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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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Back Door Slam (Again), Nicole Atkins, Mike Leigh and the Blind Boys Of Alabama

A quick update on my outings. Saw Back Door Slam again at the Mercury Lounge. The lads were smashing, as always ("Thank you very much indeed!") with a few new tunes mixed in, including a cover of the Robert Cray song that gave them their name. (I still prefer my take on their name - the Back Door Slam is the sound of kids running out to play in the summertime.) And word of mouth is tremendous. The first time I saw them, there were maybe 15 to 20 people, the next time 30+, the next time even more and this show was crowded. Not quite sold out, but close, I think. Hey, touring still works!

Then saw Nicole Atkins at the Bowery Ballroom. Have to admit, when I first heard about the show, I assumed she was opening up for someone. Nicole herself said it was "the weirdes" day of her life. A strong crowd and she joked that she didn't even recognize everyone. (That's when you know you're getting somewhere, when the audience isn't just filled up with family and friends.) She has a great voice and is a real performer. A few of the songs are weak, but she barrels through them and had some great covers: the Doors' "Crystal Ship" and a raucous sing-along with the opening acts finale on Fleetwood Mac's "The Chain." Every indication she'll just get better.

Then on Saturday I saw Mike Leigh's new play "2000 Years." Not terribly involving and it certainly didn't help that New York actors were trying to nail London accents. Without that specificity of location (it might as well have been East Orange, New Jersey), the play loses something. Still I doubt an all British cast would have lifted it up too much. Seemed to be about a middle aged couple whose son becomes interested in praying and his Jewish roots much to the chagrin and mocking humor of his parents and sister and grandfather. But there's also the mother's sister who is mysteriously out of touch for 11 years (or seven!) who naturally reappears in Act Two. A very good melt down

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