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“Shouting with the Passion of a Truly British Band”

Westside Cowboy, The Exchange

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A band endearing and boldly unique, Westside Cowboy graces Bristol with power and a pure-hearted performance at the tightly-packed Exchange. They coin their sound as Britainicana – nostalgic British punk and indie-fused American Country – and play as artists who are masters of their craft.

Beginning the evening, Holly Head embrace chaos in their modern conception of punk through a whirlwind set of abrasive soundscapes and vulnerable emotion. They hail from Manchester, a four-piece band who are making waves with their boundary-pushing new tracks combining aspects of shoegaze, punk, 90's emo with unique groove-heavy baselines. They certainly create a depth to their sound, where the audience can ebb and flow through each song: amazing drum breakdowns, scratchy guitars, visceral bass and flowing chords reminiscent of The Strokes and The Stone Roses forge a fabulous balance. Further, screaming vocals cut through this wall of sound before dissolving into this deep instrumentation. You can truly loose yourself in their sound.

They are certainly a band who take themselves seriously onstage, and perhaps function more as 4 individual artists live – a very separate atmosphere to the clear relationships of Westside Cowboy. Their individual contribution to the sound melds seamlessly, despite their presence as a team onstage.

Passing their guitar over the crowd to get to the stage, the Exchange tightly packed and oozing with excitement – there is certainly a reason why this gig was highly-anticipated by fans. Another sign of good things to come is the massive cheer as Westside Cowboy bound onto stage to the backing of ‘higher and higher’ by Jackie Wilson, what a way to start a show!

A Manchester-based four-piece band, they are held to high standards in the emerging indie scene from the likes of Black Country New Road, Geese and Huw Stephens and were recently awarded the 2025 Glastonbury Emerging Talent slot. Their session tracks and recent second EP buzz with clarity, but their music truly comes alive onstage. Beginning the set with painfully hanging guitar chords reminiscent of 80’s rock bands, they melt into this meticulously crafted mix of shoegaze meets indie rock, punk and slacker charm. They shout with the passion of a truly British band, yet somehow find ways to sprinkle in the aforementioned ‘cowboy’-western quick beats that get your feet tapping without even realising. It was a performance for the audience and members alike, and all were smiling, laughing, dancing and mesmerised by the music they create.

True artistry is the core of their band, as they are able to take you from moments of gentle clarity, Adriaenne Lenker-style acapella sections which humbly take your breath away, to diving headfirst into explosive drums to a beat seemingly struck from thin air – and the crowd were there to absorb every single second possible. Massive praise must be given to the ‘Drum Encyclopedia’ Paddy Murphy whose crisp, impulsive drumming against the methodical, harmonised vocals balance effortlessly within every song.



Further, the vocals are steeped in emotional vulnerability and power, questioning how they are able to put so much heart into a performance night after night on tour. Lead singer James Bradbury thanks the audience – ‘it’s so awesome to see people in a place that we don’t live’ – evidence of their mould-breaking new material able to connect to the masses.

All hands were in the air to thank Westside Cowboy for their short set yet bursting at the seams with amazing stuff, both new and old. They are a band who love to play, and it is so brilliant to see onstage their comradery as a group of friends and talented artists. I am sure you can still hear the passionate shouts for Westside Cowboy lingering at the Exchange, and keep watch for their presence in the British Music scene as it inevitably grows stronger and stronger.