

MAEL MORDHA

+ PANTHEIST

LONDON GARAGE

A virtual paradigm shift from darkness to light sees new Pantheist material illuminating the audience gathered tonight, and rather than a feeling of forlorn doom there is, if anything, hope flowing around the harmonious and uplifting vocal croons of 'Broken Statue'. Singer Kostas is stage front behind keyboard bank and obviously in his element sharing this new material, but in case we had forgotten the past, old number 'O Solitude' is played, drowning us in its oppressive stomp. The group captivate with elongated instrumental meltdowns, which are flamboyantly laid down with eclectic tenacity, and the Middle Eastern twist of 'Unknown Land' serves as a fiery sermon. Past evoked, future glistening, there's an almost Anathafloydian dreaminess jousting through the melodies, and on the strength of this heady display, for once the words "brightness" and "Pantheist" can be used in the same sentence.

The doomed Gaelic sword thrust of Mael Mordha follows with swift precision, and with the barbarians not so much at the gate as knocking it down, the audience is quick to react, thrusting fists in the air to 'Cluain Tarbh'. Mead flows and the blue warpainted crew quickly take control, led by the imposing Roibéard Ó Bogail, who only pauses from haranguing us to trill and toot a jig on his whistle. The passionate and forceful frenzy hardly pauses for breath and the group literally charge through their ten-song set, taking in 'The Doom of the Races of Éire' and into the Celtic clamour of 'Gealtacht Mael Mórdha'. The somewhat frenzied pace takes downtrodden doom into different territories, and it's a triumphant display with little in the way of mourning over battles once lost, making this impassioned show one to remember fondly — once the resulting hangover wears off.

PETE WOODS