; Vincent Ramos, bass; Andres Ramos, drums; Andrew Moore, guitars; Konrad Thompson, keyboards; Lex D, rapper.

AMP Username: Neverwonderband

Material: Neverwonder performed four songs for the "Indies In Motion Road Show" produced by LA Talk Radio's Rick Mizuno. Their set included some standards as well as new selections from an anticipated album. The band's former lead vocalists have ranged from the punky Joy Pearson to the sassy Megan

Bobo, each time introducing a very new dimension to the band's sound. Neverwonder introduced Alima Soul as lead vocalist in 2012. True to her name she continues in the tradition of a soul influenced vocal.

However, Soul contributes more than just great vocals. Her empowering lyrics for the band's new ballad, "Drowning," include some great slant rhymes like: "My heart's on the ground, won't let them break me down..." and "Too many dreams lingered on, too many lies stole my sun."

Musicianship: Andres shifts between metal, rock and funk styles with ease. The dynamics on "Spinning" are nicely structured to showcase Thompson and Soul before

the entire band builds up to wind down the song. Moore introduces some atmospheric funk guitar effects on a lush introduction for "Drowning."

Performance: Soul's outfit looks good, but the combination of the stiff tailor cut paired with some very high platform heels seems to restrain her ease of movement on the stage. Technical difficulties during the set were the result of a wireless microphone cutting in and out. Vincent's bass mix being too high only compounded this problem. Fortunately, the mixing issues were resolved after that introductory warmup and all parties made proper adjustments.

The latest incarnation of "Wild Out" is without a doubt, No-Doubted up. This is noteworthy as the band are currently working with producer "E" (No Doubt, Save Ferris). This rock and rap mashup is still a crowd favorite and a good finale for the band who are at their performance peak here. Soul is able to hold her notes and she hits the changes.

Summary: "Wild Out" was the best of the set; tight and indicative of the contemporary vision toward which the band seem to be progressing. Neverwonder will release the full-length follow-up to their critically acclaimed EP, *Really Let It Out* in Spring 2014. Although the band still tries to appeal to a larger audience through a variety of genre styles, their strength resides in a special blend of rock and soul. — **Brooke Trout**

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