

Hit 'em where it hurts

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Two hundred indie haircuts bounced up and down at The Marquee on Oct. 18. It was a sea of kids in tights and Chuck Taylors, entranced by bands far more sophisticated than they were, at the Arts & Crafts showcase.

Up first was Fredericton's finest, Grand Theft Bus, who are not on the A & C label. These gents have come a long way since the days of 14-minute jams and guest appearances with Jimmy Swift in backyards.

Once known for their eclectic, catchy, maritime rock jams, their performances are now more refined and disciplined. Grand Theft Bus played a tight set of songs from their new album, *Flies in the No Fly*. They provided a nice soundtrack of experimental, rocky tunes, along with some gentler instrumental pop.

Next up was Young Galaxy, whose name may be a bit of an oxymoron, but a fairly accurate description of their music.

Although they aren't as galactic and sci-fi as their name would suggest, they do have a unique style of echoing female and male vocals and playing catchy, distorted riffs. It seemed likely most of the people at The Marquee were there to see these

once West Coast, now Montrealite rockers.

The Most Serene Republic received a warm welcome. Perhaps this is because their low-fi, twisted, ambient sound is more addictive than crack. These guys will smash their way into your heart and kick you in the arse.

Chorus vocals were interwoven with a jazz influence and a hit-'em-where-it-hurts pop sound.

This seemed like the quickest set of the Pop Explosion, not due to a lack of songs or short song length, but because when you're immersed in a whirlwind of ambient noise, time never lasts long enough.

Last on the roster for the evening was another local band from Toronto, Apostle of Hustle. It's a mystery what made them come from Lollapalooza to the Pop Explosion, but kudos to whoever directed them toward Halifax.

Broken Social Scene guitar hero Andrew Whiteman has managed to create an enigmatic genre with this band. Their set of weird, tropical, rustic rock was thoroughly enjoyable.

Guitarist/vocalist Julian Brown's sweating was likely not due to the heat of the venue, but to the musical heat radiating from the stage.