**The Cavedogs successful in the Boston club scene**

**THE CAVEDOGS**

**Performing with Cross Comedy and God’s Fool.**

The Boston Rock Club, Feb. 25.

By Chris Roberge

**O**... the hits!” said Cavedogs guitarist Todd Spahr with more than a hint of success after bass player Brian Stevens and drummer Mark Rivers regaled following up with a strong rendition of “Baba Ghanouj” with the hard-hitting “Tayter Country,” one of the few Cavedogs songs that got a noticeable airing.

Spahr’s sense of humor was a welcome part of the horrific show that The Cavedogs put on last Tuesday night at their record release party for the new Capitol release, Soul Marvin, but the night’s success was somewhat disturbing. The Cavedogs, a favorite of the Boston club scene, are a very talented band who have recorded two great albums and give very energetic live shows, but who have received only a fraction of the popularity that they deserve. Tuesday’s concert, with God’s Fool providing a decent opening and Cross Comedy performing during the Cavedogs’ set, showed all of the band’s strengths quite well and hopefully suggests a future with many more hits.

The show began with a member of the Cross Comedy team, who performed skits during the first half of the show, introducing the band as role models for bands who refuse to sell out, and as a result don’t sell.

The Cavedogs have recently switched labels from Enigma to Capitol Records, causing some concern about whether or not their distinctive musical personality would survive the transition to a bigger company. Based on the new album and the Paradox show, though, little has changed with the music or the magic for Steve’s new look, which seems modeled after Shaggy of Scooby Doo fame. Spahr was overhead at Newbury Comics earlier that day explaining that Stevens had dropped too much acid since the last album, *For That A Reason*.

Soul Marvin is a strong and varied offering with all of the books of the songs and some punchlines of the old 900 debut. Once again, all these members share the responsibilities of writing and singing, and like the members’ distinct and very different voices, the twelve new songs come in each other somewhat in style and mood but form a harmonious whole. The new album’s pleasures are buried a bit deeper than on *Journeys*, which was basically a compilation of songs, but are well worth exploring.

The majority of Tuesday’s show was devoted to Soul Marvin — a program selection obviously intended to push sales of the new album, but which may have alienated the audience with unfamiliar music that had been available to the public for less than one day. Still, one of The Cavedogs’ greatest merits is that their songs are for the most part instantly engaging. At some points the band rounded less than perfectly comfortable with the newer material, particularly in slower songs, such as “You’re Put Away (Folded),” “Folded,” probably the strongest track on Soul Marvin, is a haunting song sung by Stevens that obsessed about lost opportunities and images that control their true meanings. Live, The Cavedogs were more impressive with Marvin’s louder edge. “Love Graveyard,” the aggressive opener for the album, and “Boy in a Plastic Bubble,” the fine single released, were both enthusiastically played as Spahr hopped back and forth along the stage with more energy than seemed humanly possible. In these two songs, as well as “Fascist and His Arrowheads” and “Sunny Day,” the trio of Spahr, Stevens, and Rivers gave further proof that they can put out a stronger, richer, and more powerful sound than many larger bands. Despite strong pretensions of the new material, though, the biggest audience-pleaser of the first half was definitely “Bed of Nails,” one of the more popular *Journeys* songs.

After exhausting most of Soul Marvin, The Cavedogs settled into a string of songs from *Journeys For Shaw-Shes*. The encore began with the fantastic “Baba Ghanouj,” The Cavedogs’ best song to date, and continued with the band tearing into “Tayter Country,”...