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Concert review: The Gaslight Anthem celebrate CD release at Webster Hall

Tuesday night [The Gaslight Anthem](#) celebrated the release of their latest CD "Handwritten" with a special intimate gig at Manhattan's [Webster Hall](#). The show clearly meant a lot to singer Brian Fallon, who said he was a bit starstruck getting to play the famous venue. Having grown up in nearby Northern New Jersey, he said he'd been to countless great concerts that took place on the very stage he was playing, specifically mentioning Green Day's 2009 show that celebrated their own CD release at the time (my review of that show [here](#)). Not only that, but just before the show, he and his band (drummer Benny Horowitz, bassist Alex Levine, guitarist Alex Rosamilia and additional guitarist Ian Perkins) found out that "Handwritten" had hit #1 on iTunes, adding some extra joy to their night.





Webster Hall

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[The Gaslight Anthem](#) has been steadily growing in popularity since 2007's "Sink Or Swim", winning the masses over with their feel-good punk/soul influenced rock and poignant [lyrics](#) that speak to the heartbroken and disenchanting. However rather than drag the listener further into the gutter emotionally, singer Brian Fallon's lyrics offer the perspective of someone eternally optimistic that even though things are a mess right now, there are valuable lessons to be learned from each disappointment, and better things are ahead. During these difficult times, any message of hopeful encouragement is very much welcomed and is the reason why fans are flocking to the Gaslight Anthem's shows, helping the band sell out halls all over the world.

Tuesday night's show was the end of a quick run throughout the US that hit small venues like the 500-capacity U Street Music Hall in Washington D.C. and the 550-capacity Middle East in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Given the extremely high temperatures cities have been confronted with this summer, each show has been a test of

human strength, seeing many cases of heat exhaustion and sauna-like conditions barely survived all in the name of having a good time.

The evening began with Philadelphia's [Dave Hause](#), who is known in the punk community for his work with the Loved Ones as well as his solo work, which has been his main focus over the past year. Switching off between acoustic and electric guitar, Hause sang songs off his CD "Resolutions" including "C'Mon Kid" and "Time Will Tell." For his final song, he brought out the Gaslight Anthem's Levine and Horowitz along with Loved Ones guitarist David Walsh to back him up on Loved Ones tune "[Jane](#)." Taking over mic duties, Hause rocked out with the front row as he sang "Alright, alright!", finishing up a brilliant set.

The Gaslight Anthem regularly changes their stage entrance songs, choosing tunes ranging from Fugazi's "Waiting Room" and The Beastie Boys' "Sabotage" to Jay-Z's "Empire State of Mind." But this night was different in that they quietly took the stage without any entrance song at all. Normally the band opens with a high energy party starter such as "[Great Expectations](#)"; stage lights flash maniacally, the crowd immediately goes crazy and chaos ensues. But on this night, they opened with the beautifully calm "Mae", while performing in near darkness with minimal stage lighting. As tiny white lights twinkled against a black curtain behind them, [Webster Hall](#) was transformed from an average Tuesday night concert into a makeshift night under the stars.

After the magical opening, the band kicked things into high gear,

playing their old hit single "The '59 Sound", followed by new hit single "45" off of "Handwritten." Though the new CD was just released that day, the record had been streaming on NPR.org all week long, giving fans a chance to bond with the new music prior to the show. From the reaction of the crowd to songs "Keepsake", "Howl", "Handwritten", "Here Comes My Man", "Mulholland Drive" and "Too Much Blood", they've taken to it all quite well. Old favorites like "Casanova, Baby!", "The Navesink Banks", "Wherefore Art Thou, Elvis?", "Wooderson", "Señor and the Queen" and "Blue Jeans & White T-Shirts" also made the cut as well "American Slang", which saw opener Hause join in on the chorus. The band also likes to perform covers from time to time, and so they chose Fake Problems' "Songs For Teenagers", nicely performed by singer Fallon on acoustic guitar as their first encore.

After getting in one last crowd-surf and one last singalong to finale "The Backseat", fans wiped the sweat off their brows and headed back into the summer night, satisfied once again by a great show from their local heroes. To check out photos from the show click [here](#), with additional shots [here](#).

For more information on The Gaslight Anthem, including upcoming tour dates with Rise Against, visit their official [site](#). You can follow them on Twitter at [@GaslightAnthem](#) and me at [@ConcertExaminer!](#)