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It Happened Last Night

Ben Kweller Lays His Catalog to Rest

By Gavin Paul Giovagnoli on August 2, 2007 2:00 AM [Comment](#)



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On the final evening (Aug. 1) of his three-night stint at Brooklyn's Southpaw, and one song shy of completing his 2006 self-titled effort, a fan demanded that Ben Kweller "PLAY ANOTHER ALBUM." The Brooklyn-based popster raised a little smile while tuning his guitar, while a pit of 18-year-old girls screamed their nod of approval. For a minute Kweller let the joke hang there, teasing with a repeat of *Sha Sha*, but his smile dropped -- "I'm so ready to move on... I can't tell you enough."

From there, Ben and his touring band, Trio on the Train Tracks (bassist Chris Morrissey and drummer Mark Stepro), tore apart the calculated ballads of Kweller's latest. Lyric sheets were, again, pretty much instant souvenirs rather than sing-along aids, as every soul gathered at Southpaw spit verses quicker than Ben could fire them off the mic, sometimes taking vocal ownership of jangly anthems such as "Penny on the Train Tracks" and "Magic."

As with the previous shows, Ben had a special surprise in the form of a sparkly box atop his piano, to mirror the album cover in play. Monday was toothbrushes. Tuesday something to do with *On My Way*. Last night, despite one lady fan's hope for something phallic, a la Justin Timberlake, saw bandanas. Not one to dwell on the week's sentiments, Kweller and crew immediately clicked on the power chord punk for "This is War," followed by a handpicked set of encores -- "Walk on Me," "Hospital Bed," "Different but the Same" -- that "just didn't feel right without" a last minute "Wasted And Ready" finale, Ben hopping up on top of his keyboard to jam it home.

For the diehards that bought a three-day pass, Kweller hosted a pizza party in the basement and SPIN.com caught a moment with the prolific songster to ask why the 26-year-old is so ready to put these albums to rest.

"I'm not proclaiming that these are classics or anything," Kweller said. "I'm just trying to sort of reach into my past and...it's more of a personal thing...to take a review on what I've done so far. But what it's really about is my future. I'm about to make two new albums at once -- one in September, the other in February."

We asked: On Ben Kweller's piano ballad "Thirteen," the protagonist is told he's loved in the backseat of a taxi. Where was the best or worst place you've been told you're loved?



Topics: Gavin Paul Giovagnoli, It Happened Last Night

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