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The Mighty Cash Cats rock the Lab

THE MIGHTY CASH CATS | NOVEMBER 11, 2012 | BY: WILLIAM PHOENIX | [+ Subscribe](#)

The Mighty Cash Cats once again rocked The Lab Brewing Company in Agoura Hills, CA on Saturday, Nov 10 with their tuneful Tribute to Johnny Cash and June Carter. The concert began at approximately 9:30 p.m. For those not in the know, The Mighty Cash Cats—once featured on Germany's TV show *RTL Punkt 12*—consist of Michael J. Smith (lead vocals, guitar, harmonica and bass), Leticia Blumette (bass, lead vocals and guitar), Justin Young (drums and vocals) and Oliver Thin (guitar and vocals).

They are a world-renowned group of musicians whose show focuses on six decades of music by the "Man in Black", Cash and June Carter duets, and several songs by his contemporaries such as [Carl Perkins](#), The Carter Family, [Elvis Presley](#) and [Roy](#)

[Orbison](#) as well. In fact, they also perform a "Tribute to the Women of Rock 'n' Roll and Country Music" in which they cover some of country and rock music's top female performers.

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"Americana Made"

Photo credit: Courtesy of Original Owner



Video: [Mighty Cash Cats Live in Concert](#)

While one might reckon this was just another of countless live gigs to which your crusty chronicler is always invited, think again. In truth, it was one of a so far select few performances your near perpetually penned-up penman attended. It was a rare moment when your regularly reclusive writer was able to leave his laptop and appreciate some of the performers about which he writes.

It was an interesting evening as your rockin' writer was about to experience his first exposure to what The Mighty Cash Cats were capable of live. Some highlights of the evening included a strong opening with the classic "[Ring Of Fire](#)", "[Folsom Prison](#)", fan favorite "[Ghost Rider In The Sky](#)" and the timeless tune "[Jackson](#)". Blumette seemed at her best during her rendition of June Carter's "Juke Box Blues" and the group seemed to really work the [Carl Perkins](#)' piece "[Long Legged Guitar Pickin' Man](#)".

They also performed a solid rendition of the Cash hit "[I Walk The Line](#)". After which Blumette would once again shine as she performed her version of Martina McBride's "[Independence Day](#)" as part of the group's tribute to the women of country music. It worked especially well considering it was nearly [Veteran's Day](#) and afforded Smith and Blumette the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to play other instruments as well.

They added even more variety by covering classic rock cuts such as Joan Jett's "[I Love Rock 'n' Roll](#)" and Deep Purple's "Smoke On The Water". Thin stepped up to the plate as he took over on lead vocals with covers of Tom Petty's "Last Dance With Mary Jane" and Blumette's take of Motley Crue's "[Home Sweet Home](#)". If their upcoming live disc is anything like this show so wonderfully free of strict recording studio limitations, your rockin' reviewer is already ready to receive his review copy!

As Mary Sparks observed while taking photos of the band, the show was obviously enjoyable to everyone in the building whether they could see the stage or not. In fact, even your usually subdued scribe found himself surprisingly swaying to the tunes. (Apologies to whoever has to clean the restroom at the LAB. Yeah, your rascally writer had also sampled some of the fine home-brewed ales earlier as well.)

The inclusion of more contemporary country cuts and classic rock songs while meant to make the show more appealing to general audiences is actually a highly appropriate idea as Johnny Cash had covered an album full of more contemporary cuts before his death. They later brought it back to “the man in black” with memorable renditions of such songs as [“Cocaine Blues”](#) and a tuneful tip of the hat to yours truly with [“If I Were A Carpenter”](#). (Thanks, guys, but shucks, it ain’t *Rolling Stone*.)

Smith’s love and knowledge of both Cash’s history and his music was an obvious indicator that the act no mere “flavor of the week”. Smith and company are not simply (ahem) cashing in on the current lucrative tribute band trend.

Their clothing, playing and vocal styles, and even their knowledgeable between bits banter reveal a genuine commitment to the man and his music. Mind you, The Mighty Cash Cats are no one-trick pony show here, folks. The Mighty Cash Cats had entertained a crowd of mainly twenty and thirty-somethings that no doubt were not even born when much of the music the band played was first released.

The overall performance (as earlier noted) included a healthy mix of genres and artists. Again though, when your all-too often reclusive writer does crawl out from under his laptop to attend such an event, he does so in hopes of actually enjoying himself. So forgive the lack of a detailed playlist. Let’s just say [The Might Cash Cats](#) have learned that variety is indeed the spice of life and if y’all need to know more you’ll just have to get up off your butts, get out of the house and go check ‘em out for yourself!

My name is Phoenix and . . . that’s the bottom line.

NOTE: Smith and company (who have shared the stage with musicians such as Kris Kristofferson and Merle Haggard) will be presenting a Johnny Cash Workshop on Saturday, November 17 at 3:00 p.m. at the Norwood Library in El Monte, CA. Here they will explore both the music and the myth of Cash and the performers around him. Admission to this all-ages event is free.

<http://www.examiner.com/article/the-mighty-cash-cats-rock-the-lab>