

The Sonar Yen in Manchester

Venue: *Star and garter*

Date: *wednesday March 17*

In a corner a worse-for-wear woman berates her boyfriend at the top of her voice. "No more manipulation, no more lies!" she yells, before the scream of a guitar signals the first glorious crack of The Sonar Yen. The timing is cinematic. Tonight's the launch of these locally cherished Manchester post-rockers' debut album, 'Slow Picture', and 'driver' isn't a strong enough word to describe their performance. Frontman Mike O'Neill is rigid behind the mic, pumped with adrenalin, while the sheer power of the four-piece elevates the whole thing above the tangled, confrontational aspects of life their songs chronicle.

Fortunately, 'velvet Jesus' is the sound of the universe being opened up to all possibilities, a stomping frenzy behind a Mark E Smith-style mantra. 'Livin' Right' pulses and contracts with dazzling intensity, as though Ian Curtis handed his diary to ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead. What's more, the couple at the front finally stop arguing and dance wildly with one another – coalesced by the sense that rock'n'roll is all about living for the moment. *Lenne Steleberg*

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SIVES DESCEND ON A PONTIN'S

