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PAUL TILL

Matthew Cournoyer (left), Julien Mineau and Renard Bastien notched their tooth show of the year Saturday.

## live review

# Malajube magic

Quebec's finest indie rockers have a smashing good time at Lee's By **BRYAN BORZYKOWSKI**

**MALAJUBE** with **FIVE BLANK PAGES** and **BOCCE** at Lee's Palace, November 25. Tickets: \$10. Attendance: 450. Rating: **MNMM**

**IF ONLY MALAJUBE WEREN'T GETTING** so big. If only they didn't sell out Lee's Palace, get nominated for the Polaris Prize, tour Europe and win numerous awards.

If Malajube were just starting out, an unknown Montreal group still trying to make it, I'd definitely hire them to play my upcoming Hanukkah party. In fact, by the time Malajube finished diving into the crowd Saturday night at Lee's, violently smashing a guitar onstage and basically losing their shit for an hour playing seriously high-intensity power pop while singing only in French, I'd already figured out what

I'd need to sell to hire the band. While it's highly unlikely they'd play my party, at least I got to watch them celebrate at Lee's. The crowd didn't know it (I found out later from their tour manager), but this, their second Lee's show in seven months, marked their toothy gig this year. But before the fete kicked off, Burlington's Five Blank Pages tried to keep the crowd busy with a few pleas-

ant indie pop songs from their EP, *Spaces To Occupy And Abandon*. The buzz has been growing around this foursome, but on this night they failed to woo the audience.

Aside from **Rajiv Thavarathan**, the band's engaging bass player, the members of Five Blank Pages didn't seem that into their set. The songs felt sluggish, and singer **Noyan Hillmi** seemed a little out of place.

The lacklustre opener made Malajube's set that much more impressive. The band, with only two albums under their belt, performed a set comprised of songs from their critically acclaimed last disc, *Trompe-l'Oeil*. The album's exuberant blasts of distortion and infectious hooks translated well in a live setting, especially the upbeat Montreal -40°C, sprawling opener *Pâte Filo* and epic power ballad *Etienne Daout*.

The sweat-soaked set involved plenty of leaping, shouting, feedback and all the things that make a great live show, but the climax came near the end of the night when guitarist and singer **Julien Mineau** whipped his brand new Fender Telecaster above his head and smashed it onto the stage. The guitar's strings held the shattered neck and mutilated body together until he slammed the axe down again, to the crowd's obvious approval.

A few songs later, keyboardist **Thomas Augustin** threw down his mic stand and leaped into the crowd without warning, falling flat on his ass.

Antics like these, combined with stellar sounds, are the reason Malajube are doing so well outside of Quebec. It doesn't matter that they sing and banter in French. All it takes to impress is good songs, a great show and a party atmosphere. ©

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