

On Wednesday night at Brooklyn Bowl, Gov't Mule held a listening party for their new CD "By A Thread", coming out October 27th. After the CD was finished playing over the loud speakers, the band gave a private performance on the small stage of the alley/nightclub. To gain entry to this intimate show (club capacity is around 600) fans had to put in a request to be part of a lottery drawing when they pre-ordered the CD via the band's official site. This was quite a treat for Mule followers who are used to seeing them play larger venues such as the Beacon Theatre, where the band will be playing on New Year's Eve (tickets on sale October 2nd via Live Nation ticketing).

Brooklyn Bowl is located in Williamsburg, a few blocks away from McCarren Park and one block off the waterfront. When I first arrived, I almost thought I was lost. The neighborhood was quiet and relatively dead (at least on a Wednesday night). It didn't seem a likely location to host a rock show. I couldn't wait to see the inside of the building, which dates back to 1882 when it housed Hecla Iron Works. It's part bowling alley, part bar, part music club. I have to say the odd combination works, especially since it's been beautifully renovated, and by the way, environmentally safe.

After show attendees bowled a few frames and scarfed down food provided by Blue Ribbon while listening to "By A Thread", the band took the stage after 9. They played a set that lasted around an hour and a half, which not only included new tunes from the CD, but a cover of Alice Cooper's "Is It My Body" as well. Towards the end of the set, fans partook in a personal moment with the band when Haynes' wife and Sirius DJ Stef Scamardo brought out birthday cakes for band members Abts and Carlsson and had the crowd sing "Happy Birthday" to the two men celebrating this week.

This being my first time seeing them live, I finally understood why they're still drawing crowds over a decade after forming. Warren Haynes' massive electric blues-rock guitar playing and rich, soulful voice are balanced out nicely by talented bandmates Matt Abts on drums, keyboardist/guitarist Danny Louis and Jorgen Carlsson on bass. I'm not by any means a fixture on the jam rock band scene, but this is a band I'd go see again if given the opportunity. If you're looking for no-frills, classic rock that stands the test of time, a Gov't Mule show is where you'll find it.