

Alt-Nation: Folk Fest Wrap-Up and the Latest from The Silks

Newport Folk Fest

The book is closed on the 2016 Newport Folk Fest, which showcased a mix of rising stars, modern day heavyweights and bona fide legends. Friday's highlights included Raury, who mixes folk and hip-hop to create a soulful uplifting vibe. Dan Auerbach's side project The Arcs had the feel of The Black Keys in a more fleshed-out arrangement playing tunes from their debut, *Yours Dreamily*. I also caught a surprise set from country legend Kris Kristofferson in the tiny Museum Stage, which was something I certainly never expected to see. Kristofferson would do another set Saturday backed by the Texas Gentlemen. Upcoming Nashville star Margo Price and main stage headliners, the New Zealand comedy duo, Flight of The Conchords, rounded out my list of Friday's highlights. The latter performed many of their tunes from their popular HBO show like "Business Time" and "Too Many Dicks (on the Dance Floor)."

Saturday featured a hilarious back and forth trolling exchange between Ryan Adams and Father John Misty one day after the latter got booed off the stage at another festival. Adams' set with his band The Infamous Stringdusters featured a bluegrass take on songs from his catalog. Father John Misty had a big bounce-back solo stripping down his tunes to solo acoustic format. Singer-songwriter John Moreland's set was a revelation with great tunes like "You Don't Care For Me Enough to Cry," "American Flags in Black & White" and "Nobody Gives a Damn About Songs Anymore" delivered in his unique voice. Ruby Amanfu took a star turn showcasing a powerful set of pipes on tunes from her forthcoming record, *Standing Still*, which is due out at the end of August. Notable about Amanfu's set from a local perspective was her backing band featured three members of Deer Tick. Amanfu would also later perform at Deer Tick's post-Folk Fest Bash with Deer Tick covering The Cranberries' "Zombie" and Screamin' Jay Hawkins's "I Put a Spell on You." Graham Nash showed he still carries the '60s protest spirit with tunes like "Military Madness" and "Immigration Man." Nash sent everyone home happy with a closing sing-along of "Teach Your Children Well." The two best things I saw Saturday was one artist who was totally unknown to me — Nathaniel Rateliff & The Night Sweats — and a long time-favorite, Patti Smith. Rateliff & The Night Sweats made it even hotter under the midday sun that was mercilessly beating down with some old school bopping '60s soul. Smith is a dynamic performer who lifts spirits in tunes like "Dancing Barefoot," "Summer Cannibals" and "People Have the Power." Smith's set was heavy on covers including a reading of Allen Ginsberg's "Holy, Holy, Holy" and renditions of tunes by Prince ("When Doves Cry"), The Who ("My Generation"), Rolling Stones ("This Will Be The Last Time") and Bruce Springsteen ("Because the Night").

On Sunday Elvis Costello's set was one for the ages, literally, as he covered songs from the '20s as well as tunes from throughout his extensive catalog. Billed as solo performance, Costello's set was anything but, featuring guests like Rebecca and Megan Lovell from Larkin Poe, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Glen Hansard, and Dawes, members of whom were in the Middle Brother. Highlights of Costello sets were "Every Day I Write the Book," "King of America" and "(What's So Funny Bout) Peace, Love, and Understanding." Middle Brother, an indie super group featuring members of Dawes, Delta Spirit and Deer Tick, performed their self-titled album cover-to-cover on the main stage. Son Little gave a stirring set early in the day. Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros closed out the Quad stage with a set that started off sounding like a jug band before transcending into their hippie alterna-daze hits like "40 Day

Dream." They seemed to be having a ball and genuinely bummed that they couldn't play all night because of the stage curfew. All in all the Newport Folk Fest lived up to the magic of its rich tradition in delivering something for everyone and spotlighting artists, both new and grizzled legends.

The Silks - *Turn Me On*

It's been three years since The Silks dropped their debut, *Last American Band*, which was recorded with Paul Westerberg. Since then, The Silks have toured, played festivals and opened for bands like The Replacements, but it is in a sweaty club where the band is in their element. On *Turn Me On*, The Silks deliver more of their signature early '70s stomp rock. The opening "All Day" sounds like bastard of Solomon Burke's "Everybody Needs Someone to Love" and the Stones' "The Last Time." "Rolling Wheel" is a fuzz-infused barroom swinger where singer/guitar wizard Tyler-James Kelly sings of the love of being back on tour with a lines like "take that rearview mirror, throw it out the door, you'll won't need to look at it anymore." "Blue" is a ballad in the vein of the Stones' "Angie." "Take Me to Town" mixes a honky-tonk vibe with barroom rock in the vein of John Cafferty and the Beaver Brown Band. My favorite tune on the new biscuit is the three-chord stomp of "Get Up and Get Free," which is like one psych-garage meets Humble Pie. The rhythm section of Jonas Parmelee on bass and "Uncle" Sam Jodrey anchor the beat, freeing Kelly to insert as many molten leads as his heart desires. Tunes like "Get Up and Get Free" and "Home" showcase the growth of the band from their debut making more use of Kelly's harmonica playing and incorporating more elements to make a richer album. *Turn Me On* is available now online through bandcamp.com.

The Silks celebrate the release of Turn Me On with a show with Tall Teenagers and The Low Cards at Aurora in Providence on August 12.

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