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Concert Review: Lucero at Brooklyn Bowl

Walking into [Lucero](#)'s pre-New Year's Eve gig this past Friday at [Brooklyn Bowl](#), I was pretty much a newbie. My only experience seeing the band live was catching part of their brief set at this summer's Warped Tour, and my knowledge of their musical catalog was extremely limited to a handful of songs. But based on the strength of the little I had seen and heard, plus great word-of-mouth via fellow music fans and [bands](#) that have toured with them, I knew I was in for a great show.



Lionize at Brooklyn Bowl

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Though [Brooklyn Bowl](#)'s website stated the show started at 8, bluesy-rock openers [Lionize](#) didn't go on until just after 9pm. This gave concert goers, who had arrived as early as 6:30 for doortime, an unexpected extra hour to drink at the various bars inside the beautifully designed venue/bowling alley. So by the time Lionize had finished their impressive set, the alcohol-fueled fans were beyond ready to party with headliners [Lucero](#).

To say this crowd was lit would be putting it lightly. At one point, a wasted youth down front tried to pour another drink from her pitcher of Brooklyn Brewery Pilsner, but missed her cup entirely and doused the stage in beer instead. Towards the end of the set, the drunken mosh pit got so rowdy that Lucero bassist John Stubblefield asked them to look out for the pretty girls in the crowd and calm down. Guitarist Brian Venable even played the part of security guard, utilizing a flashlight to single out one of the more unruly guys, flat out telling him to "Stop it." By show's end, the stage was littered with plastic cups and empty glasses while the floor was left soaked.

However, the bright side to playing for such a liquored up crowd is that people had obviously thrown their inhibitions out the window and weren't afraid to let loose. From note one of Lucero's set,

couples danced while best buds and temporary drunk-friends for the night threw their arms around each other and sang along. At center stage, a mob of diehards formed, shouting out every lyric back to the band as they played an enormous [27-song](#) set that included tunes like "Nights Like These", "On My Way Downtown", "Sixes and Sevens", "The War", and "Tears Don't Matter Much." Singer Ben Nichols also joined in on the reveling, accepting free shots from the crowd, later thanking the New Yorkers for their "Yankee hospitality."

Listening to Lucero and watching their live show, it's easy to see why fans get so worked up over them. [Allmusic.com](#) categorizes their Southern blues/country rock as "earnest", "passionate", "gritty", "brooding", "raucous" and "cathartic." For people who want to really feel something when they listen to a song, this band is for them. I'm not talking about superficial emotions like "Oh, this song puts a smile on my face" or "This song makes me sad." I'm talking about feelings like "This song rips my heart out and shows it to me while I melt into a puddle of tears." Or, "I want to sit and drink Jack Daniels in front of a campfire after a solo drive across Texas in a pickup truck." Or, "If I don't call up my friends and raise hell all over town tonight, then this evening is a failure." In other words: the sound of Nichols' Southern drawl singing heartfelt lyrics set against countrified rock music that moves you will make your soul happy.

The band has been putting out albums since 2001, so if you're only just hearing about them now, you better start catching up. Check out their site to [listen](#) to album streams and their Facebook [page](#) to get news updates. If you missed their Brooklyn Bowl show, do not

despair. They're hitting NYC again on April 20th when they play Webster Hall. Tickets are on sale now via their [website](#) and Ticketmaster. You can also follow them on Twitter at [@luceromusic](#).

Check out my slideshow from the show [here](#), with additional shots from the concert [here](#). Follow me on Twitter at [@concertexaminer!](#)