

Brolly green giant

THE GREEN MAN FESTIVAL

GLANUSK PARK, BRECON, WALES
FRIDAY, AUGUST 15 - SUNDAY, AUGUST 17

All the rain Wales can muster can't soak the spirit of eclecticism

Forget the weather. The variety of music on offer at Green Man puts most other festivals to shame, and the vibe remains blissfully relaxed despite the weekend's inclement conditions. Where else would you get to see **Nina Nastasia's** delicate acoustic balladry before **Magik Markers'** abrasive drone-rock, or **The War On Drugs'** sun-kissed Americana followed by **Fuck Buttons'** electronic noise-terrorism? Nowhere.

This weekend, though, belongs to one band: **Super Furry Animals**, and their various offshoots. Headlining the main stage on Saturday night, the Welsh fivesome deliver a career-spanning greatest hits set surprisingly low on gimmicks - perhaps they're trying to remind us that beneath the wackiness lies some of the most forward-thinking pop songwriting committed to tape by a UK act. That they're denied an encore, perhaps due to **Spiritualized** over-

running the previous night, isn't a popular decision.

Still, there's plenty more SFA action on Sunday, with keyboard player Ciaran's **Acid Casuals** side-project delivering some pounding, pounding techno in the aptly named Rumpus Room, followed later by Gruff and guitarist Huw Bunford on the ones and twos. Last but certainly, unfortunately, least are **The Peth**, featuring SFA's rhythm section and fronted by actor Rhys Ifans (who we see splashing around in the mud the previous evening, clearly somewhat the worse for wear).

Musically, it's horrifically overblown classic rock, with Ifans strutting around the stage and hamming it up Spinal Tap-style. They play a song called 'Let's Go Fucking Mental', with a chorus of, well, you've guessed it...

Perhaps it wouldn't seem quite so unacceptably ridiculous had we not seen **Laura Marling** play a totally

spellbinding set moments earlier.

Backed by members of **Mumford & Sons** (who themselves went down a treat just after lunch), an upright double-bass and a violinist, Marling's modern folk songs translate perfectly to the bigger stage.

'Night Terror', in particular, is a real hairs-on-the-back-of-the-neck moment, woven with heartache and gravitas.

Sometimes, though, you just need a bit of good old-fashioned rock'n'roll, and that's exactly what **The Archie Bronson Outfit** deliver in spades, along with a healthy dollop of psychedelic blues. Their Folkey Dokey Stage (!) set is a definite highlight.

Caribou close the festival in equally impressive style the following evening, with a display that encompasses mass instrument-swapping, two drummers and a heavier-than-expected take on recent album 'Andorra'. It can't tempt the sun out of hiding, but at a festival as unique as this, who cares? **Rob Webb**



Most scenic festival ever?



To keep warm, burn hippies



Rhys Ifans being a rock star for the day