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Airborne Toxic Event

May 11, 2011**House of Blues, Boston, MA**

A few months ago I was creating my list of upcoming shows and threw on the Airborne Toxic Event because I felt like I had heard of them but couldn't put a finger on where and most importantly, they were at my favorite venue in town, the House of Blues.

Fast forward a couple of weeks and I'm driving to work listening to WBOS when I find myself rocking out to a new song I've never heard before. The chorus is catchy and I get ready to write down the band's name so I can download the song later. "Changing" the DJ announces, "by the Airborne Toxic Event." When I got to my office I didn't just buy the song, I also got myself two tickets to the event.

After doing a bit of research, I found out they also play an old favorite: "Sometime Around Midnight". It contains some of my most appreciated lyrics, including, "She's laughing, she's turning/She's holding her tonic like a cross". A bit melancholy for my usual tastes but still impressively thoughtful and realistic.

Throughout the show last Wednesday night the band proved further to me their status as reflective rockers. The intro by lead singer Mikel Jollett was always pensive and described the sadness that brought inspiration to the upcoming song but then the opening cords would strike and it was hard to imagine that such an energetic fun song came out of such a depressing experience.

Airborne Toxic Event has managed to create an admirable following since their 2006 formation. So despite the occasional slow down, the band had the audience (mostly in their upper 20's) bopping their heads and singing along to their largest show ever.

Article Written By: Teresa Reilly

Photographs By: Mary Kocuiba



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Airborne Toxic Event

November 19, 2011

Orpheum Theater, Boston, MA

"He isn't going to make it!" screamed colleague and friend Melissa D'Amico as lead singer Mikel Jollet pulled his body up from the speakers to the lower balcony.

The crowd let-out a short-lived sigh of relief before Mikel continued to make his way even further up as he balanced on seat backs and arm rests. All the while he was singing flawlessly, not missing a beat and not sounding as panicked as my heart was telling me I felt.

He stopped for awhile and sang to Boston-local and band mate Anna Bullbrook's family for a moment. This is when my heart slowed because it seemed liked that was his reasoning for committing this outrageous experiment and the daredevil antics were about to end.

But then he kept climbing. Further and further until he reached the end of the lower balcony. He stood for a moment and stared at the gap between the lower and upper balcony. It wasn't more than four feet across but then it was another four or five feet up. I grabbed the back of the seat in front of me, praying he wouldn't do it. I could see him contemplating it. Was his adrenaline high enough? Was it worth it? Everyone's watching, what would they think if he didn't?

He reached out his hand and leaned his body across the gap. He grabbed hold of the old molding along the upper balcony and placed his foot on the lower lip. My own life flashed before my eyes as he scrambled upwards and pulled himself up and over the edge of the balcony. The crowd erupted. He stood triumphantly at the top and belted out every word as he continued to sing.

Up to this point, the crowd had already been completely engulfed in the Airborne Toxic Event's performance. Little kids with mohawks and older couples alike threw their hands in the air and screamed right along. The energy was high from the very first note and the entire place was on their feet.

Mikel Jollet though, he wasn't done. I had assumed once he made it up there, he would take a back staircase and just pop back up on stage. No one would have blamed if he did.

That isn't what happened though. He eyed that gap once more. Judged it. Then slowly lowered himself so that he was dangling at least 40 feet in the air. He caught his footing and then reached across and jumped. Every second felt like an eternity.

"He should have died! I cannot believe that just happened!" I screamed at my colleague.

"Seriously! I cannot believe he made it!" she screamed back as we look at each other with a look of amazement.

He made his way back down the lower balcony, microphone still in hand. Then he made the final leap from the lower balcony back down to the speakers and finally the stage to the explosion of the audience.

Clearly feeling more alive than any other person I've seen, he proceeded to jump into the audience and do a nice round throughout the crowd before belting into my favorite, "Changing". I usually try to enjoy myself but seeing professional stunts shows the exciting but dangerous



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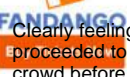
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All Time Low

May 06, 2011

House of Blues, Boston

All Time Low accomplished a big show in a small venue. Not that the three-story, 2,400 person capacity House of Blues in Boston is all that small but the band fit in all the workings typically suited of a 20,000 capacity venue. With large columned lighting fixtures and an epically high drum platform, the stage served as the perfect setting for the loud and energetic show.

The band, comprised of four young guys, predictably has a fan base mainly created of even younger girls which usually leads to high-pitched screams and angry dads. While the high-pitched screams were in full-swing, the angry dads were distracted from the array of brightly-colored bras bearing phone numbers that guitarist Jack Barakat and bass player Zachary Merrick collected in heaps on their microphones, by a play-off Bruin's game that was plastered onto every TV across the venue. While I'm sure most the audience wasn't overly concerned with the outcome, lead singer Alexander Gaskarth did mention a goal scored here and there which caused a wave of cheers, and my press pass for the night bore the slight jab of "Flyers". Even their encore was solicited by cheers of "Let's Go Bruins" to which Gaskarth responded, "does anyone even care they're at an All Time Low concert?"

Despite the distraction, the band played on, and put on a wonderful show full of dancing, crowd-surfing, head banging and dizzying lights. Their new single "I Feel Like Dancin'" from their upcoming release Dirty Work was strikingly received by their fans and might have been the biggest hit of the night. With an infectious beat and a title that says it all, it felt perfectly placed in the midst of party-heavy set.

Most importantly though is that this may be the only band in history where the bassist is the cute one. Usually in the background strumming away, bassists don't often take the spotlight but Zachary Merrick had his fair share of rock-out moments accompanied by a very distracting smile and head of hair. The others had their moments but I feel strongly that forum boards and doodles drawn during class will back me up on this one.

By the end of the night, the Bruins won their way into their first Eastern Conference finals appearance since 1992 (dads were slightly deaf but happy), some teenage girl was involved in her first mosh pit and I developed my first ever crush on a bassist.

Article and Photographs By: Teresa Reilly




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Britney Spears

August 8, 2011

TD Garden, Boston

Britney Spears brought her "Femme Fatale" tour to Boston on August 8th and proved that she still reigns as princess of pop with 13 years of hits, 7 chart topping albums, and 34 hit singles under her pink rhinestone covered belt.

The show kicked off with some fist pumping with DJ Pauly D that got the crowd excited and dancing. He mixed popular club songs like "We No Speak Americano" by Yolanda Be Cool and "Party Rock Anthem" by LMFAO behind his Italian flag bedazzled laptop.

Next up was Nicki Minaj who brought a theatrical experience to the anticipating crowd, complete with a team of dancers, multiple costume changes and wild hair. Fans rapped along with Minaj to hits like "Your Love," "Moment 4 Life" and "Super Bass."

Spears immersed from the stage in all her pop power through lights, fog and pyro, kicking off her show with "Hold It Against Me." She then entered a cage for a seductive dance to a new upbeat dance track "Up 'N Down" from her latest album.

Spears was in control the whole night, looking at ease on the stage she's called home for so long now—she smiled and waved to fans in the audience that soaked up every moment of the show. For the sultry song "Lace and Leather" Britney picked one lucky guy from the crowd to be handcuffed to a chair and given a lap dance by the pop diva.

Spears brought back the ballad "Don't Let Me Be the Last to Know" from her first album, sitting on a swing and belting out the song as the entire audience sang along. She then changed into an edgy biker outfit and danced on a motorcycle for an updated and remixed version of her 1998 hit "Baby One More Time" and the Rihanna collaboration of "S&M."

The party was non-stop all night as Spears continued to bring the upbeat hits with tight choreography, different sets and multiple wardrobe changes. Spears was greeted with extra loud cheers and screams from the crowd when she performed the original choreography from the "I'm A Slave 4 U" music video. For her latest single "I Wanna Go," Spears brought fans up on the stage to dance and sing along with her.

Dressed in a beautiful pink kimono, Spears started her encore with "Toxic" and led into "Til The World Ends" where she was joined on stage by Nicki Minaj. After a flash of lights and glitter, Spears flew over the stage with giant angel wings behind her. She landed on the end of the stage walkway and smiled as she embraced the applause and cheers from the sold out crowd of diehard Boston fans.

Article and Photographs By: Haleigh Stanway



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Bush

October 15, 2011

House of Blues, Boston, MA

Engaged and fan-friendly, Bush made the audience feel a part of the show last week at the House of Blues in Boston. Never before have I been in the 16th row at a show, had the lead singer come up to the guy next to me, place his head on the man's shoulder and sing him a tune. Then, plow through barricades further into the crowd where then, he started a dance party in the middle of the floor. Gavin Rossdale may be a veteran but he has lost none of his crowd appeal and even less of his youthful energy.

Pushing his mid-forties, Rossdale has been kept in the spotlight due to his marriage to No Doubt's Gwen Stefanie but Bush has been off the scene for nearly nine years, just reforming in 2010 (minus a few members) to play a few shows and record their latest *The Sea Of Memories* which was released in mid-September. And they've come back full force. Their new song "The Sound of Winter" is addicting and has a classic feel to it that's reminiscent of the band's core sound.

Certainly though, Bush is known for their golden years in the '90s. You will be surprised once you start listening to their hits how many of them you know. "Glycerine" absolutely falls into that category. Bush gave fans what they came to hear as they sold out the House of Blues. A long string of classic hits along with a few new ones peppered in led to a high energy show led by a very animated lead singer. When he wasn't having some serious guitar rock-out moments mid-stage, he was pointing directly to the most enthusiastic fans and holding their gaze as he serenaded them even just for a moment.

Hopefully this is just the beginning of this band's resurgence. They have an on-target new album, a still good-looking and charming lead singer plus a loyal fan base that hasn't let go even after a long hiatus. This is a winning combination.

Article By: Teresa Reilly
Photos By: Michelle Ronscevic



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CAKE

April 22 2011
Wang Theater, Boston

CAKE is doing things a bit differently. Since hitting it big with "The Distance" in 1996 the band has had time to create a steady following and build the confidence to spread their ideals and put into practice what they preach.

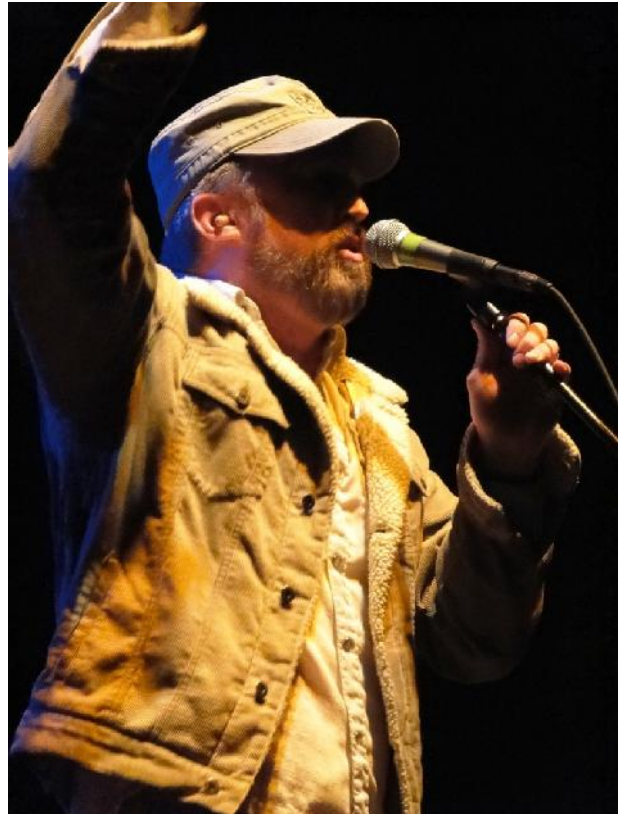
So perhaps the disco ball and tacky backdrop were distracting eye sores that should be burned and I'm sure Clarence Blackall, the architect who designed the gorgeous Wang Theater in the early 1920's, is cringing in his grave over the mere concept that such things even exist, but maybe the music played there last night would put him at peace. CAKE has developed an impressive catalog over the years and played a set that incorporated a wide variety of loyal listener's favorites. By saving "Never There" and "Short Skirt/Long Jacket" to the end, it gave fair-weather fans a chance to hear what the band has accomplished.

Perhaps one of the band's biggest undertakings was going indie in 2007 with a split from Columbia Records and the creation of Upbeat Records. After taking such a leap of faith, lead singer John McCrea, spoke on-stage berating "thieves" who stole directly from the band by downloading music illegally but graciously thanked their fans who spent their hard-earned money supporting them. Then he gave someone a tree.

Environmental promoters in their own right, CAKE has taken their activism to the next level by giving away a tree at their shows. Fans simply have to name the type of tree, plant it somewhere safe and send the band pictures as the tree ages. While the whole ordeal probably took a bit too long, the thought was there.

McCrea's stage presence and involvement of the audience kept the crowd's attention if the tree and disco ball didn't do it. The show wasn't exactly what I had expected but it made for an interesting night in an incredible building.

Article and Photographs By: Teresa Reilly



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Celtic Thunder

[November 29, 2011](#)[Symphony Hall, Springfield, MA](#)

Celtic Thunder's performance in Springfield justly showcased how some lights, fake snow and a minor bit of choreography can enhance music's already beautiful qualities without overcompensating and distracting. It was classic and seamless while being captivating for the entire variety of age groups present.

The curtain was open and the stage was set as audience members moved to their seats. A gorgeous backdrop of lightly snowcapped trees dotted the stage while a park bench sat waiting in the corner. If anyone walked into the theater and didn't think "Christmas" right away, someone should pass them some eggnog.

As each band member took the stage for his respective opening number, shrills echoed across the walls. It wasn't just the teenage girls daggling roses either, grown woman grabbed the arm of the friend next to them as Keith Larkin shook that long blonde hair and gave a slight wave to the crowd.

George Donaldson, a Celtic Thunder vet, had women dancing in the aisles to "I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday". Ryan Kelly completely had me in the moment as he crooned "Baby, Its Cold Outside" to the harpist who twirled out of his arms but ended right back in them by the end.

My favorite? New comer Emmet Cahill. As a novice to Celtic Thunder myself, I had no idea the charming blue-eyed kid had only been at the job for a few months. He held the stage just as well as the rest and had a voice that stole my attention. His deep baritone doesn't seem to match his young face but it comes out flawlessly.

After going through my entire new favorite album *Christmas*, which included a riveting rendition of "Christmas 1915", the house lights went on for a brief intermission. While moms scrambled to the merchandise booth to get the biggest Harkin poster they could find, the stage was transformed into a ship, perhaps taking from their newest album *Storm* and soon to be release *Voyage*.

My stand out memories from this set however come from the tunes they sung from their February release *Heritage*. "Black is the Color" sung by Kelly is powerful and has the elements of a rock song. While "The Dutchman" performed by Larkin has a beautiful guitar backing to it that feels almost like a lullaby.

Then they covered some Irish classics in a new way. "Whiskey in the Jar" featured Larkin and Neil Byrne with electric guitars. While not as heavy as Metallica's version, it felt pretty rock 'n roll.

When they started the chords to "Seven Drunken Nights" however, I was nervous about the performance being too stiff and not giving the song the justice it deserves. Celtic Thunder didn't disappoint though as I was out loud laughing when each member acted out one of the drunken nights, getting funnier as it went (while still being in perfect pitch of course).

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The show blew away my expectations. And I was expecting a lot seeing as how sexy Irish guys with great voices tend to make me pretty happy. If you're looking for a Christmas album, I highly recommend you pick-up their new one as I know it will be the one playing during this year's *Relly Christmas*.

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Chad Perrone

August 19, 2011
Middle East, Cambridge, MA

Chad Perrone played to a sold out crowd on Friday night at the Middle East Upstairs. Backed by a full band, Perrone rocked the stage with upbeat, tight melodies and powerful lyrics.

Perrone chatted with the intimate crowd from behind the mic, joking around in between songs and sipping on a drink that was handed to him by a fan in the audience.

Perrone's conversational attitude made the show that much more cozy, and showed that he was genuinely happy to be hanging out with the crowd of friends, family and fans on a Friday night.

The show kicked off with the upbeat "Okay" from his latest album *Release*. The song tells of a love gone wrong, saying, "Ok, I'm the worst thing that you know, Ok, this would be better left alone."

Perrone brought back some old hits from his days in the Boston based band Averi including "Mouth Full of Sand" and "Liminal Life." He shared with the audience the story behind his song "Madison", explaining that it was about a time when he was within arm's reach of a record deal in New York City on Madison Avenue, singing, "Madison I never thought I'd get past your front door, this is all I've waited for, just listen."

The upbeat hits from *Release* continued as Perrone performed "Motionless" and his own favorite, "Anything or Anyone." He slowed it down for the sweet "All I Go Looking For" from his 2008 album *Wake*.

The moment of the night came when Perrone asked the audience to sing along to the fan favorite, "Awake in the Morning." He stepped away from the mic for a moment as the entire room sang the words to his song. The smile on his face seemed permanent after hearing everyone sing his lyrics and he said to the crowd, "I know I say this every time, but that will never, ever get old. Thank you."

After over a decade of playing the Boston music scene, Perrone has clearly mastered his craft and belongs on the stage-- trusty guitar in one hand and a whiskey on the rocks in the other.

Article and Pictures By: Haleigh Stanway



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Dirty Heads

March 24, 2011

House of Blues, Boston, MA

In the middle of their first headlining tour The Dirty Heads lead singer Jared Watson announced to the crowd in Boston Wednesday night, "this is the most tickets we've ever sold!" to which the packed House of Blues absolutely erupted.

The hardworking and diligent band seems to finally have gotten their break. After opening up for such acts as Unwritten Law, 311, O.A.R. and Sublime with Rome over the past few years, they've evidently collected a solid group of followers. Or at least they've gotten the word out enough that paying \$17 to come down to the show was completely worth it.

Personally, I saw them open up for Sublime with Rome over the summer and was sincerely impressed. They contain a stage presence that reflects their music in the best way. Watson knows how to work the stage and kicks the attention around to fellow band mates, keeping it interesting. He even exuded enough confidence in his fans to call for choruses. Additionally, party-way through the set he even brought four fans on stage to sing the rap to an old song which only young man was able to accomplish.

The audience was impassioned though with every fist in the air and bobbed to a collection of excellent rock reggae music. Reminiscent of Sublime, The Dirty Heads maintain that energy seamlessly with that chill hang-on-the-beach vibe. Songs like "Lay Me Down" and "Stand Tall" are ideal examples of that. However, the band puts on an interesting show in that they're live energy can bring a slower song from the record to life; what fans may think of as that slow-swaying tune, they'll find themselves full-fledged dancing to in the middle of the pit.

Humble but with confidence and great record to back them up, they are exactly what a band on the verge of well-deserved success should be.

Review and Pictures By: Teresa Reilly



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Disney on Ice

December 26, 2011

TD Garden Boston, MA

Disney on Ice brought the magic to Boston for thousands of little princesses and princes to enjoy on their Christmas vacation week, taking over the TD Garden for a total of ten shows over the course of four days. Disney on Ice "Treasure Trove" highlighted Disney's legacy of animated film, sharing the classic stories from the first film, *Snow White* to the 50th film, *Tangled*.

The show kicked off with a group of young skaters in brightly colored costumes that helped to get the audience excited, telling them to stand up and dance along with them to songs like "Move it Like This." Once the crowd was ready, Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Goofy and Donald Duck skated out to get the classic Disney stories started, leading right into *Alice in Wonderland*. Alice came out singing her own version of Ke\$ha's "Tik Tok", putting a modern spin on the clock that is used in the story. The rabbit's clock was also used to transition into the next story of Peter Pan, as Captain Hook and Smee appeared on the ice, running away from the crocodile.

The set transformations were quick and barely noticed, adding to the magic of the show. Each classic Disney story was compressed into a 10 to 15 minute version that highlighted the best moments and songs, and got the kids (and even some adults) in the audience singing along. The story of the *Lion King* was the highlight of the show, starting off with a young Simba singing the upbeat "I Just Can't Wait (To Be King)." The skaters created an incredible scene during the stampede, making it look like a heard of wildebeest were running wild on the ice. Timon and Pumbaa then joined in the fun, singing a crowd favorite, "Hakuna Matata" with a now grown-up Simba. When Nala came to find Simba, the two delivered a stunningly beautiful routine to "Can You Feel the Love Tonight." The story was rounded out with the "Circle of Life" as Simba took his rightful place as King of Pride Rock.

The Seven Dwarfs were the next to skate their way out, introducing the original Disney princess, Snow White. After Prince Charming had come to awaken Snow White from her sleep with a kiss, Aladdin took Princess Jasmine on a magic carpet ride, flying high above the ice during "A Whole New World." The rink was then transformed into an underwater paradise as Ariel and Sebastian from the Little Mermaid performed "Under the Sea."

Mickey and friends then returned to the ice to introduce the next story. "She likes to brush her long, long hair," Mickey Mouse said, as several of excitement came from the crowd that knew that Rapunzel, the latest Disney princess, had to be up next. Rapunzel and Flynn lit a lantern together and sent it flying up into the air as dozens more appeared at that very moment, as if by magic, flying over the ice. All of the Disney princesses-- Snow White, Cinderella, Jasmine, Ariel, Sleeping Beauty, Belle, Mulan, Tiana, and Rapunzel--skated out on the arms of their princes for the final number, performing "Some Day My Prince Will Come."

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Ellis Paul

December 30, 2010
Club Passim, Cambridge, MA

Some people kiss at midnight, others stay at home and watch the ball drop on television, and still others fall asleep by 10 p.m. And like any other tradition on New Year's Eve, Ellis Paul drinks red wine and fills hole-in-the-wall Club Passim in Cambridge with folky melodies and lots of laughs.

It's a special time for Paul, who always plays Passim on Dec. 30 and Dec. 31. Familiar faces tend to pack the audience and sing along to his staple tunes like "Maria's Beautiful Mess" and "3,000 Miles."

This year was no different. With more than 15 albums under his belt, Paul is a master at his craft. His latest record, "The Day After Everything Changed" was Paul's quest to write the perfect story-song. He succeeded and wrote 15 of them.



The New Year's Eve shows are a perfect blend of old Ellis Paul and new Ellis Paul, staple tunes he's known for and cover songs. Along with guitarist Don Conoscenti and pianist Radoslav Lorkovic – who also play with Paul every year – the full band sound during a show is a rare one for Paul and a treat on New Year's Eve for longtime fans.

Paul always works hard on stage to give the audience more than they bargained for, but New Year's Eve is like a first-hand look into what it's like to write and interact with other musicians. They're quirky, they're fun, and they're incredibly talented.

Paul's show is a chance to ponder his familiar, relatable lyrics and look inward and think about what they really mean. Hearing his repertoire of songs year after year is a reminder that sometimes music changes, but traditions don't have to.

If you attend Paul's New Year's Eve shows, you might just be surprised about what you learn about yourself. You know that year after year, he'll be there. Will you?

Article By: Krista Perry

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The Foo Fighters

November 16, 2011

TD Garden, Boston, MA

The Foo Fighters brought back the true meaning of a "rock show" to Boston on November 16th, packing the TD Garden to capacity, with their dedicated fans filling every single seat—even the ones behind the stage. The Boston show was the final stop on the North American leg of their "Wasting Light World Tour" that brought the band around the world for the good part of 2012.

The Foo Fighters proudly described this as a "dirty ass rock and roll show" and delivered just that. Frontman Dave Grohl teased the crowd at first saying, "this is our last show on this tour, so we're gonna play for an hour." The crowd booed at the short set offer, so Grohl quickly changed his tune and yelled "fuck it, we're gonna play for three hours!"

The Foo Fighters opened the show with "Bridge Burning" and "Rope," the first two tracks off of their latest album "Wasting Light." Grohl got the crowd singing along with him on "The Pretender" and then decided to join them, jumping right onto the general admission floor and running through the barricaded, make-shift catwalk, right down the center energetic floor. Grohl commanded the stage with ease and captivated the crowd throughout the entire show. The Foo Fighters proved they are easily one of the few real rock bands of the current generation, and showed that off with their music—there was no need for pyro, special effects or costume changes during this show.

Grohl moved to a small circular stage in the center of the arena floor with his guitar in hand, giving everyone a chance to get up close and personal with the rock star. He joked that he could start the wave just moving his head and did just that, looking around the full circle of the arena, watching section by section raise their hands. A powerful moment came during their latest single, "These Days" when the 17,325 people in the crowd all sang along with Grohl. The three-hour set consisted of a mix of hits and fan favorites from each of the bands six albums from their 16-year history. Crowd favorites included the well-known hits "Learn to Fly" and "My Hero."

The show seemed like it would never end, much to the delight of the fans in the energetic crowd. The encore was one for the record books—an outstanding six songs longs—that started off with Grohl performing solo acoustic versions of "Wheels" and "Best of You" from the small circular stage. The house lights were kept on, creating the chance for another crowd sing along that left everyone in the arena with chills.

The three-hour long night was rounded out with "Times Like These," "Dear Rosemary," a cover of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers "Breakdown" and "Ever Long." The Foo Fighters seemed like they could go all night, and so could the energy of the music enthusiasts in the TD Garden, proving that the Foo Fighters have a permanent spot as one of the best (legit) rock bands in history.

Openers Social Distortion and The Joy Formidable fit the bill perfectly, kicking off the show with high energy and great sound. They were well received by the Foo crowd, clearly having their own fan following among the arena crowd as well.

By Haleigh Stanway

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Goo Goo Dolls

[November 19, 2011](#)[Hampton Beach Casino, NH](#)

What's it like to be a multi-million dollar music star on stage looking out at twenty two hundred-some-odd fans? And what would it be like to be a regular Joe, hangin' in the crowd one minute, and on stage the next? I'm not sure, but we'll get to that later.

Things along Hampton Beach's main street were cold, dark and quiet Saturday night – a far cry from four months ago – but you wouldn't know it from the inside of the Casino Ballroom! The place rocked as the Goo Goo Dolls cruised in for their last stop on their Something For The Rest Of Us tour.

It is hard to believe that this band has been around for 25 years, although most are familiar with them for the last 15 or so when they first released Name. Also surprising (at least to me anyway) is the fact that they have had 14 top-10 singles over the years. And to think that founder John Rzeznik almost quit the band due to writer's block just before being approached to create the song "Iris" for the soundtrack of City of Angels! It goes to show you that things can turn around at any point.

They opened with "Still Your Song" and followed that with "Slide" which got them tons of positive feedback from the audience. Others from the night included "Black Balloon", "Iris", "Broadway", and "Name". These guys played tight and did not disappoint!

Opening for the Goo Goo Dolls was Ryan Star, a well qualified rocker himself. Star played hard and engaged with the audience during his hour in the spotlight. At the tail end of his performance, he asked if there were any aspiring guitar players in the audience. Apparently "Joe" caught his eye and next thing we knew he was being pulled up on stage to give his skills at the axe a whirl. And Joe, as we call him, held his own and got to experience what it's like to be a guitar hero.

Article and Photos By: Tim McNamara



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Good Charlotte

March 09, 2011
Paradise, Boston, MA

It was like rediscovering an old friend. When Good Charlotte hit the stage last Wednesday night, a flood of memories came sweeping back. The Young and the Hopeless album was on repeat for the better part of my sophomore year of high school as I know it also was for most of you out there. It was an infectious pop album with upbeat hooks and a bit of attitude perfectly suited for the angst of a teenager.

Now, almost ten years later, I was afraid I'd be sitting through an onslaught of new material from their 2010 album Cardiology. But to my utmost surprise, Good Charlotte filled the Paradise with all of my favorite old tunes.

Starting with "The Anthem", they had the crowd jumping from the first note. The energy was vibrant to the point that guitarist Benji Madden turned to his brother, lead singer Joel Madden, and whispered, "I'm getting a really good vibe from this crowd". And the performers responded with their own oomph making the entire venue truly come alive.

In-between classics like "Boys & Girls" and "Hold On", they announced they'd be playing one of their new ones. Nervously I waited for what Good Charlotte had become. "Like It's Her Birthday" though stuck to the same great positive upbeat characteristics of their prior material making it fit seamlessly into the marvelous set.

With comical banter and knowledge of their fan base, they were able to keep the attention of their sold-out crowd and make their impressive die-hard fans remember why they love them.

Article and Photos By: Teresa Reilly



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Guns 'N Roses

November 25, 2011

DCU Center, Worcester, MA

The last time GNR played in the U.S. was 2006. Now, five years later, they're making the rounds back home and are well underway with their Chinese Democracy tour – which, by the way, began in 2001. Being a relative newbie to the GNR thing, I had no idea that Rose has quite the reputation for being, shall we say, tardy at his own shows. Maybe it's a case of performer's jitters or that he simply enjoys marching to the beat of his own drum, but most of his fans seemed to be well aware of it. In my case, the media host at the DCU center alerted us that GNR were said to start at 10PM but that it really could be any time so get comfortable. So much for time management – but hey, this is rock & roll!

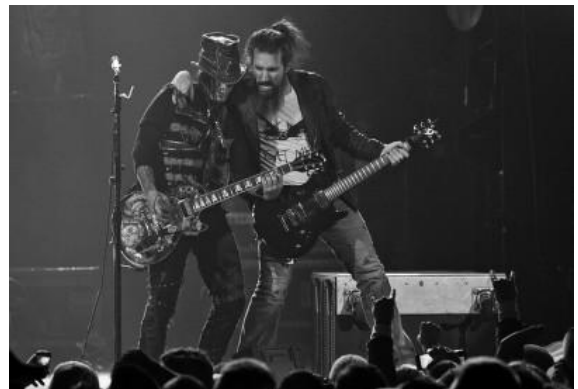
All four or five of us photographers were expecting to be shooting photos from directly in front of the stage but the next surprise was that we were actually going to be corralled at the rear of the house. Now this I hadn't planned for! The shots won't show the bulging veins and sweat dripping forehead of a screaming Axl Rose, but my fingers were crossed I'd get something publishable. Time for Plan-B - but hey, this is rock and roll!

Interestingly, at 10 o'clock, the concert hall looked surprisingly lightly populated. The venue had sold somewhere between 6500 and 8000 tickets – this was not a sold out show but it wasn't empty either. At 10:20 they hit the stage with "Chinese Democracy". Next was the ever popular "Welcome to the Jungle" – and well done it was indeed! The show included plenty of pyrotechnics – explosions, flying sparks, and pillars of flame. Behind the musicians on the raised stage was an enormous video display carrying images from the roving cameramen on and in front of the stage.

With two lead guitarists, one rhythm and one bass guitarist, there is no shortage of stringed instrument players. DJ Ashba, the newest GNR member, and one who from a wardrobe style standpoint might remind you of Slash, is pretty damned good. Ashba, Ron "Bumblefoot" Thal, and Richard Fortus all played solo pieces, as did Dizzy Reed with a rendition of the Who's "Baba O'Riley" and Axl with some Elton John classics on piano.

Purists will always lament the loss of Slash, Izzy Stradlin, and Duff McKagan from GNR 1.0, but the present version is quite capable of at least replaying those classic GNR songs just the way we remember them. Whether or not this version of the group will stay together for any length of time remains to be seen. But for now, let's enjoy them while they're here in the U.S., showing up for concerts – give or take an hour or two – and deafening our ears with screaming guitar riffs, Axl's voice and an explosion here and there. And hey, that is rock and roll!

Article and Photos By: Tim McNamara



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Honor Society

December 1, 2011

Brighton Music Hall, MA

"As much heart and soul that we put into the record, we put into these shows," explained lead singer Michael Bruno before their Boston show earlier this month in Brighton, "you know, the music you're hearing is no coincidence; we completely had our hand in every single aspect of it. From the second people walk in, from the set list to the play list, to what happens in between bands."

Honor Society has had a major year and they've topped it off with a headlining tour that's covered 17 cities. Sponsored by the Salvation Army, the tour has helped to spread the word of the band's good deeds.

"On our... Here Comes Trouble Tour in 2010, we ended up volunteering in every city at different Salvation Army's in different cities and kept it rolling. This tour, we're doing the same kind of thing," described bassist Andrew Schmidt, "We were just in Boston today and did an after-school program with some kids, which, it's been phenomenal. I mean, there's no better way to go into a show, to go into a concert than having that refreshing experience to carry in."

The Rock the Red Kettle Tour seems to be the icing on the cake though for a band that's gone from Disney to indie, and done it successfull

y. Earlier in 2011 Honor Society broke ties with Jonas Records and created Fair Isle Records where they put out their first indie album *A Tale of Risky Business Part 2* which went onto Billboard's Top 200 within the first week.

"I think I was more proud to see Fair Isle Records on the charts then necessarily our name just because it was such a process to get to that place and to be able to release music independently and on our own," beamed drummer Alex Noyes, "it was just a proud moment for all of us."

"It was an idea from day one that we wanted to do [create the label]. We look up to certain entertainment figures that aren't even in our genre but someone like Jay-Z who, his story is that at 26 or 27 no one would sign him and he said 'well, I'm just going to sign myself and I'm going to start something called Rockafella Records' and the rest is history obviously," described Bruno.

And with this new found freedom comes an album that may surprise you, but in a good way. In a day of awful synthesizers and auto-tuned vocals, Honor Society has managed to make an album full of genuine rock sounds. You'll be impressed with the quality of music that can come out of musicians who are free of that red tape. "Living a Lie" (my personal favorite) is an excellent example of a classic pop sound that just wouldn't sound the same if it were overly produced.

Then, the band was able to throw in some special aspects to the album that are a bit different.

"We were able to put interludes into the song and put a prologue and epilogue which is something that a label may be like 'what's that all about?' but we had full creative freedom and that's what we wanted to do and we wanted it to be a full statement so we were able to do it," explained guitarist Jason Rosen.

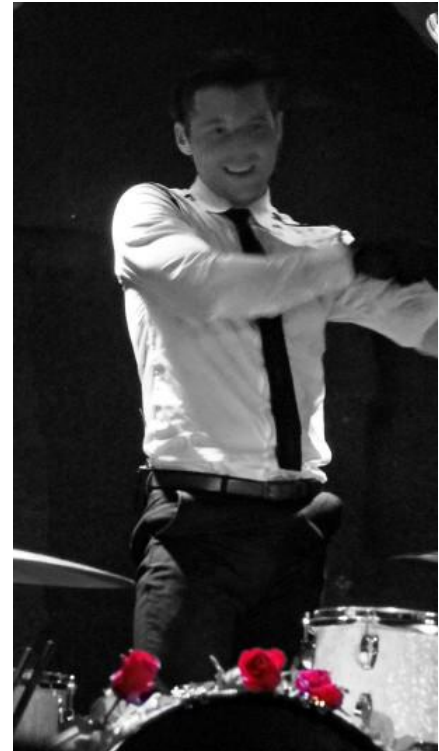
The mission of creating one seamless album appears to be a success. Since we no longer live in the days of records and LPs, artists have shied away from creating one cohesive album but the value of doing so isn't lost on the listeners.

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We really tried to make it a complete statement where it was a cohesive sound and we said Bruno, "from what fans are telling us, it's the kind of album where they never have to skip a track and that was our goal, so we're really proud of that."

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James

[Blunt](#), 2011[House of Blues, Boston, MA](#)

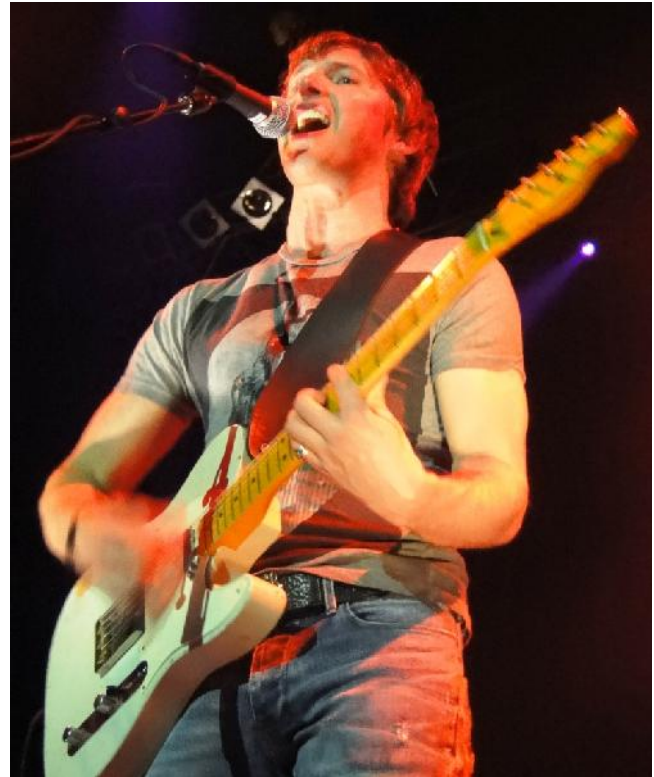
Perhaps it's because James Blunt is one of my dad's favorite musicians that I expected him to be older with greying hair and probably a bit of belly. I expected a rather quiet show based mainly on an acoustic guitar and a plain white light shining on a man sitting on a stool. There was going to be a few artsy college-kids but mostly moms and dads looking for a night out.

In reality however, none of that was true. James Blunt is hot. He can pass for a man in his mid-twenties (while actually being recently 37) with the haircut and physique to match. He has that charming British accent that he uses to the best of his ability. When he told the audience he'd sing better if someone would just take their top off, I almost did just because it sounded so polite. He has the good-guy grin and of course, a unique and remarkable voice to complete the whole package.

It wasn't just looks and charm but his energy was also exceptionally high throughout the entire set which included stage-diving and hopping onto his gorgeous black grand piano while keeping that distinctive voice of his unwavering. With his new album *Some Kind of Trouble* hosting an array of a much more rock sounding collection, his show was completely built to batch. He had a full band with him and an excellent lighting show that involved a lot of flashing crowd lights and bright blues and purples crossing across the stage.

The show was appealing on all levels – visually and musically which, I believe, led to a much younger crowd than I had expected. There were the occasional grey heads but the majority seemed to be working men and women in their 20's and 30's. Granted there were a lot of couples but there were plenty of people who had discovered this James Blunt secret long before I did. As a dedicated fan of his 2005 album *Back to Bedlam* but a Blunt concert virgin, I can honestly say it won't be my last.

Article By: Teresa Reilly
Photos By: Melissa Steiger



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James Taylor

July 1, 2011

Tanglewood, Lenox, MA

On July 1st, 18,000 fans filled the shed and lawn at Tanglewood to kick off the relaxation of their holiday weekend with the Boston Pops and James Taylor.

Led by laureate conductor John Williams, the Pops played the first half of the show on their own, performing a variety of Williams compositions, including selections from the movies *Catch Me If You Can*, *Superman*, and *Far and Away*. It was an exciting set that seemed to captivate the audience.

Following intermission, Williams welcomed James Taylor to the stage. Taylor opened his performance with "Getting to Know You," an interesting choice for the hometown crowd. He seemed almost nervous taking the stage, but it didn't take Taylor (or his fans) time to relax in the intimate setting. Transitions between solo selections, vocal accompaniment, and compositions with the Pops, made for a dynamic show.

While the pairing between James Taylor and the Pops wasn't as lively and energetic as last year's James Taylor-Carol King duo, it was perfectly suited for Tanglewood. What better than setting up a candlelight dinner on the lawn with the soothing sound of the orchestra and a calm voice to fill the air? It seemed as though this audience couldn't think of anything other than the soothing sounds.

It wouldn't be a James Taylor concert without hearing "You've Got a Friend," "Sweet Baby James," or "Up on a Roof," and he wasn't one to disappoint. And by the time Taylor performed his encore of "You Can Close Your Eyes," I don't think anyone was ready to trade the calm atmosphere for the stress of fighting traffic from the parking lot. But don't worry, Taylor prepared us for that too, with "Traffic Jam," his most up-tempo song of the night about the realities about to face the audience.

If you haven't made the trek out to Tanglewood for a summer concert, add it to your list. You won't be disappointed.

Article By: Melissa D'Amico



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John Butler Trio

[August 5, 2011](#)[Bank of America Pavilion, Boston](#)

Never have I seen so many people having the best time of their lives. Last week on a gorgeous summer Friday night on the Boston waterfront at the Pavilion, The John Butler Trio had people dancing in the aisles. It was an inspiring scene of people of all ages swinging their hips, taking off their shirts and having a genuinely good time.

They started off their set with one of my favorites from their new album *April Uprising* entitled "One Way Road" that I find myself singing in the shower every other morning. It's up beat and impossible not to dance to. The song embodies the folksy nature of the band and set up the show perfectly for the theme of "enjoy yourself tonight".

It took only two songs before the group of teenage boys, who were with their parents, decided it was time to take their shirts off. It took only three songs before I caught my first whiff of weed. And it took only four songs before John Butler, no longer sporting his epic dreads, made his first impassioned speech of the night.

Not only does John's lyrics call his listeners to action (mostly environmental) but he made a point Friday night to take some time from the music to bring attention to specific issues that have caught his personal attention. As a native Aussie, John's most recent plea is for western Australia's Kimberley region where companies like Chevron want to exploit the land for their own gain (read more and become active here at [Rock the Earth](#)).

Then, when John got back to the music he played one of the most incredible musical solos entitled "Ocean". Youtube or iTunes it. It's a remarkable twelve-minute long number that is exciting and memorable to listen to. It's a musical journey in itself and had the crowd completely enthralled.

By the end of the set, I had made a note to download their new album which has turned out to be a worthwhile purchase. If you're looking to engulf yourself in an album that will take you from rock-out to relaxation and back again, pick up *April Uprising*.

Article and Photographs By: Teresa Reilly



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John Mellencamp

February 03, 2011

Lowell Memorial Auditorium, Lowell,

Shortly after taking my seat at the John Mellencamp show on Thursday night I noticed a woman in her mid-forties wearing the ugliest red sweater I've ever seen. Slightly overweight with very short blonde hair, she and her male companion were enjoying a few beers while sitting up perfectly straight, tapping their fingers to the band onstage.

Mind you, I know a few Mellencamp songs but his peak of fame was before I was born and therefore, I swear couldn't pick him out of a line up. So for the first three or four songs, I wasn't entirely sure who I was listening to. Since only a few people seemed mildly into it, I assumed it was the opening act. Not until the lively woman next to me screamed, "I love you Johnny!" did I realize who it was.

Half-way through John's acoustic set, I went up to get another beer where I noticed red sweater's companion grabbing another few beverages. He had been up a few times already but the couple must have been averaging a beer every fifteen minutes. They still were just tapping along though even though the 43rd birthday woman next to me found every slow ballad dance worthy.

Then John gave a speech about nostalgia and how he was only doing this next one due to a request. He threw his guitar behind his back and just started singing, "Well I lived on the outskirts of town/In an eight room farmhouse baby".

The entire audience rose to their feet (including red sweater) and began screaming every word right along to the a cappella version of "Cherry Bomb". "That's when a sport was a sport/And groovin' was groovin'/And dancin' meant everything".

Certainly an older crowd but the one other kid in his twenties thought it was a great idea to yell at Mellencamp from the front of the stage. John ignored him for the most part until he was trying to explain his next song and simply couldn't focus. This kid clearly had something important he had to get off his chest. Mellencamp dragged the mic over and handed it to the guy. "Dude, I was just talking about how awesome you are," he said in one of the thickest Boston accents I've ever heard. Mellencamp took back the mic and simply moved on.

After a few more folksy ballads from his new album *No Better Than This*, John kicked it up a few notches with "Jack and Diane". The crowd erupted and the next thing I knew, 59 year-old John Mellencamp was shaking his hips; the birthday party next to me was swarming the stage; and the red sweater was off and being whirled around that woman's head.

The show didn't slow down after that and John and his audience were thrown back to a different time. With a few new good ones ("West End") and some classics ("Small Town"), Mellencamp put one of the most memorable shows I've ever had the pleasure of attending at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium.

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Ke\$ha

August 16, 2011

Pavilion, Boston, MA

From the look on mom's faces across the venue, I don't think I was the only one who was a bit surprised at Kesha's show this week at the Bank of America Pavilion in Boston. The show didn't quite match the age-range of the audience to say the least.

Not that anyone should have been as shocked as they were though seeing as how Kesha's lyrics give a fair glimpse into her persona but perhaps it was just a bit unsettling watching twelve year-old girls sing along about brushing their teeth with whiskey while sporting fishnets.

Kesha herself though, did nothing but full-fill that party-girl image as she threw quite the rager on-stage. The energy was palpable filled with costumes that lit-up, half-naked back-up dancers and an assortment of oddities like the microphone shaped as a hand. There were costume changes that reflected the literal meaning of some lyrics such as the dinosaur costume for "Dinosaur" and "Grow a Pear" had a back-up dancer dressed like, you guessed it, a pear.

Then, of course, there was glitter. Glitter upon glitter. Cannons fired tiny pieces of shiny paper into the audience on more than one occasion as Kesha herself was covered. Then colorful balloons fell which kept with the theme of "there's a lot going on here".

The 24 year-old singer did have a few sips of beer, which she actually spat out immediately but the thing that I think got a lot of parents nervous was the penis costume. The younger half of the crowd seemed a bit uneasy themselves as mothers reached across to cover eyes.

I guess the "Get Sleazy Tour" was appropriately named. Kesha fulfilled the performance though and had anyone who's listened to the radio in the last year singing along to every word. She put on a show whether the audience was ready for it or not,

Article and Photos By: Teresa Reilly



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Lady Gaga

March 08, 2011
TD Garden, Boston

Gaga fever took over the Garden Tuesday night and brought with it a vast assortment of fans, costumes and wigs. Being in the North End one could certainly tell who was in town that night as women and men filled the streets wearing spandex and leotards matched with massive spiked heels and blonde, pink and blue wigs of a wide variety.

The packed Garden enjoyed the build-up to Gaga by rocking out to some well picked Michael Jackson. Then the lights went down and nearly 20,000 "little monsters" simultaneously let out a scream.

Not personally being a big Gaga fan, I was a bit skeptical that she could blow me away the same as she has done to so many others. At first, I remained unimpressed as she simply strutted around stage. Then the dancing began to pick-up and songs I knew from their massive overplay on the radio were sung and I saw myself throwing hands in the air and shaking to "Just Dance" and "Love Game".

However, every time I found myself letting go and truly getting in the show, there was another costume change. Lucky for Lady Gaga her die-hard fans that surrounded the arena kept the energy up and it was truly amazing to see their response each time she emerged. To see such a mass of people react in such a positive way is truly inspiring.

As her set progressed with more and more hits like "Telephone" and "Poker Face" concluding with her newest single "Born This Way" it was impossible not to notice that with extravagant costumes and even a massive mechanical monster that made an appearance, Gaga's show-stopper was actually her voice. She has an undeniable talent that seemed to be almost overshadowed by the lavishness. While it was an unforgettable show, Gaga (only 24 years-old) still has room to grow and truly show the world what she can do.

Article By: Teresa Reilly



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Matisyahu

June 25, 2011

Paradise, Boston, MA

Matisyahu performed at The Paradise Rock Club in Boston earlier this summer and upon entering one could tell the genre of the crowd was quite eclectic – there were all different types of people and of various ages.

When Matisyahu began performing, his voice was a little off the first few minutes but quickly got on track and stepped up his performance for the rest of the show. In watching him perform, you can see the passion that he has for his music expressed through his body language. He also exuded a sense of humble graciousness by how he engaged and interacted with the crowd and his band mates. Matisyahu joked with the crowd between songs, had a few beers, and acknowledged the Bruins' recent victory with a "Mazltov" toast. Later in the show, he brought out a fellow Jewish musician (who was from Framingham, MA and wearing a bruins jersey) who first played guitar while Matisyahu beat-boxed along with him, and then he rapped with finesse. Overall, Matisyahu was able to quickly connect with the crowd to elevate the energy of the entire show and he maintained that connection along with its intensity throughout his performance.

Matisyahu is a Hasidic Jewish musician who blends traditional Jewish songful prayer with reggae, rock, and beat-boxing. His music reflects his personal journey in search of spirituality and identity. Matisyahu initially became intrigued with his own culture and spirituality after listening to the Jamaican legend Bob Marley. Hearing the Old Testament expressed through reggae music ignited his interest in his heritage and he began exploring his roots. While on his spiritual endeavor exploring Judaism, he also explored his interest in rock music. During this time, Matisyahu became a big fan of the band, Phish, and experimented with hallucinogenic drugs in order to experience spiritual transcendence. After making a commitment to fully experience his spirituality without chemical assistance, he immersed himself into the traditions of his culture. Matisyahu came across a Rabbi who incorporated music with orthodox Jewish beliefs around the time he was intensely studying the Torah and soon thereafter began writing and performing his own songs. His music first emerged with thick religious overtones and overt orthodox religious beliefs. After some time, Matisyahu began to feel restricted by the strict rules of his Orthodox faith and began to reevaluate his accepted "truths" and what he believed to be right and wrong. He emerged as a reformed Jew and this is evident through his music and his performance. Now, Matisyahu's lyrics are less religiously overt and he wears his yamaka and prayer shawl when he performs, instead of the orthodox black hat and coat.

Article By: Michelle Ronscevic



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Meiko

September 28, 2011
House of Blues, Chicago, IL

Everything about Meiko oozes adorable. She's an eye-catching young girl with a guitar and a phenomenal voice. She scrunches her eyes closed when she sings and throws in some shrugs when sharing something personal. And she's seemingly constantly sharing something personal as every song seems to be ripped straight from her diary. She giggles and smiles and wears charming dresses. Meiko is near impossible not to like.

In Chicago last week she trotted out, closed her eyes and unleashed that voice that is soft but also has a raspy quality to it, which makes songs like "Between the Sheets" really come to life. She shared stories before each song, engaging the audience and making it intimate, like breaking up with a boyfriend and as he was packing up singing him a not-so-great tune all about him. Then another one explaining how her guy friend's angry girlfriend probably doesn't like her song "Real Real Sweet". She was as transparent as one can be on stage for half-an-hour and the audience connected, finding her relatable and charming.

After taking her bow and releasing the stage to headliners Hanson, she joined them for their last song which was a ridiculous and astounding cover of "Super Freak". Youtube search it because it's almost too good to laugh with. Meiko carried the brunt of the tune while Hanson hit the high notes in the chorus with a break-out performance by Isaac Hanson rapping "Can't Touch This". If rockin' out with Hanson to a 1980's dance jam doesn't qualify you as adorable then I think I can't think what does.

Article By: Teresa Reilly



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Mix 104.1 Not So Silent Night

December 2, 2011

Lansdowne Pub, Boston, MA

The Lansdowne Pub was anything but silent as Mix 104.1 FM hosted their annual holiday concert featuring O.A.R., Gavin DeGraw and 3 Doors Down. The "Not So Silent Night" show was free to the lucky group of about 150 Mix listeners who tuned in to win tickets, creating an intimate feel for the merry and festive evening.

3 Doors Down kicked off the show with an acoustic set that included their hits "Not My Time", "Be Like That" and "Here Without You." Lead singer Brad Arnold shared with the crowd memories of writing some of the songs back in their home state of Alabama in 1996 when the band first formed. Their latest album *Time of My Life* was released earlier this year, and Arnold told the crowd to enjoy their 20's, leading in to their new single "When You're Young."

Next up was an enthusiastic Gavin DeGraw who kicked off his set with "Sweeter", coming to the very edge of the stage to interact with the crowd. DeGraw was happy to be sharing the stage with 3 Doors Down and O.A.R. for the night, telling the crowd of his admiration for both bands. The crowd sang along to all of his hits including "Chariot", "I Don't Want To Be" and his new single "Not Over You."

As DeGraw finished his set, the Lansdowne Pub was suddenly packed with dedicated O.A.R. fans that had clearly figured out a way to get into the show to see their favorite band take the stage. O.A.R. band members Marc Roberge, Richard On, and Benj Gershman (with Mikel Paris) took the stage, kicking off their hour-long set with the hit "Shattered (Turn the Car Around)."

The crowd was eating up every second of the acoustic performance, singing along and dancing to each song. Crowd favorites included the hits "Love and Memories", "Hey Girl" and "Heaven." Lead singer Marc Roberge shared the inspiration behind many of the songs, chatting with the crowd as if he were surrounded by old friends. In true laid back O.A.R. fashion, Roberge explained that their latest single "Gotta Be Wrong Sometimes" off of their new album *King* is about not taking things too seriously, enjoying the moment and not stressing about the future. Fans went wild for O.A.R.'s popular live song "That Was a Crazy Game of Poker" which led Roberge to add some extra songs to their set list for the night. The crowd shouted out suggestions, and the majority voted for "I Feel Home" and "Night Shift." O.A.R. ended with a crowd sing-a-long of "Stir It Up" as everyone in the audience raised their glasses with Roberge and toasted to the holidays and the New Year.

By Haleigh Stanway



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NKOTBSB

June 11, 2011

Fenway Park, Boston, MA

The New Kids on the Block and the Backstreet Boys have joined pop-forces to create the super-group "NKOTBSB", embarking on a world-wide tour, proving that they still have "The Right Stuff." NKOTBSB brought their two and a half hour show to the New Kid's hometown of Boston for a special sold-out show at Fenway Park on June 11th. Each group performed their most popular hits from the crowd's teen-bopper days for the now 20 to 40 year old age bracket, which proved that the mainly female audience could still scream for every shirt removal or pelvic-thrust the boyband-ers did.

Jordin Sparks opened the show, but didn't do much to thrill the audience. The back-track vocals often did most of the singing as she held out her microphone to the audience for them to sing along, but not too many joined in. Her hits including "No Air" and "Tattoo" recieved a few cheers, and her new single "I Am Woman" showed an edgier side to the pop star. Boston Mayor Tom Menino made an appearance at the opening of the show to announce that June 11th had been declared "NKOTBSB Day" in the city. Actor Mark Wahlberg also made a surprise appearance to introduce New Kids on the Block and the Backstreet Boys in support of his brother, Donnie Wahlberg of NKOTB.


The members of NKOTBSB were introduced just as the Red Sox would be, running out onto the outfield one by one sporting their own bedazzled jerseys. The New Kids were especially loving the moment, as the Boston natives got to live out their boyhood dreams. NKOTBSB moved from the outfield up to to stage, kicking off the show with a mash-up of NKOTB's hit "Single" and the BSB hit "The One."

The smaller circle stage at the end of the long walkway took the New Kids on the Block up into the air to get a better view of the audience at Fenway as they sang their hit "Summertime." The Green Monster was draped with a special "NKOTBSB" banner for the special event. Donnie Wahlberg was clearly enthralled with the Fenway audience, and frequently changed song lyrics to include "Boston" and "Fenway" in them.

The outdoor show was challenged by two hours of steady rain, but it somehow made the experience more exciting for both of the bands and the crowd, as they carried on through the entire show with no delays or hesitation (it was like being in a real life version of the Backstreet Boys "Quit Playing Games (With My Heart)" music video from 1998). The

members of NKOTBSB also proved that they are still very much "boys" when they decided to turn the walkway of the stage into a make-shift slip 'n slide, racing each other from one end to the other and trying to make the landings look as sexy as possible in proper teen-heartthrob fashion.

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final bow together, as a thrilled audience applauded and screamed for the bands, not wanting the incredible production to come to an end.

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Pepper

[September 16, 2011](#)[House of Blues, Boston, MA](#)

Last year, at just about this time, my friend and colleague Michelle dragged me to a show that I was on the edge about. I had heard of the band and was pretty sure I had overheard a song at the Warped Tour once but otherwise, I'm always anxious heading straight into a musical night of the unknown. A bad show can really drag.

Pepper though, they rocked. They're upbeat music with such fun riffs has created a loyal following which now, I'm proud to say, includes myself. They put on a show meant for people who are out for a night of genuine partying with their lyrics egging on drinking and smoking while just letting loose.

Boston was thrilled to have them pass through again this year at the best spot in town, the House of Blues. Packed from wall-to-wall the audience was bouncing off each other and body guards as the whole of them jammed and swayed with the band. They played a wide arrange of songs from their various albums including my personal favorite "Give It Up" which was released as a single only in 2005.

Then, they took off their shirts to the squeals of the outnumbered girls in the audience. Were there some man grunts? Quite possibly. It was that impressive. This clearly led me to do some research on who these guys are and it turns out the lead singer's name is Kaleo! I know. He looks great shirtless and his name is exotic? It's almost not fair.

Some nights however come with tragedy despite good intentions. About half-way through the audience and about half-way through the show a young man went down and was seen being given CPR as he appeared to have stopped breathing on his own and then was carried out of the venue on a stretcher. There has been no word on his condition. After he was carried out a good amount of the audience emptied as somehow those lyrics to party hard became a little too real.

Article By: Teresa Reilly
Photos By: Michelle Ronscevic



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Peter White

December 6, 2011

Sculler's Jazz Club, MA

What was Peter White thinking when he named his current tour "A Peter White Christmas"?! At age 57, hasn't this man learned anything about political correctness? To make matters worse, the first hour of his show (actually "their" show - Kirk Whalum and Mindi Abair don't get a pass on this anti-PC stuff either) was all—you guessed it—Christmas songs! In this day and age of overdone correctness it truly was refreshing to have people saying "Merry Christmas" in a public setting. In fact, I was surprised when our waitress said "Thank you very much and Merry Christmas!" after picking up our check. But let's talk about the show.

At 8 o'clock sharp, the band, sans Peter, strode on stage and began to jam. A minute or so later Peter entered from left of stage, wireless guitar in hand and playing away. Everything seems to be wireless these days! He was followed onstage by Mini Abair and Kirk Whalum, both toting their saxophones. For the better part of the next hour they covered Christmas songs that included Santa Claus is Coming to Town, The Little Drummer Boy, an awesome rendition of "Santa Baby" by Mindi, and – as Peter put it – a holiday song personally written for him: "White Christmas"! Mindi did a few of her own songs, including "I Can't Wait for Christmas". And did I mention "Santa Baby"?

I must say, this show was flat out fun! It was the perfect holiday present. Oh and Merry Christmas!

Article and Photos By: Tim McNamara



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Plain White T's

February 21, 2011

The Paradise, Boston, MA

Everyone knows "Hey There Delilah" (that catchy tune from a few years ago that landed The Plain White T's a Grammy nomination). Last Thursday night at the Paradise, I was pretty sure that was the extent of what the night was going to be about; probably just a laid back vibe with a handful of dedicated fans. But as soon as I walked into the venue, I could tell I was wrong.

The energy was high in the sold-out Paradise Club as teenagers pushed their way to the front while mom and dad stood in the back and college kids filled out the middle. A younger crowd to the extent that the woman in her mid-twenties standing next to me began referring to herself as a "cougar".

Slightly baffled but impressed, I found myself unintentionally jamming to a heap of upbeat, rock-driven pop/punk music that reminded nothing of the slower hit song the band is most known for. Even their 2008 "1, 2, 3, 4" wasn't quite the sound that the majority of the show had. The audience though, knew every word and I even saw a few moms throw their hands in the air that were truly wrapped up in the moment of the performance.

Lead singer Tom Higgenson held empowering stage presence throughout the show but mid-way through the set guitarist Tim Lopez took the mic and sung one of my new favorite tunes "Rhythm of Love" which has that Jack Johnsonesque beach feel to it. It proved what diversity and having multiple talents can do to expand one's fan base. This seemed to be what the college kids had come for, that summer feeling which is so incredibly far removed from the brisk February in Boston.

What everyone had truly come for, of course, was the encore which featured Higgenson alone with his guitar up against the back wall of the venue belting out "Hey There Delilah". What inevitably turned into a sing-a-long was a great moment and gave the song the moment it deserved. If you weren't feeling apart of the show yet, they surely turned you around.

What could have been a low key night in a club turned into an energy-filled evening in a packed venue. The audience fed off the band and vice versa to put on well-rounded and enjoyable show.

Article and Photographs by: Teresa Reilly



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Rooney

February 16, 2011

The Middle East, Boston, MA

Rooney has become one of the hardest working bands out there. Seemingly continuously on tour, the band is just about to finish up their "Not in My House Tour" which ends this week in Utah in support of their new album Eureka and their new single "Holdin' on". But as a follower of lead singer Robert Schwartzman's twitter, I feel like I'm always up to speed about cities around the world.

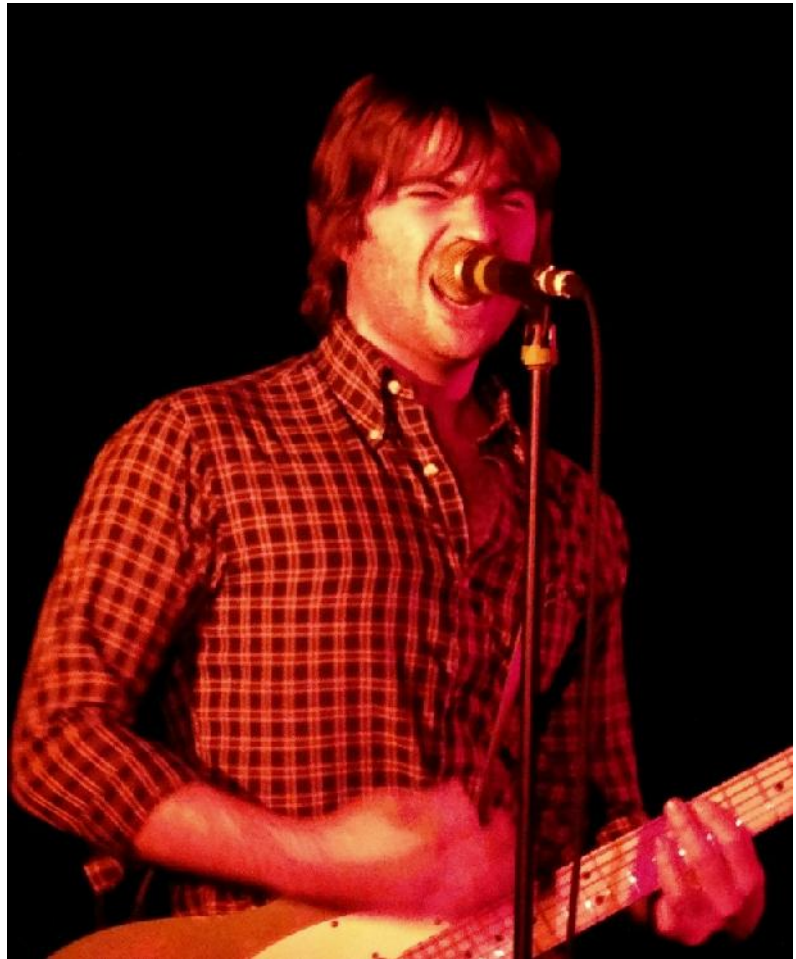
The band does an excellent job of taking the top seat on a tour or trading out for a supporting role which has led them to have an assortment of fans both loyal and casual listeners. Last Wednesday night's show at the Middle East in Cambridge had such an incredible variety of both.

Upon walking into the venue I spotted Schwartzman talking with a few excited fans outside the front door but also saw some concert-goers stroll past him showing me that the audience would truly be split between Rooney followers and newbies. For a band who hasn't hit the radio recently, the amount of newcomers was both surprising and impressive. With word of mouth playing such an important role, it's always encouraging to see a talented band be recognized and talked about. Even more so that Bostonians listened and took to the winter streets on a school night to see them play and at 11 o'clock no less!

Once again, Rooney did not disappoint and the charming band put on a sharp show that even had the most cynical spectators (yes, I'm talking about the two girls standing in the back who uncrossed those arms only three songs in) shaking along. Their new single received a roar of applause as did my personal favorite "I Can't Get Enough". Their "I'm Shakin'" had even friends of newbies singing along.

As I'm sure they'll be returning soon as they always do, a Rooney show isn't one to miss. In the end, who can resist cute boys playing instruments anyway?

Article and Photographs By: Teresa Reilly



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Ryan Cabrera

November 17, 2011

Bull Run, Shirley, MA

With just an acoustic guitar in hand, Ryan Cabrera took the stage at the Bull Run for a solo performance, greeting the small crowd like friends he hadn't seen in a while. The intimate show gave fans the chance to interact with Cabrera—with no set list planned, he simply asked for requests from the crowd throughout the night.

Cabrera has covered up his old blonde-haired, teen heartthrob status with tattoos and dark brown hair dye, but still has that cute smile and charming sense of humor. He performed songs from all three of his albums—Take It All Way (2004), You Stand Watching (2005) and The Moon Under Water (2008).

Cabrera shared stories about most of the songs he performed, explaining where the inspiration came from. Crowd favorites included his hits "True", "Shine On", and "40 Kinds of Sadness." He closed out the show with his first and biggest hit, "On the Way Down."

Local singer Ian Brown opened the show, and brought his own fan following as well. Cabrera was impressed by the up and coming singer and invited him back to the stage for a duet later in the show that the crowd went crazy for.

By Haleigh Stanway



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Scott H. Biram September 18, 2011 TT the Bear's, Cambridge, MA

It's that foot-stomping, honky-tonk, bluegrass, dirty blues music that you can feel. Scott H. Biram's tunes reverberate through your body and make you remember what it's like to experience music. It brings that raw, unadulterated quality back to what's missing in so much that's on the radio today.

He's the real deal: a one man band that, as far as I can tell, has been on-stage practically every day since 2008. On a Sunday in mid-September Scott brought his show to Cambridge at the TT Bear's and walked straight from the bar, grabbed a guitar and hopped up to the microphone. His passion for his craft was apparent right away as he grunted and howled, completely engrossed in the music, putting emphasis at just the right times. The audience became entrenched in his world for that hour despite a small group of audience members that made the floor their own and danced to that folksy rhythm.

Impressively, he needed no assistance and took no breaks throughout the whole set, truly living up to his self-proclaimed nickname "Dirty Old One Man Band". Then, with some banter from the crowd, he confirmed that his persona matches his lyrics with no apologies about it.

Immediately after the show I joined the line and bought just one of his albums that has been playing in my car on repeat. If you need a break from ditsy love songs and synthesized beats, take a minute to check out Scott. Once you become addicted, I'm sure you'll be happy to know he'll probably be in your town soon.

Article By: Teresa Reilly



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Stephen Kellogg & The Sixers w/ Jon McLaughlin

October 13, 2011**Paradise, Boston, MA**

Stephen Kellogg and the Sixers is one of those bands where each and every performance is better than their last. Whether you come for their music, witty stories, or dance-offs, you won't leave disappointed. And their recent performance at the Paradise Rock Club was no exception.

In fact, this wasn't just another SK6ers show—the band just released their newest album, *Gift Horse*, a few days before the show and coming to Boston is just like coming home for them. So they had even more energy to bring to the stage, and a crowd of excited fans who have stuck with them since the beginning. They played some old favorites as well as a number of their new songs, which are sure to become requests.

It wouldn't be a complete night for the SK6ers if there wasn't a bit of craziness thrown into the mix, and I think the band more than fulfilled this need with a spontaneous sing along in the middle of the crowd. And the crowd was ecstatic to sing right alongside them.

Having watched this band grow from little known opener to headliners, it's great to see how much they appreciate their fans. They surprised their audience by returning to the stage for three encores, and even took some time to thank everyone who has supported them throughout the years.

This tour also brings the pleasant surprise of their opening act—Jon McLaughlin. If you've heard of him before now, it's likely in connection to his song, "So Close", which he performed in the movie *Enchanted*, starring Amy Adams and Patrick Dempsey. If you haven't heard of him, definitely go check out some of his songs. He is a phenomenal singer, talented performer, and I wouldn't be surprised if we start hearing more about him in the future.

Article By: Melissa D'Amico
Photos By: Teresa Reilly



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Slightly Stoopid

August 13, 2011

Bank of America Pavilion, Boston, MA

One of the most amazing things that could happen to a fan happened to me at the Slightly Stoopid concert last week.

Part-way through an amazing set, lead singer Kyle McDonald pulls out a joint and asks for a lighter from the crowd. He sparks it, and then gazes around at the crowd. We make eye contact. He smiles and starts walking towards me. Meanwhile, I'm thinking nothing of this and figure he's just walking along the stage when suddenly he is kneeling down in front of me, arm outstretched, handing me the joint. Completely shocked and mesmerized by the moment, I was probably either smiling like an idiot or staring like a deer into headlights. I look at Kyle and he smiles and nods his head, reassuring me that this is actually happening and encouraging me to take the joint. I take it and he goes back to playing with the rest of the band. As I'm standing there next to the stage, toking on the joint passed to me by Kyle McDonald himself, I feel like the luckiest fan alive. All of my emotions were consumed by that moment.

The artists playing in the Seedless Summer Tour 2011 were Slightly Stoopid, Rebelution, and Shwayze & Cisco (not the Thong Song guy). Shwayze and Cisco went on first and unfortunately I missed them. However, Shwayze did come out and do a song with Slightly Stoopid later on in their set and it was great. Rebelution was on next and they are similar in genre to Slightly Stoopid in that they are also a fusion of reggae, jazz, and rock, but they are predominately a reggae band. They are an amazing sounding band and play with a very carefree melody. During their set, everywhere you looked you would see pot leaves. Rebelution also had an amazing saxophone player, he was phenomenal!

Slightly Stoopid took the stage last as the headlining band. They are a fusion of rock, hip-hop, reggae, and jazz. Bradly from Sublime actually discovered them and signed them to his label when they were only in high school. Kyle McDonald and Miles Doughty are both the lead vocals, bass, and guitar players. In the early 2000s, these two guys created their own label, Stoopid Records, so they would have the freedom to make their music the way they wanted to, and not the way some record label told them to.

Kyle was very personable with the crowd – he was slapping hands, borrowing lighters, and volleying balloons and beach balls back to the crowd.

After the show, a few other band members came down from the stage to sign autographs and interact with their fans. Slightly Stoopid played for a while – about two hours! They performed great and kept the crowd energized along with them throughout their set. It is obvious that these bands are doing what they do for the love of music and because they truly enjoy playing.

Article By: Michelle Ronscevic



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Team Starkid

[November 25, 2011](#)[House of Blues, Boston](#)

Strolling past the gaggles of teenage girls in line at the House of Blues last Friday, one might have assumed Justin Bieber was in town. True to the die-hard, go-big-or-go-home disposition of JB superfans, the lines had started hours in advance of the seven o'clock opening, each person desperately wishing to get a front row spot. But, Beliebers they were not—and any fan of the group that was performing would have seen the pink sunglasses and immediately concluded it for herself (while simultaneously beating herself up for not knowing this group was in town).

Team Starkid was the hot ticket performance that dominated the venue for two packed shows that day, and their cult had no problem selling out the place. While the group has one of the strongest fanbases out there, not too many outside of the Tumblr-circle are familiar with Team Starkid—yet. This troupe began as a group of eccentric University of Michigan theatre students who wrote and performed completely original taped show and live musicals. Perhaps the most famous of their work is the internet sensation *A Very Potter Musical*, an upbeat, comedic spin on J.K. Rowling's legendary seven-book series. In total, their YouTube channel has garnered 200,000 subscribers and whopping 100 million collective views, all in just 3 years.

Their S.P.A.C.E. Tour (Starkid Precarious Auditory Concert Experience) is their cross-country touring debut. Not every Starkid actor was able to commit to the 2-week performance schedule, but building the show's repertoire were many fan favorites, including Lauren Lopez (who, unfortunately, was not donning a Draco Malfoy wig), Joe Walker, Joey Richter, Meredith Stepien, Brian Holden, Dylan Saunders, and Jaime Lyn Beatty.

To those who don't constantly refresh the Starkid's Twitter feeds, a shocking surprise emerged during the opening act--Darren Criss, the troupe's most recognizable member, appeared onstage for an unscheduled visit. (Yes, he is more commonly known as Kurt's hot boyfriend on *Glee*.) Criss and Charlene Kaye, the tour's opener and the group's close friend, performed their signature duet, "Dress and Tie." He joined the Starkids during the rest of the performance as well, participating in classic group numbers such as "Harry Freakin' Potter" and "Goin' Back to Hogwarts." Criss also performed the anthem of Team Starkid, "Not Alone," to a crowd of 2,200 emotionally volatile teenagers who were shrieking out of both ecstasy and respect.

By the night's conclusion, the group had more than satisfied its dedicated fans. Starkids, expect another tour soon, and to those who still aren't enlightened by the group's brilliance, start to get yourself familiar—they're not going to fizz out anytime soon.

Article and Photos By: Maddie O'Connell

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Steely Dan

September 28, 2011

Wang Theater, Boston, MA

Steely Dan played the first of their three Boston shows Wednesday night in their "Shuffle Diplomacy" tour.

Wednesday's show, "Dawn of the Dan", consisted of songs pulled mainly from their first three albums – along with staple SD songs like "Peg" and "Hey Nineteen", "Reelin' in the Years", and of course, "The Boston Rag".

It's hard to believe that this band is still playing their (almost) 40 year-old hits to such an unrelenting fan base. Or maybe it's not that hard to believe. Their music is not for everyone, but for those whom it resonates with, they will gladly drive hundreds of miles to attend the next show. Darned close to a religious relationship this band has with its flock.

Steely Dan fans were not disappointed Wednesday night. In fact, it was remarkable how thoroughly everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves – from 40-somethings playing air guitar, to middle-aged women unable to stop dancing and sit down, even to the shouts of those behind them. No, these were not people who decided to see the show on a whim because they somewhat recalled one or two of the band's songs from the '70s. They were either avid, music-addicted Dan Fans, or they were guests of one.

They opened with a jazzy number (Dizzy's Bidness) and perfectly segued into "Your Gold Teeth". Perfection is of course what they are all about, after all – a Steely Dan trademark.

Walter Becker had more guitars in the queue than I've seen in many music stores. I believe he played a different one with every song – or just about. Donald Fagen, well, he is, after all, why we come to these shows. Jon Herrington (their hired-gun lead guitarist) was, honestly, phenomenal. The horn section was superb, as were the backing vocals from the "Brats".

Unfortunately for me, my coveted spot - just three rows from the stage - offered a perfect location to hear the music directly but was not the perfect spot for the vocals (I was in front of the main speaker arrays) - which were just beneath the surface of the music. Still, a very fine experience to be sure!

Article and Photos By: Tim McNamara



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Steve Miller Band

[October 14, 2011](#)[Orpheum Theater, Boston, MA](#)

If audience reaction is any indication of the success or failure of an act, then Steve Miller hit it out of the park on Friday night! And passionate his fans are. As soon as he and the band began the night with Jet Airliner, the crowd responded by bringing to life his "midnight toker" lyrics – although it was 8:30, not midnight. From that song forward, almost no one sat in their seat for the remainder of the show, sans during a few very enjoyable blues numbers during the first half. But it was an amazing sight, and very contagious.

Steve clearly enjoys his job. He interacts with the audience, doesn't feel the urge to pontificate about politics, or do anything other than play music extremely well. At 68, he's amazingly capable of reproducing all the songs he launched when he was in his 30s. All of his band members played and performed just as well. Jacob Petersen, the newest addition to the band, hails from Denmark originally, and has committed to muscle-memory all of Miller's original works. He's a great new addition to the band.

They played twenty songs which included obvious crowd pleasers like Jungle Love, Rock'n Me, Fly Like and Eagle, and Take the Money and Run. Their bluesy set was excellent, including Tramp off their "Bingo!" album.

Tying all of this together was Scott Boorey at the mixing console. Everything was loud and clear, not overblown or poorly mixed.

They played a little shy of two hours, no breaks, no encores - and from what I could tell, everyone loved every minute. I know that I'll surely be back to listen when they return.

Article and Photos By: Tim McNamara

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Sugarland

May 20, 2011**Comcast Center, Mansfield**

The Comcast center was rockin' all night as Jennifer Nettles and Kristian Bush led their band Sugarland took to the Mansfield stage for an early summer party. The weather cooperated and late May turned into mid-July for the night as the country duo mixed in their fan favorites along with some crowd rousing covers.

Opening act and homegrown Matt Nathanson (Lexington, Mass) got the night started with his hit "Come on Get Higher" and reappeared latter for a song with the headliners. Little Big Town got the crowd into the mood with their country inspired set highlighted by their hit single "Boondocks".

Sugarland than took the stage for 90 minutes of mixed emotional melodies that went from wild dancing to somber reflections with a few hearty laughs thrown in as Nettles showed off her crowd pleasing abilities with jokes, dancing, and of course her voice. The entire set was jam-packed with entertainment in front of a machine inspired set coinciding with their "Incredible Machine Album".

The parking lot was buzzing after the show as even those who were not big fans of Sugarland appreciated the hearty performance and swore to mark their calendars as soon as the next Boston area tour date was announced. The intrinsic mix of country and pop truly captivated the audience in an unforgettable show that brought a glimpse of summer to New England.

Article and Photographs By: Kevin Reilly



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Unity Tour

July 23, 2011

Comcast Center, Mansfield, MA

Leading up to this year's Unity Tour, I couldn't decide who I was more excited to see. I have yet to turn off a Sublime song when it hits the radio which includes the new one with Rome entitled "Panic". However, 311 has been a part of my summers for years now and it just wouldn't be right to have a beautiful Saturday afternoon slip by without a cold Bud and some "Don't Trend on Me". Similarly, 311's new single "Sunset in July" is perfect for rolling down the windows. This year, the Unity Tour really came in with a bang.

Still equipped with an excellent lighting show and of course, great music, but this year adding Sublime with Rome, upped the excitement. There are few opening acts that can command such audience attention. As the entire crowd knows every word, even the light-weight drunk kid who's passed out on the lawn is mumbling along. Then you have the die-hards that are right up front, using their hands and entire bodies to scream and express absolutely every lyric. These aren't just songs, they're summer memories. And at the Unity Tour, nothing feels more true than "summertime/and the livin's easy".

Then, there's 311. And the best thing about touring bands like 311 is that they carry an extremely loyal fan base that come year after year to genuinely enjoy some music. Because of their regular touring schedule, the fans have a general sense of calm where they're excited but know the drill and wander in shortly before show time in order to maximize the cheap drinking that takes place in the parking lot. This year, that wander started a bit earlier due to Sublime with Rome, but still, there was that slow meander that eventually led everyone to their seats.

This year, 311 was able to showcase their new album Universal Pulse. Still with their signature sound and laid-back mentality, the album fits seamlessly into their catalog. It has an excellent flow that makes it one of the rare ones these days that allows you to listen to the entire thing straight through, the way it's meant to be heard.

The band, including the ever attractive lead singer Nick Hexum, showed no favorites though last weekend at the Comcast Center. The energy was high throughout the entire night with the leg kicks and head-banging never letting up. While the lyrics from their new hit single might be a bit creepy coming from someone else, Hexum's deliverance made them seem personal.

"Watchin' you dancin' and havin' the time of your life."

Article and Photos By: Teresa Reilly

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Interview with Scott Russo -

July 12, 2011
Unwritten Law
Comcast Center, Mansfield, MA

He swaggered in puffing on a cigarette with a Budweiser in hand. Even standing next to his massive tour manager, he still directed the attention of the small courtyard backstage at the Warped Tour.

Scott Russo, lead singer of Unwritten Law, has that rare ability to transfer stage presence into an everyday allure. Perhaps it was that general sense of, "I don't really care" that makes him so attention-grabbing but then, when he started talking, it was definitely the blunt honesty.

"There are some songs I don't like playing," said Russo, "but I just don't play those. I don't play shit I don't want to play."

Fair enough. With a ten year-long career I'm sure there'd be shit I just didn't want to play either. However most guys still do, and if they don't, few are as brash to talk about it. I wouldn't expect anything less though from the guy whose songs continue to be brutally honest about drugs, rehab and life.

"I've been to jail, I've been to rehab/Three square meals a day, I ain't mad/I watched my house burn down right in-front of my ass" croons Scott on their new tune "Superbad" from their recently released album Swan referring to a hectic few years which included the horrible accident that took down Russo's home in San Diego back in '09.

The band actually has a series of stories following them that lend to that badass persona that's hard to deny. In 2000, while traveling with the Warped Tour in Australia, they were blatantly banned from the tour. "For allegedly starting a riot," explained Russo, "it's terrible but we went gold in fucking Australia a month later... we couldn't go on Warped Tour for ten years but we were gold in Australia."

Making their grand return this year, Unwritten Law rocked the stage with tracks from their new one Swan that keeps in step with their previous albums and hits. It still has the same rock quality to it with a great use of the electric guitar and drums. The album's first single "Starships and Apocalypse" has that upbeat quality and carries on that unique Unwritten Law sound.

But the one I really can't get out of my head is "Sinner" which is actually from rapper Big B that Scott has lent his voice to. It's completely addictive which is why you should check it out in the player below.

Since Warped Tour has ended, Unwritten Law has taken to headlining a few shows across the country with Japan and the memory-filled Australia to follow soon thereafter. Check out their site to see if you're able to catch them:
www.unwrittenlaw.com

Article By: Teresa Reilly

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Warped Tour 2011

July 13, 2011

Comcast Center, Boston, MA

Since I was 16, the Warped Tour has been one of my favorite summer pastimes. Now, wandering around in the hot sun and dirt surrounded by sweaty teenagers may not sound like the best time but once you get into the mood of the festival, it's hard not to get excited with them.

But a lot has changed from my first Warped Tour experience six years ago. The most obvious and drastic is the change of venue (probably for the best as I spent two miserable hours on the Mass Pike one year in stopped traffic just trying to get to the event). In the olden days, the tour unloaded on local fairgrounds, which allowed for massive sprawling, often overtaking the minimal parking lots. While more recent tours do consume a large section of the Comcast Center's parking spaces, this new venue is a bit better equipped to handle the crowd.

The biggest new advantage that the Comcast Center provides though is the seating. Not only just seating, but covered seating. With the past two years being victim to absolute torrential downpours, us non-bikini wearing goers had a place to cower. Granted, most of the audience had on bikinis or were shirtless but for the rest of us, covered seating was a God-send.

Which brings me to my second point: the Warped Tour's audience now contains a substantial section of older goers. Maybe I just never noticed it before, but I swear, they came this year where I never noticed them before. Don't get me wrong, I was still the only one in line for beer... I mean, I was definitely not drinking on the job but if I had been, I probably would have tipped the poor bartenders double on their \$8.50 beers because they clearly weren't getting much business that day, but I certainly wasn't the only one of age.

For example, while coming up to the Teggart Stage a little past 4:30 I noticed that a man, probably in his 40s with the best Santa beard I've ever seen, was on-stage with Less Than Jake. I sort of assumed he was part of the band but it became pretty obvious this guy wasn't playing an instrument, nor did he have a mic, he was just dancing away. Since Less Than Jake tends to have a bit of unusual but high energy sets I didn't think too much of it. But a few minutes after they were finished, I twirled around to see the Santa-beard man strolling past me. I caught a brief moment of his conversation: "my kids are going to be so jealous!"

Now, this man clearly doesn't fall into the I'm-here-because-my-kids-dragged-me-and-thank-God-there-is-seating category but it just further proves my point.

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As much as Warped Tour has changed though, it still remains the same. The skate ramp is still there, albeit much smaller. Half-naked teenagers were still moshing and crowd-surfing. That plus the expensive beer made the medical tent the most happenin' spot. And most importantly, Simple Plan was still up there on-stage.

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that can command like David McWane will turn casual passer-biers into dancing fans that managed to make their way up front.

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As for next year, we'll have to see what it brings however I bet it will be more of the same but of course, completely different.

Article and Pictures By: Teresa Reilly