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Chris Robinson Brotherhood
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The Chris Robinson Brotherhood And Sarah and Johnny
The Colonial Theater
June 26th 2012
Pittsfield, MA

By Jake Keplinger & Keith "MuzikMan" Hannaleck

It was another good night for Pittsfield, MA at the Colonial Theater when The Chris Robinson Brotherhood came to town. We went into the performance with some knowledge of Robinson and his awesome performances with the Black Crowe's, so the expectations were already set and everyone in attendance heard some really cool sounds. If you are fan of the Grateful Dead or Allman Brothers or any worthy Jam Band of that ilk you were in for a special night.

The CRB gang is headed up by Chris Robinson (guitar, lead vocals), Neal Casal (lead guitar, vocals), Adam MacDougall (keys, vocals), George Suppick (drums) and Mark Dutton (bass).

Amongst the audience were the folks of the jam band culture showing off their wares, a few ladies were dressed like Indians (who knows why?) and then there were the tie dies shirts and long locks of reggae styled hairdos sprinkled about the crowd. Every music style has its own culture in place and this type of music certainly is one of the most colorful and interesting to the neutral bystander.

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We both had the chance to preview the recently released Brotherhood album, *Big Moon Ritual*, which is quite impressive. There was a lot of excitement in the air with the hope of some extended soloing by all involved. And that is exactly what we got, particularly with songs like "Vibration & Light Suite." One of the features of the night besides the multi-talented Robinson was the exceptional guitar playing of Neal Casal. He has that warm Dickey Betts tone that comes across with pinpoint accuracy during numbers. A pleasant surprise was the talents of Robinson on guitar. He peeled off a few of his own licks during the night while holding his own with some strong rhythm playing behind Casal's stinging notes. The show was awesome in every way; from the fantastic mix of both groups to the overall party atmosphere they conveyed.

The opening act, Sarah Lee and Johnny, had a wonderful sound. Their harmonies were clear and tight, and the combination of the two acoustic guitars along with the addition of the upright bass, were very pleasing to get the night started. An unexpected pleasure was the additional bowed double bass solo from a third member. The results were very satisfying giving the acoustic act a more full bodied sound. They played 5 numbers then left the stage to some appreciative applause.

As soon as CRB started playing surely everyone in attendance realized that this group was and is something

special. When Chris Robinson started singing, it was as if we were listening to a live studio sound and his voice is just as unique to hear as it was some 20 years ago. His voice is just as wonderfully raspy in person as it is on any CD. In addition to his singing, the harmonies were absolutely spot on.

There were so many good tunes played last night, "Tulsa, Yesterday" and "Rosalee" were just as tight as on the album. Their versions of "Blue Suede Shoes" and "Brown Eyed Women" were very enjoyable to listen to as well. They made each song their own and the crowd gave plenty of positive responses all night long to the ear candy flowing through the sound system.

As mentioned before, the overall mix of the show was fantastic. It isn't often that one can go to a show and not get blown away by the sound. It is also cool to see that musicians of this caliber will be using equipment that is minimal – no full guitar stacks here, just some really good sounding combo amps and a small drum kit. Without a doubt, one of the cooler sounds came from the keyboards via the animated MacDougal. With a Fender Rhodes and various other synthesizers some of the sounds really set the mood for the start (and end) of some songs over the course of the evening.

To summarize this group in one phrase, it would be "lighting in a bottle." That may sound cliché, but this is the kind of group that should go far, and it will be interesting to see what the future brings for them. It is exciting to see the beginnings of an amazing group! A new release is due in September that came out of the previous studio sessions titled *The Magic Door*. Magic indeed, was what everyone just experienced it last night.

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Set 1:

Try Rock & Roll

Little Lizzie Mae

Goodbye Wheeling

Jump The Turnstile

Tulsa Yesterday

Brown Eyed Woman

Star Or Stone

Blue Suede Shoes

Set 2:

100 Days Of Rain

Never Been To Spain

Rosalee

Girl On The Mountain

Tuff Mama

Vibration & Light

Last Place Love Lives

Sunday Sound

Encore: Older Guys

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