

REVIEW

Folds connects to intimate crowd

By Caitlin Wittlif
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On a chilly Friday night, fans of Ben Folds packed into Stubb's BBQ under a full moon for a two hour, sold-out show. After surviving an opener who was an odd cross between Weird Al and Meatloaf, Folds finally took the stage a little after 10 p.m. to a hungry crowd awaiting a truly talented musician. Folds kicked the show off with "Trusted," showcasing his strength in volume control and tight harmony with his bass and drum players.

The majority of the crowd knew every word to every song, which made for great accompaniment and feeling of friendship between the artist and the fans. Folds added to the chemistry when he would laugh at himself on stage or flash a grin at an audience member. For the first three songs, Folds took no breaks; one song flowed right into the next. For "Jesusland," there was a break with banter, because Folds had attempted to add a synth arrangement on a keyboard. "When you spend \$2,000 on a shiny red keyboard," he said, "you gotta use it."

He used this later as an inside joke between friends when he sang a song he dubbed, "Rock This B*tch At Stubb's." Other standouts included the heartfelt "Fred Jones, Pt. 2," "Annie Waits" with accompanying claps from the audience, the bouncy, "Zak and Sara," the Postal Service's "Such Great Heights," and his staple Dr. Dre cover, "B*tches Ain't Sh*t."

There was much audience participation for the Dre song, and Folds put on his classic conductor shoes as he directed the audience: "All the children sing!" At one point, Folds had the stage all to himself, and dug deep into his song database to pull a tune from the Ben Folds Five era, "Eddie Walker." Because this was a quieter point in the set, a group of people loudly talking could be easily heard, and the rest of the audience vehemently shushed them, which produced a smile from Folds.

When the band rejoined him on stage, Ben brought out audience favorites like "Army," "Kate," and "Rockin' the Suburbs." When he took a break before his encore, Folds left the audience with a 10 Hz blast that he claimed



Keith Shimada | Associated Press

Ben Folds performs at the Vegoose Music Festival Oct. 29 at Sam Boyd Stadium in Las Vegas.

would cause loss of bladder control. Folds' encore kicked off with "Narcolepsy," a gem wherein Folds evokes a sound explosion from his piano; it was thrillingly overpowering. He closed the night with the

underdog anthem, "One Angry Dwarf and 200 Solemn Faces."

In all, the concert was a brilliant display of a band that seemingly always knew what was coming next, despite the intricate rhythms,

crescendos and decrescendos, and Fold's constant reformulation of his songs. Ben Folds is a musical genius and proved why his shows are rare treats that shouldn't be missed.