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Concert Review: Springsteen, Waters, Gervais and more Stand Up For Heroes

"How do we serve our country?", Captain Aaron Mankin of the U.S. Marine Corps asked as he stood in front of the audience at the Beacon Theatre. "It is my belief that if you don't serve there, serve them; those who do. National service is not an option. It is an obligation." And so began the 6th Annual Stand Up For Heroes concert benefit for the [Bob Woodruff Foundation](#), held at the Upper West Side theatre on Thursday night.

Lorraine Schwartz

Some of entertainment's biggest stars came out to the event, which is presented by the New York Comedy Festival and the Bob Woodruff Foundation, to honor our nation's military [veterans](#) in an effort to help encourage public donations to the organization. The Bob Woodruff Foundation helps injured servicemen and women through programs that offer help with physical and mental rehabilitation. \$14.5 million has been raised over the years With sizable donations from the in-person audience (egged on by Jamie Niven of Sotheby's and TV/Former New York Giant Michael Strahan) as well as text-in donations from the internet audience

watching the live YouTube stream, that number only continues to grow. The highlight of the night's contributions came from a [Bruce Springsteen](#) fan in the audience who donated \$110,000 for the singer's autographed guitar (which he played that night), harmonica, six tickets to a Springsteen show and a personal backstage tour.

After performances by Bruce Springsteen (which included a touching duet of "Tougher Than The Rest" with wife/singer Patti Scialfa), John Mayer, and [Roger Waters](#) (backed by a band of veterans who participate in the Walter Reed Army Medical Center's Musicorps music therapy program), it was time for comedy. Comedians Jon Stewart, Ricky Gervais, Mike Birbiglia, Robin Williams and Patton Oswalt each gave brief sets as Max Weinberg's Big Band played each of the men on and off the stage. Stewart, host of the Daily Show on Comedy Central, joked that the evening was an excellent way to celebrate the most "F***ed up election ever!"

Though the evening provided top notch entertainment, the real stars of the night were the guests of honor; the veterans. Seated in the crowd were men like Lance Cpl. Michael Martinez of the U.S. Marine Corps, a 22 yr old who lost both legs after stepping on an IED (Improvised Explosive Device/makeshift bomb) during his time in Helmand Province, Afghanistan; Staff Sgt. Robert Henline of the U.S. Army, NYCF, Veterans Airlift Command, who suffered massive burns on over 38% of his body including his head after being the lone survivor in his vehicle that hit a roadside bomb; Capt. Pat Horan of the U.S. Army, who was unable to walk and lost

coordination of his body, mouth and vestibular system after a bullet exploded under his helmet; Lt. Col. Timothy Maxwell of the U.S. Marine Corps, who suffered severe traumatic brain injury due to shrapnel tearing through the left side of his brain. Mankin, who helped kick the night off with his inspirational speech, was injured from an IED attack during an operation to stop insurgents flowing into Iraq from Syria. All of these men were very much alive and well on Thursday night, looking sharp and laughing with Gervais and Williams as they walked the red carpet.

To find out more about the Foundation and how you can help our nation's military, please visit [Remind.Org](#).

Check out my slideshow from the Red Carpet [here](#) with additional shots [here](#). To watch the archived stream of the show, click [here](#).

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