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Amaluna by Cirque du Soleil

June 13, 2014
Boston's Waterfront

In a wave of beauty Cirque du Soleil does it again with Amaluna. The creators have managed to weave together acrobatics and design to take the audience packed into a small tent on the waterfront to an imaginary island full of fairies and magic.

This show takes the artistry to a new level as the actors utilize water in a way that is memorizing. They dip into a glass tub that shimmers after they perform impressive acrobatic moves alongside the edge. Of course the music is perfectly timed by the band in the background to add that additional effect of enchantment.

There is the expected amount of men flying through the air off trampolines and strong women gymnasts who swing themselves around the bars. But this show added in something I've never quite seen before. It was a balancing act. A serene woman took the stage to yet another mystic song and spent about ten to twenty minutes balancing large wood sticks on top of each other to eventually create what looked like a graceful bird. The precision and balance was impressive and when she completed the task, I've never seen anyone more relieved.

The fairy-tale Cirque du Soleil was able to create in a tent is remarkable. They take you into a different world and awe you. It's rare a performance can completely take you away from the spreadsheets and work in your head but when it's accomplished, it is inspiring. If you're able to catch a show while it's still in town, I promise you will leave feeling grateful for the experience.



Article By Teresa Reilly

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Ben Kweller

May 7, 2014

Brighton Music Hall, Boston, MA

People lose their minds over Ben Kweller. He's a musician's musician and knows how to showcase it. He plays genuinely and the audience obsesses over every minute of it.

Opening up with my personal favorite "Wasted & Ready", Ben spared no moment in grabbing the crowd and shaking that full head of curly hair as he gracefully stroked his guitar. Ben plays nearly pure rock with a bit of folk thrown in at times. He's described as a singer-songwriter but the world knows he's renowned for his guitar playing skills. But something I've never heard about him before witnessing it first-hand was his on-stage personality. It's a highly underrated skill but makes a world of difference. If you get good laugh in-between tunes, it lightens your mood even more on top of gaining some insight into whose words you're singing along to.

Ben's being doing something for nearly 20 years now (first with Radish and then solo) but you've probably only known him for the last ten. He's one of those names people nod at in respect in the music community. And one of the signs of a successful and smart musician is the quality of their back-up band. Ben is a whiz kid in this arena as the songs flowed naturally with sporadic break-out jam sessions. And not just one of those moments where someone goes rogue and strikes a few cords but more of an orchestrated free-for-all where you stand there thinking, "well this should have been on the album"!

With no signs of slowing down, like him on Facebook or whatever means it is you use to track your favorite musicians. Maybe even buy a few songs on iTunes and invite that classic rock 'n roll sound right into your own home. Whether you're out for a sunny afternoon walk or doing some spring cleaning, Ben will make it a little better.

Article By: Teresa Reilly



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Cody Simpson

January 20, 2014

The Sinclair, Cambridge, MA

One of the best things about pop stars as they grow-up is their confidence. They stand their ground and know how to wink at just the right time to just the right section of the crowd to get the best response. They know how to work it, when to look up in the middle of a ballad and stare off into the distance or when to add just a little groan after a lyric. Cody Simpson is there. He knows how to create that magic.

Of course, the better thing is that they become better musicians. They perfect notes and pronunciation. Since the last time I saw him, Cody's voice has already gotten a bit more smooth and perhaps an octave lower. He's ironing out those wrinkles and this seventeen year-old Aussie is hot on the trails of Biebs.

He's getting a bit edgier though. His hair's a little shorter and he stood up on stage sharing a bit more attitude. There was less smiling and more seductive grins. Out promoting his new acoustic album, tunes like "Pretty Brown Eyes", fell perfectly into the more alluring set and atmosphere, especially in the new Sinclair, which is romantic just in itself with the exposed walls and dim lighting.

In a world full of youngsters trying to be the next big thing, it's hard to find someone who's actually getting close. While it seems that Cody is getting a bit more jaded, he's getting better, and there is no better way to showcase that than in an acoustic album. Curious?

Article By: Teresa Reilly



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Demi Lovato w/ Little Mix

March 5, 2014

DCU Center, Worcester, MA

Neon colored tutus, faux leather jackets, crop tops and pink spray-in hair dye- the evidence that Demi Lovato has inspired countless teen girls with her edgy style on The Neon Lights Tour, that made a stop at the DCU Center in Worcester, MA on March 5th. The crowd brought their screams to a new decibel with every mention of the former Disney star as they eagerly awaited her arrival to the stage.

Fifth Harmony opened the show, each standing and posing in their own box, as if they were sweet dolls on display, each with a different look and personality, kicking off their set with "Me and My Girls." These girls were definitely in harmony, bringing sass, class and a whole lot of glitter to the stage. The group tackled a cover of Destiny's Child's "Independent Women" showing off their girl power, and were very animated during the upbeat "Don't Wanna Dance Alone." The crowd went wild for the group's hit single "Miss Movin' On", singing along with the girls.

Collins Key kept the crowd entertained in between sets with magic tricks, comedy and DJ music. His Bieber-ish charm had all the girls squealing in no time.

Little Mix hit the stage next, bringing in a more mature, sexy performance. The British group's dance moves and performance showed that they've polished their pop-craft, and are quickly becoming a major sensation in the US. Adorned in red and black leather, the ladies brought intense energy with "Salute" and "Move." A medley of some throwback girl group songs included "No Scrubs" by TLC, and "Bootylicious" by Destiny's Child—their take on En Vogue's "Don't Let Go" actually gave the original a run for its money. The group ended out with their sassy and fun hit "Wings."

Demi Lovato hit the stage with her band, appropriately opening with the song "Heart Attack" as it seemed all her teen fans were about to have one, screaming, jumping and crying when they caught the first glimpse of their idol. Her vocal chops were shown off in "Remember December" and "Fire Starter", showing that the 21 year old certainly has true talent.

The pyro and techno light displays were put away for a bit to show that she wanted to focus on the music. For the softer "Catch Me", Demi pulled out an acoustic guitar and sang sweetly to the crowd. Demi brought her band to the end of the stage to sit down with her for a chilled-out version of "Here We Go Again", and she sat on a stool by the grand piano for "Nightingale." Her band rested on pedestals on stage at different heights, which was a nice change of pace as most pop acts tend to hide their band in the shadows of the back of the stage.

Demi is known for her troubled past, and she took the opportunity to address her struggles with the crowd instead of hiding them, encouraging young people in the audience to seek help if they were dealing with depression, self-harm, or any sort of addictions. She then led into "Warrior", playing the piano herself for the song that says, "All the pain and the truth/ I wear like a battle wound/ So ashamed, so confused/ I was broken and bruised."

The energy picked up again with the crowd favorite "Let It Go" from the Disney movie "Frozen", and an old favorite "Don't Forget" that included a video montage of Demi's music videos from over the years, showing that the 21 year old has had a long, successful run already. For "Dynamite" Demi proved that she's grown out of her Disney mold, with sexy dance moves and an electric guitar solo.

The cell phones and glowsticks lit the entire crowd up for the dance hit "Neon Lights", as Demi gave it all that she had. The encore consisted of two of her biggest hits, "Skyscraper" and "Give Your Heart A Break." It was evident that Demi is focused on her passion for music and was born to entertain on stage, having the power to inspire so many young people.

Article By: Haleigh Stanway/Photographer: Jenna Machnik



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Dirty Bourbon River Show

[July 11, 2014](#)[Lizard Lounge, Cambridge, MA](#)

In a classic basement in Cambridge, a room full of people had one of the best Friday nights they've had in a long time. Dirty Bourbon River Show, straight from the New Orleans streets, brought their loud and pumped-up show with purity and fancy clothes.

There was brass everywhere in that small room but the music it made filled it. Where there was space, couples swirled and danced in the aisles as quite seriously everyone else clapped along. Toes were tapping and shoulders were swaying as each song rolled into the next, making a night of seamless southern music.

With a wealth of musical instruments at hand, they produced a full sound that reverberated the sidewalk upstairs and forced the audience into feeling every note. It carried the heart of jazz with just a whole lot more trumpet and bass. It was powerful and confident and boastful. The songs carried fun surprises from time to time with sweet moments thrown in but the magic was in the oomph.

There were no egos either present onstage or in the audience. It was a night to let your hair down, grab some whiskey and let the music in.

Article By: Teresa Reilly



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Dropkick Murphys

March 13, 2014

House of Blues, Boston, MA

In a year full of turbulence there is always one thing this city can count on: the Dropkicks are going to take over your St. Paddy's Day weekend. They'll be on the radio, taking over speakers at every bar, bands across the city will cover them and the guys themselves will set-up residency at the House of Blues.

They've got it down. They plan the fan favorites, "Shipping Up", "Rose Tattoo" and "Drunken Sailor", mixed in with a few new songs like "The Boys Are Back". Of course there's the covers Throw in some Irish step-dancers and a bagpipe tune in the background, you've got yourself a rowdy Irish party.

Yes, often it becomes too rowdy and Dropkick shows are well known for the amount of arrests that tend to happen surrounding them but being the face of Boston Irish music, the band sets the tone for a drunken weekend.

The trickiest part to it all is finding tickets. The shows sell-out months in advance as fans have made it a tradition to catch at least one of the shows in the busy holiday weekend. It's just a thing. The whole city knows it and St. Paddy's Day parties are planned around it.

If you're in the city during one of the most special holidays of the year, you need to find tickets and you need to experience this Boston tradition. It's like going to Salem on Halloween or Plymouth Rock on Thanksgiving but an insurmountable amount of more fun.

Article By: Teresa Reilly



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Emblem3

February 23, 2014

House of Blues, Boston, MA

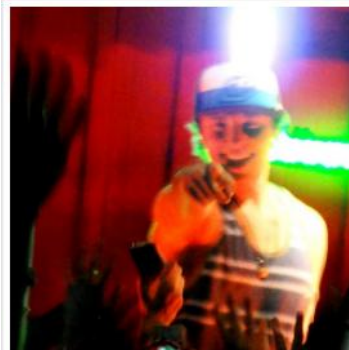
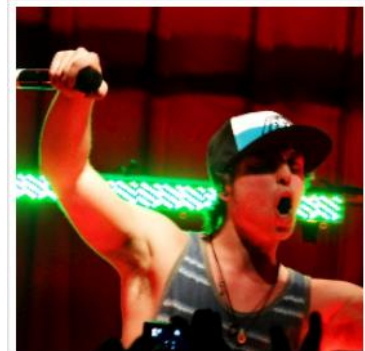
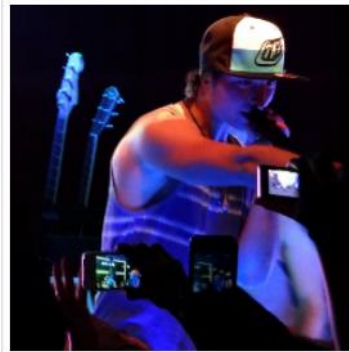
A year ago Emblem3 sang to a small crowd at the Paradise. They amped up the audience the best they could on a small stage that just wasn't big enough to hold them. This past Sunday night however, they went big in every way possible. They brought a full band, improved voices, more toned six-packs and of course, a skate ramp.

Aside from the buff arms, Emblem3 is bringing something else not only to Boston but to the music world that makes them pretty worthwhile. They are training the next generation of Sublime-loving, reggae-appreciating, liberal (re: pot smoking) music fans. It's a small baby step but definitely a movement that if it catches on, could produce a whole new era.

Not all of it course, they are still a boy band, but on their newest album *Nothing to Lose*, they cover a Matisyahu song. On their original tracks, they throw in that slice of hip-hop which is becoming more and more prevalent among reggae bands (Dirty Heads) and nothing spells happiness like some laid-back beach-loving tunes. Emblem3 has got a piece of it all.

Sure, they aren't doing you haven't heard before. They're catchy and poppy in most senses but they don't pretend like they aren't. That's what happens when Good Charlotte writes a song for you but there's a large part of music that critics almost always forget – it's an escape. They are asking you to remember what it's like to drive down Sunset Blvd with the sun in your face and not a care in the world. You're lying if that doesn't smile.

Article and Photos By: Teresa Reilly



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George Clinton

March 7, 2014

House of Blues, Boston, MA

The godfather of funk isn't looking to impress you. This 72 year-old man knows why you came. It wasn't to see the bright colored hair or an extravagant stage show. You came for the music. You came to shake your butt. And you came to see a legend showcase everything he's learned.

For years, George has been identifiable on his stages packed with musicians and back-up singers, as the guy with the brilliant hair. From orange to neon green, his hair had become almost a staple of his appearance. This time around though, George decided to forgo the more trivial aspects of his legend and focus on the tunes.

From "Atomic Dog" to "Bring the Funk", Clinton performed a long string of classics. As funk allows for, the musicians that covered every corner of the stage took prime spotlight but George himself was always dead-center, tapping along with his red crocodile shoes. Don't be fooled though, this man who is past the age of retirement, can still shake it. While others his age may be slowly shuffling along, George has rhythm that he shared with a room full of grinning fans.

Since releasing *Computer Games* in 1982, George hasn't slowed down. Despite the loss of his son a few years back, a more recent divorce and seemingly continuous financial troubles, he continues to tour. There is an endless list of rock stars that burn out but if you saw George's face at the House of Blues that night, you would know he loves it. He sings with every passion left in him and appears proud of the notes and lyrics he's written, even those more than 30 years old.

A bit more simplistic and perhaps a bit more pure, George Clinton proved why he is a legend. If you enjoy irresistible music and need to let loose, this man will show you not only a party but what funk truly is all about.



Article and Photos By: Teresa Reilly
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Immortal World Tour by Cirque du Soleil

February 18, 2014

DCU Center, Worcester, MA

Imagine as you listen to your favorite Michael Jackson song (I'm not even going to guess what your favorite is because if you're like me, whichever one is on at the moment is mine), acrobats fly way too high above your head in perfect synchronization with the music. They dance in the air with gorgeous backdrops and props that light up the stage in costumes that sparkle and sometimes literally are lights themselves.

You'll see a woman move around a pole like you could never imagine to Jackson's legendary "Dangerous". She slowly rotates as her body bends back so far, you're sure it's an illusion.

At one point a woman raises a muscular man into the air with just her teeth. They spin to "I Just Can't Stop Loving You" and you will be inspired.

Then a woman will move around a massive opened children's book to "Is It Scary" and the only way to describe it is that at times, I wasn't sure if I was looking at her front side or back side. The way her head was facing just didn't add up. Sort of like an owl but with more limbs.

Of course, "Thriller" happens and the perfection that the dancers nail the legendary moves is incredible. They stay true to what Michael Jackson created, adding a layer of authenticity that makes the title of the tour, The Immortal World Tour, feel that much more real.

The magic of Cirque du Soleil is simply enhanced with the music. Everything you love about the high flying shirtless men and women wearing flowing outfits that follow them beautifully is there with a cohesive theme of Jackson. With so much quality music to pull from, the creators have made sure that took some of Jackson's more visionary songs are portrayed in a way he would have been proud of.

Article By: Teresa Reilly



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Jamestown Revival

February 9, 2014

Brighton Music Hall, Boston, MA

Jamestown Revival is one of those situations where it's hard not to feel incredibly right. You knew there was great folk music out there that had thoughtful lyrics but an up-tempo, true pulsating beat. You've heard it before and Mumford & Sons sort of took over the market but you knew there was something else out there that was going to be fresh and just as good, if not better. You'll understand when you hear "California".

They sound off the ground and little gritty. Their choruses are strong and bring the song together like they should. There's passion in it.

Plus, their stage presence is powerful. Sadly it's not every artist that takes the stage and plays the song with all the energy they wrote it with. Jamestown Revival did just that and added in a bit of funny banter in-between. For some, falling in love with a band can take that extra step of getting to know the musicians and if that's the case for you, they've got it covered. Completely covered.

Not to gush but I wasn't the only one there feeling it, I swear. For the opening act of the opening act in a small club on a Sunday night, the place was wall to wall packed. The audience was focused and tapping their feet. Sometimes clapping along and sometimes laughing along. It was a show that filled its set with entertainment and feel-good music. Not sure what else one could ask for.

Now that it's become clear this band comes highly recommended, watch the video and judge for yourself. Am I wrong?

Article By: Teresa Reilly



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Juicy J

March 11, 2014**House of Blues, Boston, MA**

The crowd was amped. They had been standing in a sold-out House of Blues for hours. Grown men were passing out and being carried over the railings to freedom. The tour provided styrofoam cups that boasted the tour name "Never Sober" which had been long since cleared of their water. The DJ who was keeping the crowd at a remarkable level of energy had stepped off the stage. And Juicy J was 45 minutes late.

Then the lights went down and high shrills mixed with deep yells were barreling through the venue. A fight broke out in the corner but for the most part, all eyes were on the long awaited legendary rap musician.

Packed full of energy himself, Juicy ran from stage-end to stage-end, doing what he does best: rapping about his sincere love for strippers and porn stars, backed with beats that will make you bounce. The crowd moved as one in unison to Juicy's own rhythm on-stage.

After hours of waiting, this audience that was an interesting mix of old and young, was completely enthralled. But after only 20 minutes of entertaining, Juicy J was shut-down by a false fire alarm. Fire trucks came roaring down Lansdowne followed by police cars that blocked off the top of the street.

An unsatisfied and angry crowd poured into the streets to be comforted only be Juicy's twitter that stated "I love you Boston! I'll be back for summer jam."

Article and Photos By: Teresa Reilly

**juicy j**

@therealjuicyj

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Whomever pulled that fire alarm fuked shit up tonite , damn! I love you Boston! I'll be back for summer jam

12:56 AM - 12 Mar 2014

421 RETWEETS **819** FAVORITES**juicy j**

@therealjuicyj

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It was hotboxed in the club weed smoke errrr whurrrrr #bostonkush

11:13 PM - 11 Mar 2014

888 RETWEETS **1,753** FAVORITES**juicy j**

@therealjuicyj

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Sum dumbass pulled the fire alarm in the middle of my show , fuckkkkkkkk!

11:08 PM - 11 Mar 2014

1,145 RETWEETS **2,342** FAVORITES

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Jurassic 5

August 3, 2014

House of Blues, Boston, MA

The last twenty years have been one hell of a ride for hip hop, and while Jurassic 5 wasn't there for all of it, they definitely helped set the precedent for the genre.

The atmosphere in the venue was electric and the crowd was ecstatic. Backed by Dilated Peoples, celebrating their 22nd continuous anniversary, some of the biggest hits in hip hop were on display as the crowd participating in call-and-response through the night.

However, when gauging the audience's ability to catch a diving MC, the Weatherman thought better of it as the crowd backed away in fear of a 150 pound man leaping in their general direction.

Jurassic 5's repertoire spanned both albums and generations, with most of the audience still in diapers when they were formed. Akil was excited to see all the hands in the air when he asked who in the audience was younger than 25. It also seemed to highlight the amount of time since their last single, unfortunately with Dave Matthews, which was surely an oversight by the band. Jurassic 5's DJ's Cut Chemist and Numark stole the show, spinning vinyl on specially made guitars and a 12 foot record player.

However, given they were on hiatus between 2008 and 2013 it seems somewhat strange that they bill this as their 20th anniversary tour. If the remaining members of Led Zeppelin could stand each other for long enough to go on a self-proclaimed 46th anniversary tour, it'd be strange, but they're Zeppelin and they can do whatever they want.

Having said all that, it will be interesting to see where J5 goes next. Will they take their newfound tolerance for another as inspiration for a new album, or will they take the pay day and split? Only time, and future anniversary tours, will tell.

Article and Photos By: Mike Malmberg



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KISS Concert

[May 31, 2014](#)[Xfinity Center, Mansfield, MA](#)

The 2014 summer concert season kicked off this past weekend with Kiss 108's annual Kiss Concert at the Xfinity Center in Mansfield, Massachusetts. This year's lineup included many new and emerging pop stars as well as superstar headliner, Jennifer Lopez. Local reality show finalists Jillian Jensen of the X-Factor season 2 and Kristin Merlin of The Voice kicked off the show with acoustic performances as the crowd began to fill the venue.

MKTO took the stage and kicked up the energy levels of the crowd with their current single, "Classic." The pop duo experienced some technical difficulties and left the audience wanting more after only performing two songs. The emerging pop/rock band Rixton was next to take the stage. The four piece band gave an impressive performance of their hit "Me and My Broken Heart" as well as tracks from an upcoming album.

Based on the amount of ear piercing screams, homemade signs and decorated t shirts, pop band R5 proved to be the most anticipated act of the night for the young fans in the crowd. Fronted by Disney Channel heart throb Ross Lynch and playing all their own instruments, the band proved to be the next big pop sensation while providing plenty of hair flips and hip thrusts, sending the young girls in the crowd wild. Ariana Grande received a similar reaction as the former Nickelodeon star took the stage and performed her hit single "The Way" with several enthusiastic backup dancers and a video recording of Mac Miller during his rap verse. Ariana then left the stage while her dancers performed a three minute dance break. She returned to perform her new single "Problem."

The growing popularity of electronic music in the pop world became apparent with performances by EDM artists Cash Cash, Timeflies, and headliner Calvin Harris. Cash Cash got the crowd dancing with several remixes of popular top 40 songs. They wrapped up their set by bringing out Bebe Rexha to the stage to perform live vocals for their current single "Take Me Home." Local favorite, TimeFlies performed an impressive 20 minute set featuring live vocals, bass drops and a freestyle rap about their hometown of Boston.

X-Factor's own Fifth Harmony revealed a new style by adding accapella verses and lower bass to their current hits, making their usually fun and spunky pop jams sound more generic to fit the mold of today's mainstream radio. They wrapped up their set by giving a 90 second preview of their new R&B inspired single "Boss" which is set to come out this summer. Excitement in the audience began to build as Jennifer Lopez's performance drew closer. JLo, dressed in a revealing sequin dress and accompanied by a dozen male and female backup dancers performed a 30 minute set of all her most recent hits including, "Get Right", "I Luh You Papi", and new single, "First Love."

By Amy Saunders

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Krewella

[May 16, 2014](#)[Red Rocks Amphitheater, Denver,](#)[CO](#)

Up in the mountains at one of the most famous and beautiful venues in the world, Krewella took the stage to the overwhelming delight of an enthusiastic youthful crowd. After hours of pure partying from the parking lot, up the long and exhausting climb to the theater, to the crowded seats, the high-school generation of Colorado could not have been more ready.

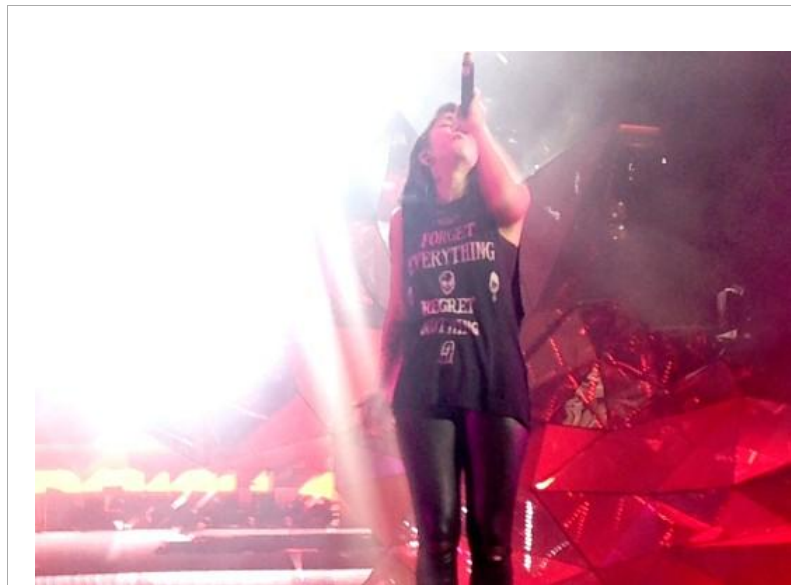
The three electronic dance music innovators, Krewella kept the energy up throughout the show not only with lights but also with the constant beat and showmanship. While new to the scene, they performed with passion that resonated throughout their audience. They connected to the wide-spread chaos that became their crowd as puffs of now-legal marijuana floated into the darkness above the venue.

In most cases, it's the hit single that really gets the crowd powered up but when "Alive" was played, it was hard to discern as the noise level and vitality was already at what appeared to be a physical peak. Then as they played new hits from their album *Get Wet* the front row screamed every word. Only having been released in September, their die-hard fans had already spent many intimate hours with the album and felt every word of "Live for the Night" was completely true.

Then, and I couldn't make this up, they married a couple. A very adorable and sweet young couple who decided to invite thousands of their peers to witness them say "I do". Followed by a loving rendition of "Human", it was a new thing to witness while covering a show and despite the cold rain, it sort of made the whole experience that much more enjoyable.

Article By: Teresa Reilly

Photography By: Brittany Whiting



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Meat Puppets

April 2, 2014

Fox Theater, Boulder, CO

Finally, the long-awaited Meat Puppets show... I showed up about halfway through the set of the opening band Moistboyz. I had heard of them briefly but was completely there to see the Meat Puppets. Lead singer Guy Heller had an Iggy Pop like stage presence, and their current line-up included old Queens of the Stone Age bassist Nick Oliveri and Ween guitarist Mickey Melchiondo. They were just a fun drony punk band that were easy to get into.

After their set and before the Meat Puppets set, I got to meet the band over by the bar and talked mostly to rhythm guitarist Stephen Haas. They were such down to earth guys and extremely humble about their band and instead Stephen Haas was recommending I listen to Ween more (Mickey Melchiondo's old band). He also had some funny insights on the music industry, spoke of the balance between band life and family life and was a great person to be around. After a few drinks with them, I got back right in time for the Meat Puppets.

As soon as Meat Puppets kicked off with "Touchdown King" off of their album *Monsters*, I knew these guys were much more eclectic and inventive musicians than I had given them credit for. They went into long jams in between their songs without getting too full of themselves which really pleased the Boulder crowd as there is a big jam band scene here.

They played the crowd pleasing "Lake of Fire" which was made popular by Nirvana and vocal fan Kurt Cobain. In between their weird country influenced punk rock, they managed to do a cover of the Beach Boys and even encored with a song by the Everly Brothers. They were generally all over the place, but in a good way.

After the show talking to some fans, I described them as a very confused band but in the absolute best way possible to which we all agreed. It was evident they'd played together a while and it was also clear that musically they came from all over the place. My previous exposure to them had been primarily Meat Puppets II which I saw as "their sound". After seeing them it is clear their sound is all over which explains their influences on both lo-fi bands like Pavement and post Minutemen band Firehose who does a song called "Under the Influence of Meat Puppets". This was a fun show to be at, I got to meet Nick Oliveri from QOTSA and see some unexpected covers and jams.

Article By: Chris Beliveau



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MKTO

August 6, 2014
Paradise, Boston, MA

Just over a year-old, MKTO is looking to make memories with you. They will grab your hand in the second row and sing straight into your eyes up in the balcony. They are begging you to remember every song so that when you go home and listen, you'll have a special memory tied to it that you'll never forget.

Currently best-known for their single "Classic", MKTO is rapidly picking up steam and are busy promoting their debut self-titled album that dropped only a few months ago. They've already created buzz in the pop community as an act that has charisma and energy. Fresh off their short-lived Nickelodeon show, "Gigantic", the two young men have been busy flashing those smiles and picking up fans in every city they encounter.

It's hard to miss just how excited they are to be on stage. Especially as A&E stopped into the Paradise that night to film one of Boston's favorite shows, "Whalburgers", the two performers just kept looking at each other in amazement. While Mark Wahlberg didn't exactly show-up, the real life Jonny Drama, whom the character on "Entourage" was modeled after, did. Jonny even took the stage and sang the "Whalburger's" theme song which was actually pretty catchy. Plus, what crowd doesn't love being on TV.

While they still have a ways to go, MKTO is on the right track. Lead-singer, Tony Oller, can really sing. He has a deep voice that can pick-up rhythm and has a bit of range. Then Malcolm Kelley adds a tad bit of something different with a hip-hop verse every so often. They make catchy music together and they're fun and excitement is contagious. So go, go have fun with them and let yourself free of any preconceived notions, you'll have a much better time that way.



Article By: Teresa Reilly

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Neon Trees

July 8, 2014

House of Blues, Boston, MA

In a flash of, well, neon, the up-and-coming Utah rockers came to show what 80s pop reinvented could be to Boston's curious. They came with costume changes and a bright set with flashing lights – none of which I've ever encountered at the usually more humble House of Blues. But they came with seemingly something to prove.

With three radio hit songs under their belt, Neon Trees is making a name for themselves. "Everybody Talks" and "Animal" put them on the map but "Sleeping with a Friend" is keeping them there. The slightly new-age but retro-at-heart pop song was only released back in January and has already taken over contemporary radio. With a slew of new material from their album Pop Psychology I'd bet they'll have another right on its tail. "I Love You (But I Hate Your Friends)" is already catching some steam in fact and has just the right beat for some casual summer partying.

But after only four years since they truly took off with "Animal", Neon Trees has developed a fan base that not only relates but is curious. As the band is becoming more rapidly known for their shows, it appears that while first few rows are crammed with fans who know every word, there is quite a bit of space left-over for those who have heard good things and want to see how true it is.

While lead singer Tyler Glenn has a unique and powerful voice, he is still growing in his showmanship. A bit overdone and unsure, he is still making his way into figuring out his own style. At present it appears to be a mash of other's greatness but in short time it should become more seamless and personal.

Even if Neon Trees has a bit further to go, their music is catchy, fun and a bit different. It invites happiness and good vibes which are hard to turn down.

Article and Photos By: Teresa Reilly

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Ray LaMontagne

May 30, 2014**Blue Hills Bank Pavilion, Boston**

Rapidly becoming a New England legend, Ray LaMontagne filled the Pavilion on a cool May night to an audience full of his worshippers. They crowded in early and got cozy to watch Ray perfectly play as many songs as he could fit in.

Best known as a musician's musician, Ray's audiences tend to be fans of music that is hard to come by these days. Let's just say it makes sense that he lives out by James Taylor now. His lyrics are serene, sometimes political but always backed up by his unique yet enchanting voice. He pulls it all together with a nice guitar hook and has the rare ability to perform it just as well in front of thousands of people as he does in a studio.

Yet it seems the Pavilion was not Ray's best choice of venue. With the ocean air ripping through and the echo down the streets of the waterfront, his skill was lost to the busyness of the atmosphere. Meant for loud shows typically, his intimate performance didn't carry to the audience the way it would have in a smaller place. The audience stayed seated throughout the majority of the show but granted Ray resounding claps and cheers at the end of each song. However the overall vibe was that most everyone just wasn't feeling it.

A shame and something Ray should look to change in future tour stops. The music was spot on but it's disappointing to know it was lost.

Article By: Teresa Reilly



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Slightly Stoopid

July 31, 2014

Blue Hills Pavilion, Boston, MA

A product of the post-Sublime-era, Slightly Stoopid has had a long history full of one of the more interesting varieties in a catalog. Especially with their label as a reggae band, attending a Slightly Stoopid show will likely end-up surprising you.

Yes, there was a pot cloud hanging over the heads of the audience and yes, Stephen Marley opened but as the band picked through their catalog, it became clear that their music had not only evolved over the years but had dabbled in almost hard metal at one point and had been a part of the integration of hip-hop into the reggae sound.

Being apart of reggae history has allowed Slightly Stoopid to ride the successful wave the genre has taken. They have consistently toured and were able to release seven albums with a fan base that has entrusted them.

When they took the stage Thursday night, the crowd grabbed a 24oz Bud and cheered for 20 minutes straight. Then the music took over and the audience engulfed in, becoming surprisingly subdued. They swayed and looked off into a faraway place. Security relaxed and it appeared enough concert-goers had snuck up that the front of the house was shoulder-to-shoulder.

As Slightly Stoopid continues to grow and helps with the success of reggae I'd watch them as it'll be interesting to see what they decide to experiment with next. While it probably won't be a single with the recently re-united Jonas Brothers, it will be fresh.

Photos By: Michael Malmberg
Article By: Teresa Reilly



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...And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead

April 3, 2014

Summit Music Hall, Denver, CO

...And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead (Trail of Dead for short) made a huge splash on the indie scene with their 2002 "Source Tags & Codes". It received a perfect rating from Pitchfork so, naturally, the music snobs piled on. That being said, it is actually an amazing album and I am always stoked to see a band perform an album front to back that I love. With a somewhat misleading name, I always try and describe them, and namely this album, as a mix between Sonic Youth and At the Drive-In. About 5 years ago, I caught a brief end of their set at My Bloody Valentines Reunion show but had never really "seen them".

After sitting through a pretty boring opening performance by La Femme, a pretentious French band with about 4 keyboardists and 7 members who were more concerned with their performance than music I was ready for anything else to come on, Trail of Dead came on, spoke briefly then went right into "Source Tags & Codes".

The crowd was immediately into it with the powerful opener It Was There That I Saw You. The thing I never knew about the band, was that drummer Jason Reece would switch off with their guitarist and play rhythm and do vocals for about a third of their songs including Homage and Days of Being Wild. This was a lot of fun to watch them do seamlessly and still hold their strong energy on drums.

They had the crowd engaged throughout the whole performance as most everyone there was well aware of their wildly successful album. After playing the whole album, they came out and played an encore which included probably my favorite two songs outside of this album *Mistakes & Regrets* and *Richter Scale Madness*. "Richter Scale Madness" being their first song off of their self-titled first album. It is a song with pounding absolutely pounding drums and intense vocals. During this performance, the pretentious French band totally redeemed themselves as they came on to play on Jason Reece's drum set to really turn the song up.

This show did not disappoint at all. Outside of my excitement for them to play "Source Tags & Codes", they played some other favorites and were a really energetic engaging band.

Article By: Chris Beliveau



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ZZ Ward

March 2, 2014

Paradise, Boston, MA

If you're into sexy blondes with killer raspy voices, keep reading. If you would like that she is overflowing with passion and grit, I think I found your new favorite artist. If you like honesty backed by a solid bluegrass sound, you're welcome.

ZZ Ward stepped onto the scene less than two years ago with her debut studio album *Til the Casket Drops*. The record is full of some southern style and ZZ carries every tune with genuine talent. Her lyrics are soul-bearing, complete with dumb ex-boyfriends and even worse, boyfriend-stealing chicks. She is overflowing with stories to tell in a way that's empowering and incredible to listen to.

On stage, she brings it all. A year ago, a bit shier ZZ took the stage at the Paradise. She was a little unsure and a little held back. The same amazing voice, just a bit less attitude. This year, she brought it all. She brought the energy and her show was in full form. She joked a bit with the crowd and played every instrument as loudly as she could.

In a music world that is forever changing, seeing the next big thing isn't always obvious. Sometimes it's Lorde and sometimes it's Selena Gomez. ZZ Ward though, she's got what it takes now that her confidence is prominent. A singer-songwriter at her core, she has a grassroots quality to her that makes her feel unpretentious and frank.

Check out "365 Days" or "Til the Casket Drops" for music that takes me from a stressful day at the office to the gym to a glass wine at home. ZZ Ward just fits.

Article and Photos By: Teresa Reilly



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