Concert Review Of AJR Performance In The Neotheater World Stage

To be honest, I did not know what to expect when I went to this concert. After all, I bought the ticket on a whim because my friends were going and they wanted me to come. It isn't that I don't like the band; I wasn't a huge a fan as they were though. On the way to Florida, they told me AJR were going to perform the Neotheater album, which I only know like three or four songs on it. In addition to that, AJR were going to perform some songs from the previous album, The Click. A four and a half-hour drive later, we have listened to AJR's popular songs such as "Dear Winter" and "Birthday Party" in addition to some of my friends' personal favorites like "Netflix Trip" and "Finale." Not only were we listening to music, but they were also telling me about AJR like some of their history. To summarize the show, Neotheater reflects AJR's career. Let me explain.

For starters, the main feature of the Neotheater World Stage is the monstrous video screen on the back of the stage. I am talking about you and three of your buddies could play Mario Kart or Call of Duty and see their perspective of the action better than solo on a large flatscreen. The point I am trying to make is that there is a huge screen upstage while the band plays downstage.

Now, any sane person would think, "Hey, we got this huge screen behind us with hundreds maybe even thousands of people that are going to show up. Let's make sure we make it where it is worth watching the screen." We can all agree to that, yes? Well, AJR decided not to do that, but instead, they put a picture of Mount Everest and some lightning. However, they also throw in a pinch of nostalgia by adding the old windows media player screensaver; you know, the one where you would have a dance party by yourself or with your siblings. It brought back some childhood memories, but I didn't understand what this has to do with the show, especially this is the majority of the first act. So, the first part can be compared to Living Room; it wasn't bad, but you didn't have much to work with to figure out what the end is going to be like.

The show picks up as it continues, much like their career with The Click. There are three factors that turn it from a good show to a great show. The first is "The Entertainment's Here." The band is heavily influenced by classic Hollywood and Broadway shows. The song delivers on that while AJR uses the video screen as a set piece?a New York street that Jack walks down while 'singing in the rain.'

The next factor is one my friend had to tell me about since I haven't watched any of the Pirates of the Carribean movies; when "Come Hang Out" starts, the band did an opening sequence by using the bass inspiration from the movie as well multiple Jacks cooperating to make music on a white screen, similar to the multiple Jacks joining together in Davy Jones' locker from the movie.

The major shift, and probably my favorite part of the show, is when their trumpet player, JJ Kirkpatrick, took the audience through a brief history of the band; he 'walked' through snippets of the more popular songs from the Living Room's "Growing Old On Bleecker Street" to Neotheater's "Beats" to The Click's "Bud Like You."

Following the literal stroll down memory lane, the video screen is featured in a major way for almost all the rest of the songs. Some of the highlights (since there are too many to include all of them) are the in-depth explanation of how “Don’t Throw Out My Legos” was written, especially the comedy of “so we made this beat...and then we forgot about it” (Concert). Also during “Wow, I’m Not Crazy,” AJR took the audience back to the old days where they were performing in Washington Square Park when they were essentially unknown.

I’m not going to spoil the ending so in conclusion, the experience was great, especially since it was my first one. It was worth buying the last minute ticket and I can hardly wait for my next opportunity to go to a concert to see what they will do next.