

Steepways - The Road to Altamont Review



Steepways - The Road to Altamont, Chapel Arts - 15 September 2018[/caption]

The Road to Altamont proves an immersive and ambitious musical journey through American counter culture

Steepways, an original five-piece Americana band from Bristol, opened their set with a bold six song concept piece that evoked the free spirit and fragility of America's hippie movement. From the optimistic, psychedelic sounds of *Moving on* and *Does My Heart Good*, which captured the energy and dreams of a summer of love, *Steepways* steered the audience into darker territory with an incessant drumbeat that echoed the rising tensions of the Vietnam War and the death of American Youth Culture in Altamont; a free concert that was marred by violence and death.

The lively high energy of the opening songs was replaced with the more pensive, sombre mood of *Heaven's Gate*, a mood that reflected the end of a time of peace, love and freedom in America. As the band took to the front of the stage, and the lights fade to black, the audience found that they themselves were locked out of the *Heaven's Gate* *Steepways* had earlier offered an invitation inside.

The Chapel Arts Centre itself proved a fitting environment for the concept piece, with the intimacy of the venue and table seating creating a community atmosphere akin to the communal spirit of the 1960's celebrated at the beginning of the show. With a sound that is an authentic musical amalgamation of folk, blues and country, *Steepways'* slice of Americana boldly recreated a moment in history that was both recognisable and familiar, yet gratifyingly original in its delivery.

By Annie Rose