

It was a rockin' good time at the Palladium

Written by By FAITH HUFFMAN, News-Telegram News Editor
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And a good time was had by all... or that seemed to be the general consensus Wednesday as Evanescence completed the last haunting notes of “My Immortal” — the song the entire Palladium Ballroom audience had waited all night to hear.

Aside from a few fellas who had consumed one drink too many before the second act took the stage and technical issues — apparently the main mic and/or speaker decided that was the night to blow out — the Oct. 19 show was great.

First, Rival Sons — not a widely known band — showed their chops with bluesy riffs and sounds that just blew me away. Very impressed with these guys. Given the opportunity, I'd definitely see the group again — and I plan to check out more about these dynamic musicians who had me from the start. They were refreshing and different from most of the over-produced musical acts now touring.

Wowed though I was, I couldn't help but wonder, how in the world did they get the gig opening for two heavy rockin' girl-led bands? They seemed polar opposites to the rest of the night's lineup.

Taylor Momsen of The Pretty Reckless was every bit as good as those familiar with “Light Me Up” expected and then some. Just listening to her talk, all small and soft, you'd have no idea what a big sound she makes. Give her some sweet beats and heavy thumping guitars and the 17-year-old Momsen goes from dulcet to rough, raw and real in seconds. She has that gritty, whiskey, smoke-roughened sound of a much older, more mature female lead.

The Pretty Reckless knows how to get people on their feet, and Momsen's definitely no shy violet. Momsen is sex on a stick with a voice to match and the energy of a hyperactive child. Don't expect her or The Pretty Reckless to stay still for long. And, as the name suggests, don't expect any pretty, melodic power ballads out of this group. Their raw, sometimes explicit, songs hit on fast lifestyles, and the music has just the right mix for hard rocking fun.

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They did a great job on "Zombie," which quickly separated diehard "Reckless" fans from newbies. "My Medicine" and "Goin' Down," however, were particularly resounding crowd pleasers. Of course, fans of the "Light Me Up" album really got into "Make Me Wanna Die" and "Miss Nothing." Their twist on "Factory Girl" wasn't bad either.

Momsen and the The Pretty Reckless powered up and are even better live than their recorded songs suggest. If Wednesday's performance was anything to go by, this group is going to be rocking for a long time to come. And, seein' 'em live? A must.

Evanescence proved they can still kick it with the haunting, classical, goth rock sound that's become their trademark. It was especially during Ev's performance that the technical difficulties were most noticeable. So many octaves and notes to hit! They didn't translate as well when the sound dragged or a speaker blew out.

But even that couldn't daunt the release Ev's patented head-banging gives.

Their front girl, Amy Lee, is definitely another dynamic female lead who throws herself into her music. And on the piano – wow. There's something special about the combination of her voice and fingers lovingly pounding those keys; it's part of what drove the band into popularity and sold 25 million of their albums.

Evanescence mixed some fan faves with quite a few of the songs off their third and self-titled album, which dropped last week. To get the full affect and appreciation for the new songs you've gotta hear 'em live — a recording just doesn't have the same soul and vibe that Ev's live performance gives.

"The Other Side," "The Change," "Made of Stone," "Lost in Paradise," "My Heart Is Broken," "Sick," "Oceans," and "Never Go Back" were made to be heard live. Even the single release, "What You Want," is at it's best from the stage.

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The room was packed, and aside from a few inebriated fans, all were on their feet, pumping their hands in the air, bouncing and head-banging from the moment Ev took the stage until the final note of their last encore, "My Immortal" which they held back until last.

Amy Lee still belts out her sound, the **many** octaves of it. From deep and rough to high and haunting, she rides that musical scale, and literally throws herself into the music. I swear sometimes she pulled breath and sound from her toenails up, because it was as big as Ev's music. Oh, and part of that while tinkling the ivories. Who could ask for more?

And the guys in Ev definitely deserve credit too. Guitarists Troy McLawhorn and Terry Balsamo, drummer Will Hunt and bassist Tim McCord were on their game, rockin' the rafters. You felt the songs pour from their fingers to those strings and sticks, then out to the crowd. Balsamo was right there with Lee, keeping up. McLawhorn hit it hard and apparently tried more than once to run interference, making adjustments to equipment to try to compensate for the technical issues.

The set-up crew deserves a hand, too. They were out a couple of different times, helping position and remove Lee's piano between numbers.