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Night Ranger



Lowery Park Zoo (Zoofest)

Saturday, November 8th, 2008

Night Ranger Rocks the Zoo

by S.Teets

It was the perfect end to a hot Florida day. One of my favorite bands famous in the 80s rocked the Lowery Park Zoo for a special fundraising benefit. The tickets were a bit pricey at \$80 a piece but it was definitely worth it, covering free food and drinks from many Tampa Bay vendors and for a very good cause. The [Lowery Park Zoo](#) is a great outlet for children to explore and

learn and was voted #1 Family Friendly Zoo in America by Child Magazine. This is just my second review so I could not get a camera pass for this one but I still managed to get some shots with my phone. I was front and center so they are not too bad.

Jack Harris introduced the band and they started off with "This Boy Needs to Rock". They all looked and sounded great with only a few audio issues at the start. I appreciate that there was no barrier between the fans and the stage but this was a bit of a challenge for the crew when someone spilled some liquid on the stage causing Jack to take a minor spill. Thank goodness he was okay but he did let us know it hurt. From that point on it was smooth sailing.



Jack Blades (bass guitar, lead & backing vocals)

The second song "Sing Me Away" was like hearing it for the first time again. I purposely did not listen to Night Ranger for a week before the show. Brad Gillis was exceptional in his performance. His guitar solos were mind boggling. Then a few strings of other hits "Coming of Age", and classic "Rumors in the Air". Outside of Night Ranger, Brad is most famous for his work on lead guitar with Ozzy Osbourne after the passing of guitar great Randy Rhodes. Brad is up there in the top echelon of guitar heroes.



Brad Gillis (lead & rhythm guitars, backing vocals)

Jack really connects with the audience and is a great speaker. He told a story about how the band was asked by Michael J Fox to do the soundtrack song for "The Secret of My Success". He said they spent days working on the title for the song ☺. Jack is not only an icon for the band but was a founding member of Damn Yankees. He and Tommy Shaw from STYX are still friends and perform together from time to time as Shaw/Blades.



Me and Kelly Keagy (drums, percussion, backing & lead vocals)

Kelly Keagy the drummer is one of my favorites and one of the things that has always made Night Ranger a class act. They don't stuff their drummer in the back under tons of equipment, not this one. Right up on the front left stage (our right) belting out the next hit "Sentimental Street". Kelly also an original member since 1979 when they were called Stereo. He has done some solo work, and a member of Scrap Metal band with the likes of Mark Slaughter and Gunner Nelson.



Joel Hoekstra (lead & rhythm guitar, backing vocals)

The band followed up with "Eddie". Then I was really impressed with Joel Hoekstra who did a fantastic acoustic guitar dual with Brad Gillis with a Spanish flare. They both showed that it's not all amps, whammy bars and pedals; these guys really know what they are doing!

Next songs were "High Enough", "Goodbye", and "Your Gonna Hear from Me". Then they followed with back to back continuous hits "Four in the Morning", "When You Close Your Eyes", and "Don't Tell Me You Love Me". For the encore Kelly walked out singing "Sister Christian" and they topped it off reminding us that we can still "Rock It America".



Me & Christian Matthew Cullen (keyboards, backing vocals)

Before the show I got the opportunity to say "Hi" each of the members and they were all very cordial and appreciative of their fans. My favorite part was that I caught Jack Blades' guitar thumb pick on the last song. I now have it displayed in a frame next to a picture I got him and the band to sign. Kelly thanked me for being around after 25 years. I also got to shake Brad Gillis' hand and got the chance to briefly meet Joel Hoekstra and have some conversation with the keyboard player Christian Matthew Cullen. These guys are first-rate!

I can't forget the fans I did hang out with after the show who were awesome. One guy came all the way from Japan just for this show. My new friend Casey was there with his boy raising the next generation of Night Ranger fans (thanks for the set list, btw).

I encourage you to explore the timeless music that is Night Ranger. Check out their website and new album "Hole in the Sun". If they ever come to your town GO SEE THEM, there will never be another band like Night Ranger!!!!