

## Gig Review of Funeral For A Friend, The Haunted, Million Dead & Online Drawing @ Wolverhampton Civic Hall

I always try to catch all of the support bands on a bill, even if I've never heard of them before. You never know- you might discover your new favourite band. So when I got to the Civic to find Jonah Matranga's onlinedrawing had already finished, I was a little pissed. No worries I thought, FFAF have put together a stellar line-up, so we've still got two bands to go. BUT- when I later discover I also missed Jonah giving a little acoustic show at the back of the hall just before the headliners, AND an acapella performance in the courtyard when everyone was packing up to leave. excuse me one second..&lt;muffled sound of this reviewer punching the wall&gt;. much better. There was no way I was going to miss Million Dead, however. Although they've only got one album and a few EPs to their name (just like FFAF- Coincidence?), Million Dead certainly aren't short of tunes. As well as album highlights like 'Pornography for Cowards' and 'Charlie and the propaganda myth machine', we get a few new songs ('Sasquatch', and the soon to be released 'I gave my eyes to Stevie Wonder') and the first guest appearance by Jonah, who joins in on an inspired cover of the Smiths' 'Girlfriend in a coma'. All in all- a faultless performance. Especially on set closer and personal favourite 'Breaking the back'. Although it's a bit scary seeing 15 year old mini-mosher fashion punks singing along to every word of it, but probably not understanding any of it. They probably didn't understand The Haunted either, but that's because they're METAL!!! Oh, and they're Swedish. Apart from the instrumental 'Privation of Faith INC.' (not chosen as an opener- but rather HALFWAY THROUGH THE SET!), a new song called '99', and 'Godpuppet', I haven't got a f\*\*\*ing clue what they were playing or saying. But damn it was good. The circle pits that broke out every few songs and the pained expression on my none-more-emo friend's face were proof enough. It seems Funeral For A Friend decided they could splash out a bit, since they were obviously going up in the world (last time they were next door in the smaller Wulfrun Hall). Gone is the standard big-ass logo on the backdrop. In its place, we have a frenetic, almost epileptic stream of live video feeds and arty images. Which does nothing but piss me off for the entire set. Shame- good intentions, and all that. This was the third time I'd seen them live (if you can count standing outside the tent at Reading last year), and I finally worked out why they're such a good live band. It's because they have so many songs that could be set closers- 'Juneau' (third song played- ballsy!), 'Bend your arms to look like wings', and even the acoustic 'Your revolution is a joke', which was being given its first live airing on this tour. They all seem to reach a crescendo that gives you this feeling of . sorry, this is getting a bit silly. Look, they're just good! Trust me on this. 'Novella' actually turns out to be the set closer, as it was last time- with its stretched out ending, it's the obvious choice, allowing for the band to quietly disappear one by one. Which is what they did last time, leaving without an encore. But this time, they make up for it. It's an encore for the fans (read- 'obsessives'), giving us 'This year's most open heartbreak', and 'The art of American football' (both from their first two EPs). Can you guess what the other song was? Do I actually have to tell you they didn't pass up a golden opportunity to do their now obligatory cover of 'The System' with their hero, the guy who wrote it? No? Good. In that case I'll just be off to buy 'Water & Solutions'

### About the Author

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