

SPIREA X SOUNDS 4.11.90

Liverpool Temptation 2

JIM BEATTIE, the man who kicked Primal Scream off in the early '80s, is back on the circuit. Hulking menacingly over his guitar, his onstage demeanour is of the tuff guy with the knack for the soft melodic touch.

His new project still bears the songwriting hallmarks of his Primals gear, the classic '60s Byrds-style guitar manoeuvres. But there's an ear for the '90s here, from the post-house intro tape that roughly segues into the dashing strafe chords of the set opener 'Spirea Rising', with a fuzzed dark riff from Beattie that ominously flows around Judith Boyle's new age croon. There's a smouldering menace about this track but it's all pinned back in guitar pop dynamics.

The attention to '90s detail is further bolstered with a homemade lightshow that sees manic manager figure Andrew McDiarmid swinging from his sweltering collection of lights. Spirea X have an inbuilt groovability, a danceable backbeat from the McGovern/Kerr bass and drums core. This gives Beattie plenty of space for his crystal clear guitar stylings and coarse vocals that he couples with Judith's sweet touches.

The set switches gear a tad on the wah wah-heavy 'Revolution' and burns exquisitely at the Stones-ish riffed exit 'Jet Pilot'; the only downer is that they didn't play the fab melting melody ballad 'Confusion In My Soul'. Spirea X coolly split, knowing that they are very much in the right place at the right time.

John Robb