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Concert Review: The Gaslight Anthem play John Varvatos Store

Thursday night, [The Gaslight Anthem](#) sprung a surprise show on NYC, when they held a sort-of secret show at the John Varvatos store on the Bowery. Sort-of, because due to the fact it was packed wall to wall with people and the line to get in was around the block, it's obvious someone let the news out! The party was invite-only, which usually means lots of press and industry people in attendance. But for this event, The Gaslight Anthem made sure at least some of their local hardcore fans got a chance to be part of the night by giving away guest spots to fast-acting members of their 45 RPM Club, who received emails offering passes to first responders. Fan-run message board [Dimestoresaints.com](#) also gave two fans [a chance at winning](#) their way into the concert by creatively showing their enthusiasm for the band's next album "Get Hurt", which will be released this Tuesday, August 12th (it's currently streaming on iTunes Radio [here](#)).

The famous designer's store, located at 315 Bowery, is also known as the former location of legendary rock club [CBGB](#). Being that The Gaslight Anthem was formed just a bit too late to play there before CBGB shut its doors for good in 2006, this was the closest the band could come to the real deal. It seems that at least one member,

drummer Benny Horowitz, had his own memories of the also-legendary bathroom of the venue, [tweeting earlier](#) in the day how much nicer the new facilities were than before.

Opener [Jesse Malin](#), who had made a name for himself playing at CBGB with his bands [Heart Attack](#) and [D Generation](#), warmed up the crowd, backed by a full band that included a horn section and keyboardist. Also backing Malin were The Gaslight Anthem's singer Brian Fallon's bandmates, bassist Cat Popper and drummer Randy Schrager, who play with Fallon in his side project Molly and The Zombies (read my recap of their Stone Pony appearance [here](#)). During his set, Malin paid tribute to CBGB's favorite sons [The Ramones](#) by playing a cover of their song "Rock N' Roll Radio", reminding everyone in the house that they were standing on hallowed ground.

Finally, after an introduction by John Varvatos himself, it was time for the band people had packed the house to see. Given the quick rise in popularity The Gaslight Anthem has experienced over the past few years, it will not be surprising if shows taking place at small venues like this one become a rarity in the future. Their next local show will be in September at the huge PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel, NJ, which made the evening even more special for fans of the band.

The room was already hot enough on the warm August night before the show started, but it increased to Sauna Level by the time The Gaslight Anthem began their opening song "Stay Vicious", off of "Get Hurt." The set was comprised mostly of new material off of the

upcoming album, including the title track, "Stray Paper", "1000 Years", "Rollin' and Tumblin'", "Selected Poems", "Sweet Morphine" and "Red Violins." Though a handful of tracks were not played, it's a safe bet a few of the songs left off could see the light of day at future shows, since the band is known to change up their setlist on a nightly basis.

The most exciting moment of the evening occurred when they played their most well-known track "The '59 Sound." Only a few notes into the song, fans suddenly rushed forward, dragging the weak movie-theater-style fabric barrier with them to get even closer to the action, prompting stage-side VIPs to whip out their phones and film the chaos. But surely even for those who managed to abstain from taking cell phone video to preserve the memories, it was an unforgettable evening for everyone ranging from the super fans in the front row, to those who were simply curious as to what this next record had to offer.

You can check out my photos from the show [here](#). Follow me on Twitter at [@ConcertExaminer!](#)