



[1]By Ryan Sterritt

The English Beat 8/25

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Now, I'm only 21 years of age. So, asking me about a band called "The English Beat" is like asking your five-year old about Milli Vanilli. (In no way am I comparing musical capabilities, just a reference.) The English Beat (or as they are known overseas, The Beat) have been in the music scene since 1978. Between their formation and eventual break-up in 1983, the band released three albums with more than 4 singles. With original vocalist, Dave Wakeling, fronting the band's reunion, The English Beat is storming North America and teaching the world the joys of Ska.

Opening the show was a band called Bad Manners. This 9-piece 2 tone ska band got the energy going and most of that was thanks to the frontman, Buster Bloodvessel's, crazy antics. Buster definitely brought the fun side of music out by wearing his camo suit and forcing the crowd to jump along to their songs. I haven't heard of Bad Manners before either, but that didn't stop me from enjoying their energetic live show. If you have never heard of this crazy-fun band, try checking out songs like "Special Brew" and "Lip Up Fatty".

Separating energetic ska band from energetic ska band was acoustic performer Chris Murray. Now don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with acoustic acts. But the mellow sound just really weighed down the energy of the night. Especially since Chris was placed between Bad Manners and The English Beat. If he had been given the opening time slot, the show would have flowed incredibly well. Minus the flow of the show, Chris Murray isn't a bad performer. Just a little boring. All of his songs supported a large "We Are One" style of lyrics. Murray's performance isn't one that wouldn't be found far from a equal rights protest.

Knowing that this wasn't the first reunion that The English Beat has embarked on, I wasn't sure how the turn-out would be at Atlanta's own, Variety Playhouse. This was put to rest once the lights went down for the final time that night. Once Wakeling and crew took the stage, bodies flew to the stage like moths to a flame. The audience came with many different varieties: Everywhere from 60 year old fans to 13 year olds who just wanted to skank around (Skanking is the universal dance symbolic to Ska music). Regardless of age of the audience, everyone had a blast listening to old favorites, ranging from "Mirror In The Bathroom", "Save It For Later" and a Smokey Robinson cover of "Tears of a Clown".

Fan of ska, rock or just fun, make sure you check out The English Beat, a great live performance with more than a few hits to get your inner-ska side to show itself on the dance floor.

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