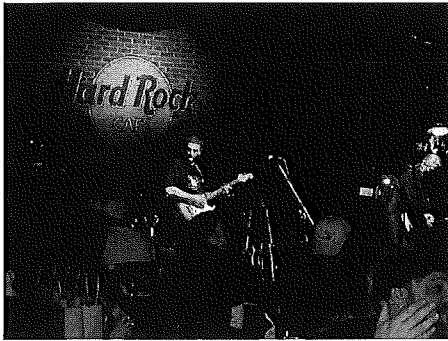


Live Concert Review-Fungus, Scott Blasey-Hard Rock Cafe-5.15.09

By Jodi Temyer

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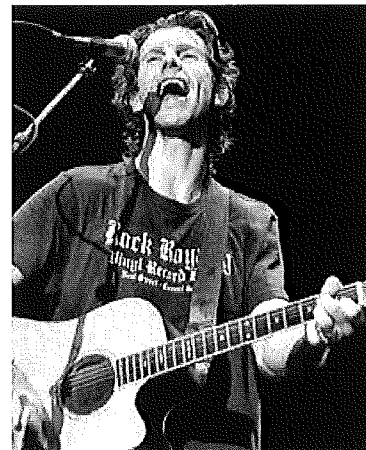
Holding steady in their role as Pittsburgh's best known Grateful Dead cover/jam band, **Fungus**, along with some help from **Scott Blasey** of The Clarks, had people on their feet at the Hard Rock Café. Fungus took the stage and opened their set with Grateful Dead's "*Bertha*" (c. 1971). Guitarists **Terry Callahan** and **Dave Gasbarro**, bassist **Dan Eaby**, and drummer **Matt Montgomery** definitely all showed up prepared to jam, and it showed as they completely rocked out their first few songs.

Considering the band has been around since 1991, it's obvious these guys aren't just a bunch of kids playing around. Unfortunately, the Hard Rock Café probably isn't the best venue for Fungus. Something about having Pink music videos playing on the screens in the background isn't exactly conducive to a Dead experience.

One of the best performances of the evening was when Scott Blasey (the opener) grabbed a guitar and a mic and hopped back up on stage to form "Connellsville's finest," as Blasey and several members of Fungus hail from there. Breaking out into the Dead's "*Good Lovin*" drove the crowd absolutely crazy, and it finally felt like the right energy was formed in that place. Immediately following, Fungus started on "*Not Fade Away*," and about a verse into the song it was obvious they were plotting something unplanned. After a few seconds of all of the band members whispering, smiling, and nodding amongst each other, Blasey used that powerful voice of his to belt out the rest of the song, much to the enjoyment of everyone in attendance. I guess Fungus isn't lying when they say that no two shows are ever the same.

The band played some classic Grateful Dead songs; the kind to which even non-dead heads can probably sing every word. However, some of these songs can never be overplayed, and Fungus proved that with their amazing rendition of "*Sugar Magnolia*." Fungus balanced out the common with songs that seem to be much rarer in a Dead performance, playing "*Peggy O*" after the set break (a Dead song that Bob Dylan also frequently performed). The last song for the evening was "*Shakedown Street*"—a song who's title defines the row of tents set up at shows where vendors usually sell everything you might expect at such a show.

When Scott Blasey, lead vocals and electric and acoustic guitar for The Clarks, opened the show, the audience was sparse. In fact, the only person dancing was the one guy that always gets drunk too early and basically defines the phrase "dance like no one is watching." Blasey acoustically performed some classic Clarks' songs, such as "*Born Too Late*" from the '**Let It Go**' album (2000). Armed with his easily-recognizable voice and original songs about Eat N Park and his dog (which his young daughter helped him write), Blasey drew laughs and cheers from those in attendance. But when the tie-dye shirts and floor length



skirts started to roll in, it was obvious who people really wanted to see. Overall, the show was definitely not a disappointment. I could have listened to Fungus (and Blasey, for that matter) for twice as long as they actually played. On the other hand, the venue definitely left much to be desired. No matter how “cool” the Hard Rock Café tries to be, expensive drinks and a dance floor made up of pushing some tables to the side is hardly the way this band (and most others) should be experienced.

Local Scene: 08/18/11

Thursday, August 18, 2011

By Scott Mervis, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Fungus at 20

- Grateful Dead tribute band Fungus will celebrate the two-decade mark with a show at 9:30 p.m. Friday at Altar Bar in the Strip. The band was launched in 1991 by Terry Callahan, formerly of MCA recording artists The Zippers, and has been a staple in the jam-band scene ever since.

First published on August 18, 2011 at 12:00 am

Read more: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11230/1167921-388.stm?cmpid=entertainment.xml#ixzz1fl8EU5vv>

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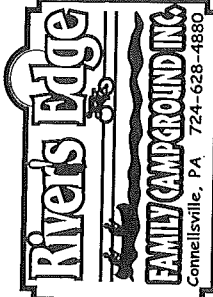


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