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Concert recap: Royal Blood at Upstate Concert Hall

My first opportunity to finally see the much buzzed about [Royal Blood](#) came when they played a set at the 2015 Governors Ball (recap [here](#)). The pair, singer/bassist Mike Kerr and drummer Ben Thatcher, were scheduled in the mid-afternoon on Sunday, hours away from any slot reserved for what the festival considered headliners that weekend. Understandable, as they are a fairly new band to Americans. But regardless of where they fell in the hierarchy that day, they played the kind of impressive set that will surely earn them a place higher up on American fest bills in the future.

Being a two-piece, Kerr and Thatcher have of course inspired comparisons to The White Stripes and The Black Keys. Much like both, there is a blues influence and a thick, rocking guitar sound present (though you did read right- Kerr is playing bass, not a six-string guitar). But a carbon copy of either band, they are not. Hailing from the Brighton, UK area, their music has a bit more of a smouldering quality to it. Or, as Rolling Stone's David Fricke [put it](#), a "dark funk." Kerr's vocals range from a steady cool to a burning howl, while the combination of his unusual bass groove and Thatcher's pounding drums come together to make a sound all their

own.

This past Friday night I had the chance to catch them headline Clifton Park's Upstate Concert Hall after their double header at Citi Field opening for the legendary Foo Fighters (singer Dave Grohl handpicked them to open for their Sonic Highways tour). Playing a 10-song set featuring nearly every song off their debut album, along with B-side "One Trick Pony" and a quick cover of Black Sabbath's "Iron Man" as their finale, the band may have been on stage shorter than the Catskills traffic battle I faced to get there. But it was worth all of that trouble to see them light up the Concert Hall's with their fierce electric rock.

It's difficult to find a true rock band these days that doesn't try to distract you with some sort of gimmick or latch onto current trends to stay relevant. But Royal Blood doesn't need to resort to any of this. They are the real deal.

Check out my photos from the show [here](#). To see a clip of their Iron Man finale from that night, click [here](#).

Find out more about Royal Blood and their upcoming gigs on their [official site](#).