

Music Review: Pocket Monster, Sunday November 3, 2024 at New York City Marathon

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Pocket Monster has been setting-up on the street along 4th Avenue in Brooklyn since 2005, for as long as I have lived in Brooklyn, and playing 3 to 5 hour sets for the 10's of thousands of runners who pass by the neighborhood in Sunset Park, BK for the NYC marathon. This 2024 gig has been their 18th support for the marathon, with time off for good behavior such as during covid.

This review is to introduce music lovers to this unique group. As a friend said recently, they do something which people aren't doing much anymore which is create wild (very) loud psychedelic music. Not to be too obvious but the performance reminds one of the Airplane at Woodstock or even better, Pink Floyd on speed. Pocket Monster, which is an English translation of Pokeman, is two brothers, Robert and Eugene, whose family lived in Bay Ridge BK and at whose family house the band was formed, and where other groups used to practice as well, until a few years ago when the brothers sold the family house and moved on.

Robert writes the songs and plays guitar and sings and produces the recorded music while Eugene plays the drums and puts together the revolving cast of musicians comprising the live Pocket Monster. Robert now lives upstate while Eugene lives in Brooklyn and plays with various other musicians in the area, recently playing jazz in Harlem, drums with acoustic group Big Noise BK (full disclosure, I am songwriter in Big Noise BK), and with the revolving cast of musicians known as Jackie Puppet.

Pocket Monster live on the streets of the NYC Marathon is not to be missed (40th St. and 4th Ave). PM's recent incarnation includes one of Eugene's finds on electric guitar named Jawnee Conroy. Jawnee is an electric guitar maniac, sometimes like Sterling Morrison of the Velvet Underground (good find Eugene !) or sometimes like the other great NYC lead guitar player Robert Quine (ty Brian Dillon for this insight.)

I wish that Pocket Monster would practice more often and have other voices in the songwriting and singing. Meanwhile take it as it comes. If you like the Airplane at Woodstock, which I do, look for Pocket Monster.