

LIVE REVIEW: The Bongos, The Living Room, New York City, Tuesday, October 15th, 2013



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BY ROB ROSS - OCTOBER, 17TH 2013

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Seeing The Bongos live is always a joyful event. But last night was the first time I had the chance to see them on the heels of a new album in over 27 years. It was also the first night of the CMJ Music Festival, so it was like a step into the Wayback Machine. The intimacy of The Living Room, on New York's Ludlow Street, was a perfect atmosphere for the band to present some of the songs from the recently-released *Phantom Train* album, of which copies were available at the show. Having the chance to be seated up close to the stage made the evening just that little bit sweeter, as well as seeing many dear friends, old and new, and having the chance to talk and catch up – a night of celebration, really.

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The Bongos came out to rapturous applause with the now-familiar introduction, "Hi, we're The Bongos from Hoboken, New Jersey" and launched into a sonic-attack version of "In The Congo" and transitioned over to a slowed-down but intense rendition of "The Bulrushes". "Tiger Nights" and "Totem Pole" were offered up; then several of the *Phantom Train* songs

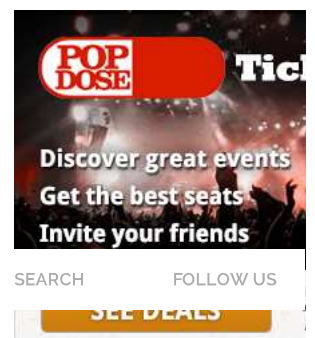
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were showcased — all of these songs are dynamic and even more intensely powerful in a live setting: "Diamond Guitar", "Run To The Wild" (an absolute highlight), "Roman Circus" and "My Wildest Dreams". The version of Donovan's "Sunshine Superman" had the crowd singing along and both the band and audience clearly seemed to be as one. The initial set ended with an other-worldly reading of "Numbers With Wings"; instead of going off the stage, The Bongos stayed and were charmingly funny as they "pretended" to be on break as they gave the crowd "Barbarella", a sweet rendition of The Troggs' "Love Is All Around" and closing with the best version I've heard them do (yet) of T. Rex's "Mambo Sun".



As always, The Bongos never fail to please in a live setting, making the crowd truly a part of the experience. The musicianship is always tight; the harmonies and vocals are something every band should strive for when performing and now with the songs from *Phantom Train* added to the set list, it makes for an even more appetizing musical plate.



All photos by Liz Ross



Rob Ross

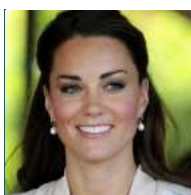
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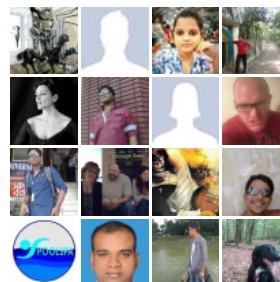
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