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It Happened Last Night

Mark Lanegan and Co. Save Some Souls

By Gavin Paul Giovagnoli on November 28, 2007 10:42 PM Comment

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Now that ex-Screaming Trees frontman Mark Lanegan has become rock's new solemn soul a la Johnny Cash, it's like watching an undertaker sing songs about Jesus, of which there was no shortage last night (Nov. 27) at New York's Gramercy Theater. Debuting the first set of their U.S. tour, the British production team -- featuring leader Rich Machin (sans his other half Ian Glover), guitarists Steve Gullick and Richard Warren, Spiritualized drummer Kevin Bales, bassist Matt Stravick, and gospel singers Wendy Rose and Carmen Smart -- supported Lanegan in promotion of their latest release, *It's Not How Far You Fall, It's the Way You Land*.

The hour-long show, boosted by a sprinkling of throwback psych and classic rock covers such as CCR's "Effigy," Buffy Sainte-Marie's "Codine," and Spacemen 3's "Feel So Good," included only one non-sung word shared with the audience -- Lanegan's 'thank you,' as he walked off stage. But each cover took Lanegan into his impenetrable, baritone concentration. He may have seemed like an inanimate statue up there, but there's pure pain in those vocals.

As for the *It's Not How Far*... cuts, Machin kept the live interpretation verbatim to the record, tinkering with sounds behind a stack of amps, when not playing keys or looping guitar riffs. Standouts included the sitar slathered "Jesus of Nothing," a percussion-heavy rendition of "Ask the Dust," and the *Grey's Anatomy* hit, "Revival," which saw some fans spreading their arms open as if Lanegan was some deity of soul.

Bassist Matt Stravick, who caught up with SPIN.com afterward to talk about some first-show-of-the-tour sentiments, explained that Rich and the band were a little "nervous" beforehand, but the feeling was quashed with Lanegan's post-show gratitude. "When Mark says 'thank you,' you know you've done something right."

We asked: *It's Not How Far You Fall, It's the Way You Land*, the new Soulsavers album, gets us thinking about some of music's most notorious fall from graces a la Axl Rose. Do you have a favorite artist that tripped their way out of your life?

Topics: Gavin Paul Giovagnoli, It Happened Last Night

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