

PHOTOS BY CHARLEY CRESPO

by Everynight Charley Crespo

BECK FOREST HILLS STADIUM, QUEENS/AUGUST 17, 2019

Beck Hansen, better known as the singularly-named Beck, obtained his first guitar at 16 and initially performed on the streets and in city buses, coffee houses, and clubs in his native Los Angeles. He was also in a band called Youthless that hosted Dadaist-inspired freeform events in coffee shops. He moved to New York City in 1989 and became involved in the anti-folk movement at Sidewalk. Returning to Los Angeles in 1991, he resumed performing in art house clubs and coffee houses and recorded demos in his living room. The hip-hop leaning "Loser" was a one-off experiment, and it became a world-wide hit in 1994. Beck went on to sell millions of albums and has won seven Grammy Awards. Beck plans to release his 14th studio album, *Hyperspace*, sometime later this year.

Beck's co-headlining concert with Cage the Elephant at Forest Hills Stadium was like a mini-rockfest thanks to rocking pre-sunset performances by Sunflower Bean and Spoon. After sunset, Beck



surprisingly started his set with his signature song, "Loser." Where would he go from there? Beck and his band (guitarists Jason Falkner and Marc Walloch, keyboardist Roger Manning, multi-instrumentalist Cal Campbell, bassist Dwayne Moore, and drummer Chris Coleman) romped through radio hits and deep cuts from seven of his albums, "Saw Lightning" from his forthcoming album, plus four cover songs for fun. Drawing from diverse influences, including Americana, hip-hop, funk, rhythm & blues, and pop, Beck's bouncy alternative pop was indie to the max, but spit-shined and slick all around. Early in the set, Beck announced his link to Queens by sharing that his grandfather used to work at a gas station in the borough. High-spirited and energetic to the end, Beck seemed to command attention even when one of his musicians was playing a solo. An encore of "Where It's At" led to a guest appearance by Britt Daniel of Spoon on Elvis Costello's "Pump It Up" and Matt Shultz of Cage the Elephant on a cover of Cage the Elephant's "Night Running." Beck's albums are eclectic, but his live performance brought the cohesion that turned all his songs into signature tunes.



SYZYGYX MERCURY LOUNGE/AUGUST 10, 2019

Based outside of Washington, D.C., Josh Clark is a musician and audio engineer formerly known as DJ Impulse in two bands, Corrupt Souls and Sinthetix. Clark and vocalist Luna Blanc met in a retail store in Fairfax, Virginia, where he worked, and she was interviewing for a job. Blanc had experimented with keyboards from a young age, but

pursued photography, writing, and film in college. In time, Clark and Blanc fell in love, moved in together, built a home studio, and began creating music through synthesizers. They named themselves SYZYGYX (pronounced sih-zeh-jix) from the scientific word syzygy, a space term for the alignment of celestial objects. They added the letter "x" to symbolize the unknown. *The Graveyard Compilation*, released on May 15, 2019, is a collection of songs from previous recordings.

SYZYGYX made its live debut at the Red Party, the monthly darkwave and gothic party at Mercury Lounge, and the question was whether the duo could bring its studio tracks to life. Unfortunately, ongoing technical problems plagued the set. Clark turned dials and flipped



switches, but the pre-programmed music and the synthesizer itself would not cooperate with his wishes. Nevertheless, the duo showed promise, with Clark playing dark, bleak layers of electronic soundscapes and danceable beats behind Blanc's disaffected, husky vocals. The effect was haunting yet compelling. If future performances overcome technical glitches, SYZYGYX will prove to be a popular act on the darkwave and gothic circuits.



JOHN FOGERTY RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL/AUGUST 15, 2019

John Fogerty was born in Berkeley, California, and grew up in El Cerrito. Inspired by rock 'n' roll pioneers while in junior high school, the vocalist/guitarist formed a cover band in 1959 called the Blue Velvets with bassist Stu Cook and drummer Doug Clifford. Later, Fogerty's brother Tom Fogerty joined the Blue Velvets as rhythm guitarist. In 1964, the Blue Velvets signed with a record company which changed the band's name to the Golliwogs without the band's knowledge. In 1967, the band changed its name again to Creedence Clearwater Revival. After four years of chart-topping success, including headlining appearances at major rock festivals, tensions within the band led to a breaking point. Tom Fogerty left Creedence Clearwater Revival in 1971, and a year later the rest of the band dissolved acrimoniously. In 1973, John Fogerty launched a solo career, at first calling himself the Blue Ridge Rangers; for many years he refused to perform the Creedence Clearwater Revival catalogue. Fogerty's ninth and most recent studio album, 2013's *Wrote a Song for Everyone*, is a collection of re-recorded hits and new songs.

Fogerty brought his "My 50 Year Trip" tour to Radio City Music Hall,

and the program began with four hippie-dressed flower-laden members of his entourage dancing and twirling in the aisles to the blaring sound of nineteen-sixties hits. Fogerty and his band (guitarist Shane Fogerty, keyboardist Bob Malone, saxophonist Nathan Collins, trumpet player Julian Dessler, trombonist Adam Miller, bassist James Lomenzo, and drummer Kenny Aronoff) came onstage and opened with Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Born on the Bayou." From there on, Fogerty mirrored the band's set at Woodstock exactly 50 years earlier. Now performed by a much larger band than the original group, the songs were played well, as images and film clips of Woodstock and other period pieces helped transport the audience back to the Age of Aquarius. Fogerty was in fine voice, a uniquely raspy take that rocked his country and delta blues-rooted songs, and extended jams gave several songs new life. Whereas at one time Fogerty would play only his solo material, he went in reverse this time, playing all the Creedence hits but only three songs from his solo work. The weakest part of the show, however, was the half hour or so of the two-hour performance that Fogerty dedicated to covering songs by other sixties musicians; this time could have been spent digging into deep cuts or introducing newer songs. As such, the name of the tour was a mislabel; there was little music that suggested a time continuum. Nevertheless, Fogerty successfully provided a partial soundtrack for the 50th anniversary of the Woodstock festival.



DENNIS DUNAWAY & THE SNAKE CHARMERS THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS/AUGUST 14, 2019

Who would have imagined that a boy born to a farm family in Cottage Grove, Oregon, would turn out to be a founding member of America's pioneer shock rock band, The Alice Cooper Group? After moving with his family to Phoenix, Dennis Dunaway in high school befriended cross-country teammate Vincent Furnier. Soon after, the duo formed several bands: the Earwigs, the Spiders, the Nazz, and finally, the band became Alice Cooper and moved to Los Angeles. The original Alice Cooper group sold millions of records and was on the cover of *Forbes* for having the largest grossing tour in 1973. In 1975, the band split, Furnier took the name Alice Cooper for himself, and Dunaway joined numerous bands, including Billion Dollar Babies, Deadringer, Bouchard Dunaway & Smith (BDS), Ant-Bee, and in more recent times, Hollywood Vampires, 5th Avenue Vampires, Blue Coupe, and Dennis Dunaway & the Snake Charmers.

To celebrate the release of *Cold Cold Coffin*, a short film based on



a song by that name by Dennis Dunaway, Fixer Productions hosted a double feature and a concert at Theatre 80. Attendees saw *Cold Cold Coffin* plus *Live From The Astroturf*, *Alice Cooper*, a documentary about the 2015 reunion of the surviving members of the original Alice Cooper band, both followed by question and answer sessions. Finally, Dennis Dunaway & the Snake Charmers performed a brief set, with a different lineup on almost every song. Most of the set featured Dunaway on lead vocals and bass, Ryan Roxie and Nick Didkovsky on guitars, Chuck Garric on bass, Russ Wilson on drums, and Tish Bellomo and Eileen "Snooky" Bellomo on backing vocals. (Roxie and Garric are members of Alice Cooper's current band, Didkovsky and Wilson are members of Dunaway's band.) Alice Cooper's daughter, Calico Cooper, who is a dancer and actress in her dad's stage show, danced to Dunaway's "Cold Cold Coffin," and sang her dad's "Feed My Frankenstein." (She and Garric lead a band called Beasto Blanco.) Satellite radio personality Keith Roth joined on vocals for Alice Cooper's "I'm Eighteen." The tight, driving rock 'n' roll with its dramatic flair begged for Dennis Dunaway & the Snake Charmers to continue as a touring band, possibly with the two films as the opening act.

