

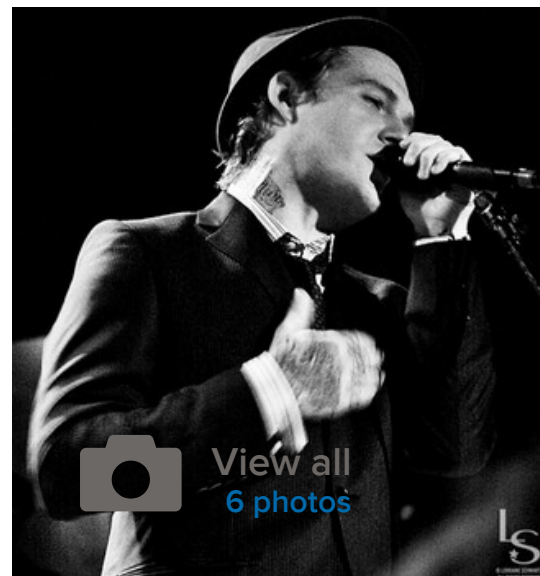
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Concert Review: The Horrible Crowes at Bowery Ballroom

September 9, 2011

2:42 PM MST

When Brian Fallon **announced** in January that he was working on side project The Horrible Crowes with Ian Perkins, fans couldn't wait. Fallon had teased the Crowes' material as "nighttime music" and described it as "the darker side of soul" with tunes that "slithered." The front man and his primary band, **The Gaslight Anthem**, have already won legions of fans with romantically charged lyrics set to danceable rock and roll, so the promise of slow, burning music that would dive even deeper into the darkness of torrid love immediately increased anticipation. After months of patiently waiting, the fans' appetite has finally been satisfied with the release of "**Elsie**" this week (which lives up to Fallon's hype by the way), and last night the band made their live debut at the **Bowery Ballroom**.



The Horrible Crowes at Bowery Ballroom

Lorraine Schwartz

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Thursday was the first of two proper live shows the band has scheduled so far. Being that the only other US performance will be at the Troubadour across the country in Los Angeles on September 14th (an in-store is also scheduled for Fingerprints in Long Beach, CA on the 15th), the most loyal of Fallon's East coast fans from near and far acted fast, quickly purchasing tickets and selling out the 500-capacity room. Dressing for the special One Night Stand in sharp suits and ties, The Horrible Crowes and their backing band (which included The Gaslight Anthem's guitarist Alex Rosamilia) played their entire album for the lucky crowd, filling the air with what can only be described as "magic."

While the album is fantastic just listening to it at home, the songs were given so much more life when played live. For example, "Behold the Hurricane", a song which got some unexpected radio publicity during the weekend of Irene, was played at a slightly faster tempo and sounded even more majestic than the recorded version; the finale of "Go Tell Everybody" even more passionate; "Cherry Blossoms" even more lonesome and melancholy.

As anyone who has been to a concert knows, the live experience can make or break the connection to the music. Sometimes a band can royally mess with your emotional attachment to the artist by rearranging the songs into oblivion (see: Lauryn Hill), lip synching like a robot and going through the motions (see: Britney Spears) or failing to finish a show altogether (see: Kings of Leon). Fortunately for The Horrible Crowes, the live performance only helped strengthen the bond between the band and their fans by giving an additional dimension to the already richly atmospheric songs.

As a bonus, the band also covered "**Teenage Dream**" by Katy Perry and INXS' "**Never Tear Us Apart**", giving both The Horrible Crowes treatment. "Teenage Dream", an ordinary flat

pop tune, was transformed into a driving, uplifting song with musical layers that helped convey a sincerity that Perry's version fails to achieve. "Never Tear Us Apart" was given an even bluesier edge than the 1988 original had. The Horrible Crowes song "Ladykiller" was also injected with a verse of The Cure's "[Pictures Of You](#)", whose lyrics "I've been looking so long at these pictures of you/That I almost believe that they're real" fit well with the tone of The Horrible Crowes' words "I can leave the wound wide open/Maybe see if I can tough it out/Let it pour over my head."

Though the mood of the Horrible Crowes' material is pretty intense, the band appeared lighthearted and seemed to be having a great time, often smiling to each other as they played. And while the lyrics are serious, Fallon himself is very congenial and humorous, joking on stage and ribbing his partner-in-crime Perkins about his British accent. Poking fun at the lack of reasonable logic in love, he compared the fear of a lover leaving to the fear of the audience at Bowery leaving the show: "If you guys leave this venue tonight. I will die. My heart will cease to be. I will turn into pink vapor", he continued, "It's one-sided though, cus if I leave, it's no big deal. But if you leave, I will die without you." Fear not, Brian. No one left until the house lights went up and returned them to reality after a dreamy show.

Check out clips from the show:

[Never Tear Us Apart](#)

[Teenage Dream](#)

[Go Tell Everybody](#)

My photos from the show can be found [here](#), with additional shots from the show [here](#). For more information, check out The Horrible Crowes [website](#).

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