

OPPIKOPPI INVESTATION NORTHAM - AUGUST 2000

Words: Joanne O

I was going to start this review by saying nothing else but **Jimmy 12inch**. That's all. A quick summary of the entire 4 day debacle in the bushveld. But that would be biased, so I'll start anew.

You can't just come to Oppikoppi to sit back, have a chilled time and watch a few bands. It's not about that. That's why people take time off work and endure the somewhat over exaggerated hardships of sleeping on hard ground. You have to let something else take over... Those chains that hold you down in rush hour traffic let go, ring themselves out and admit defeat.

It's Saturday evening, the second last night before the return.

Jimmy 12inch are loitering around on stage, checking guitars, keyboards, plectrums. A few paces upwards **The Nude Girls** are playing to a mass of people who are spilling over into the darkened bushveld, all frenzied, arms flailing to a set deserving of only the greatest respect. If anyone ever thought the Nude Girls were a pop band, they need to rethink their ideas. More like hardcore grrr floating like hyperbolic balloons amidst the tops of thorny bushes. All things considered, I've still seen them at most big festivals and the allure of new band Jimmy lies just around the corner.

It's late by this stage and most are either passing out, bleeding in the sick tent or trying to fly off the top of cliffs. I'm waiting patiently, sipping on some obscurely labelled bottle of whiskey, recovering from the same old story I seem to hear when drunk and sipping on peach mampoer. Farmers must love this... "Watch the buggers drink this poison we've been brewing in the back of our farms for the past seven years. Watch them start to swear undying love to their best friends and comment loudly on people's crap hairstyles." It's so much damn fun. Up for it, out for it, skank it up and push rev on the reverb.

When the smoke settles and the colours are all smudging around the outsides of nowhere, Jimmy eventually start. For a band who have been around no longer than 10 months or so, they are proving that they're as filled with potential and talent as the Nude Girls were way back when they were still wearing bubblegum boots. Frontman Nick is all **Placebo** Brian Molko ridden, shouting and doting on some guy called Even Steven. They're simply brilliant. Tight as a chicken's bum and as perfect as late night honesty on an empty dust road.

You can't just call Oppikoppi a rock festival. It's a music festival with one of the most diverse line-ups I have ever seen. If Splashy Fen is a surfer hippie festival and Woodstock a pop phantasmagoria, then Oppikoppi is the family of all and sundry in between. Which is kind of nice. If you're not up for jazz, you can listen to some rock, not up for guitars, chill on some beats, not up for anything at all, play some pool on a cliff that allows every ball to sink.

Friedjam.com winners **Tweak** are a punk band ridden with the smell of Camden in the seventies, long yellow haired Indie cynicism and pop jangles that are so clean and so new you can't do anything but smile. All up for SA hardcore's who have been in the scene for years, but the taste of fresh meat is delightful. Definitely one of the highlights. There's nothing worse than a cynical worn leather attitude from a journalist who has seen too much too often, but the newish bands are so much more passion riddled and up for it.

With other highlights from pink velvet goldmine glam goth **Ashton Nyte**, Belgian band **SoulWax**, **Sugardrive** and **Plum** in their Yang circle and the (in)famous duet **Van Der Want and Letcher**, Oppi proved itself a celebration of Dionysus once again. Nothing less!

Good thing Van Der Want and Letcher are still here. I read about Van Der Want being sick of the "music industry" and turning to something like law. Singing at the 206 stage with a scenic backdrop that is so fitting of these troublesome maestros of all things, it seems apt that they haven't left. Festival would be sorely lacking without them. With lyrics like "he got talking about music and I watched him fall apart", it felt so right that I'm still hovering on some rock on a precarious ledge - listening.

Besides the Black Label adorned thorn bushes and the proverbial lost souls at 3 in the morning, Oppikoppi is definitely one of the festivals one should make a mission to get to. It's worth the roadblocks, the bruises the next day, the feeling that you'll never get clean again and the lost condoms found in your tent that were not used by you. Northam rocked the world. Worcester the next weekend.

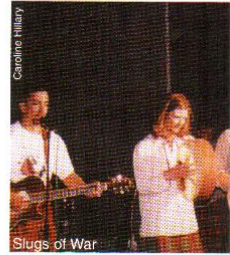
And I never lost my tent. Not once!



Soul Wax



Liesl Graham



Slugs of War

