



PROPAGANDA

SWAYS006 FEAT. BROWN BROGUES, JOHN KNOX SEX CLUB, THE MOUNTAIN BAND AND THE LOUCHE F.C.

GULLIVERS, OLDHAM STREET, MANCHESTER, 24 OCTOBER 2010

MOTHERS OF ENGLAND, this happened ...

It is a wild and blustery Sunday night in October and the drunks and lost souls who haunt the Ancoats end of Oldham Street at the fag end of the week are silently filtering into Gullivers thinking, 'this is inevitable'. Recently reopened as an alternative pub and live music venue, the place actually doesn't feel like it's been touched by human hands since 1978. Punks pull pints, old music posters peel from the walls. It's tight and sweaty and you feel like the next band on stage will be Warsaw. The toilet makes you wonder if someone died in it, and does not lock. It is brilliant.

The first band onstage are Manchester's The Louche F.C., who are also the first representatives of the city's new music label, event promoter and cultural regenerator, SWAYS. The band draws from an epic palette of influences, ranging from the 1960s pop of Roy Orbison, through post-punk and Britpop and out onto the more melodic side of the summer 2010 soundtrack: the dreamy female vocals of Beach House, The XX or Best Coast. Visually entrancing and romantic-sounding, they already draw large crowds on their home turf and you sense that their time is now.

Manchester and Glasgow have long shared musical affinities and influences and attitudes, and the heart of the night is given over to two of Glasgow's most promising new outfits. First up are The Mountain Band, playing high voltage blues rock reminiscent of the 22-20s or even The Kings of Leon back when they were good. They are followed by the deranged spectacle of John Knox Sex Club, who more than live up to their impressive name. And they look like their name too, with the bearded lead

singer giving off a seedy Presbyterian vibe as he wails and rails like a fallen preacher trying to exorcise his lapsed and carnal soul. The bass player has somehow made it to the ceiling and it is unclear where the extended band ends and the congregation begins.

The sound is massive. By now the night should have ended but the early audience had been ejected from the live room several times before The Louche F.C. took to the stage as the sound engineer battled to perfect the acoustics of the new venue and things have been delayed. So now it is late and everyone is drunker than they thought they'd be and they've missed the bus anyway and Monday can wait.

The stage is set for the primitive stripped-down raucousness of Brown Brogues - those crashing drums and crunching guitar shakers - and also for Mark E. Smith, who has taken it upon himself to give SWAYS006 his seal of approval by deconstructing the meticulous sonic architecture so painstakingly put together, so easily pulled apart, which is to say he has forcibly ejected the sound engineer from the mixing desk and is now turning the levels up and down, and off and on, like a malign dwarf who is loved and respected by all, apart from the sound engineer, whose due reverence for Mark E. Smith is being severely tested, and as the night unwinds and Brown Brogues take flight with glory to their name, and John Knox Sex Club beat a retreat to the streets of Glasgow to preach to the unconverted, and The Louche F.C. go home to dream of dying, rumours begin to circulate of ugliness, and arguments, and upturned tables, and raging landlords, and fallen idols, and cigarettes in beer glasses, and the contents of beer glasses being emptied all over Mark E. Smith's face.

And so begins the story of SWAYS.