

Concert Review: Tour for the Cure

Contributed by Clare Gajkowski

Though you've probably heard the single, "The Mix Tape" by Jack's Mannequin on the radio, you may not be aware of how proactive (no, not the acne treatment Kelly Clarkson and Lindsay Lohan endorse) the lead singer Andrew McMahon is. A lymphatic leukemia survivor, McMahon founded the Dear Jack Foundation which has been helping to raise money throughout the month of September, which is Leukemia Awareness Month. It turns out Andrew's sister actually donated her bone marrow for him, saving her brother's life. McMahon wrote on the Dear Jack Foundation's website, "Having fought my own battle with Leukemia I feel an intense personal obligation to use whatever resources are at my disposal to raise both money and awareness for the countless young people who are being diagnosed with similar blood diseases."

Along with the bands The Hush Sound, Daphne Loves Derby and Something Corporate (Andrew McMahon's other band), Jack's Mannequin is currently taking part in the "Tour for the Cure" this September. A large portion of the concert's proceeds will be donated to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Tour for the Cure recently came to The Rave in Milwaukee on the 13th of this month. Not being a huge Jack's Mannequin fan, I wasn't too eager to go, but I was with good company and the tickets were a reasonable \$22. My friend and I arrived around an hour late, but thankfully the opening band was still playing.

Actually, not so thankfully. Copeland was the opening band, and I'm not going to lie, they sounded like Keane having a terrible night. That is, if Keane had a few bad guitarists. After about fifteen minutes of listening to the lead singer hunched over a piano droning into the microphone, my friend and I decided to take a walk and check out the t-shirts.

The crowd was looking bored, unresponsive to the band and eager for Jack's Mannequin to come on. No offense to Copeland fans- it was just too much emo in one room for my taste.

After at least an hour of waiting, Jack's Mannequin took the stage, and I was impressed with the crowd's response. Going into the concert knowing very little about the band, I had no idea they had such a huge fan base. True, most of the audience consisted of sixteen year old girls who want to marry Andrew McMahon, but I digress.

They started off their set with a few strong songs off of their 2005 album "Everything in Transit." They of course had to play "The Mix Tape," which was a fan favorite - I even saw balloons being tossed in the audience during that one.

McMahon had an interesting stage presence: expressive and enthusiastic, but he seriously can't sit still. I just wanted him to park himself at his piano bench for more than ten seconds instead of getting up and down and alternating between two strategically placed microphones. He definitely sings right to the audience and never had his back to the fans.

I was also impressed with the two covers Jack's Mannequin played during their quite extensive set list. Paying tribute to Simon and Garfunkel, they played a decent version of "Homeward Bound," which even included an electric stand-up bass. And after playing another five or six songs during an animated encore, they covered Weezer's "My Name is Jonas." It was a great way to end a respectable concert, and I'm pretty sure everyone sang along to that one.

For more information on the Dear Jack Foundation, go to www.dearjackfoundation.com, or The Official Leukemia & Lymphoma Society at www.leukemia.org.

To read more about Jack's Mannequin, www.jacksmannequin.com, or if you're interested in Copeland, go to www.thecopelandside.com