

Nada Mucho » Freakout Fest Fills Macefield Void: Night 2 Recap

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Freakout Festival 2017

November 17-18, 2017 in Ballard, Washington

Night 2 Recap

By Gemma Alexander

There are so many music festivals these days that it's impossible to keep track of them, let alone attend them all.

Until this year, I'd never heard of Freakout Festival, even though the wintertime festival created by Seattle record label [Freakout Records](#) has been around for five years. The two-day festival is hosted in different parts of the city each year. This year it was in Ballard, filling the void left by [Macefield's](#) year off.

Stages at [Tractor Tavern](#), [Conor Byrne](#), [Sunset Tavern](#), [Caffe Umbria](#), and [Hattie's Hat](#) were curated by a variety of local tastemakers. But everyone has to start at Conor Byrne to pick up a wristband. I arrived when [Moon Darling](#) had already taken the stage. They had a kind of Jefferson Airplane vibe that I really liked, but Conor Byrne was packed, so I moved over to the more spacious Tractor for the next set.

Moon Darling. Photo by Jake Hanson.

On Saturday the Tractor Tavern's line up was curated by Treefort Music Festival. I've always wanted to go to that one, so it felt like getting two festivals in one. First up was [Kelli Schaefer](#). I could have sworn I'd heard Schaefer's music before, and I was expecting something in the singer-songwriter vein. While I have nothing against pretty songs, I've never been so glad to be wrong. Kelli Schaefer's music is a triangulated balance of riffs, psychedelic freak outs and punk but with none of the calculation implied by a word like "triangulated." It's raw and rough around the edges in a way that reminds me of local music in the years before Northwest bands used hair product.

Kelli Schaefer. Photo by Eric Tra.

I agonized over whether to shift to Hattie's Hat where [Stas Thee Boss](#) was kicking off an appealing line up with [Youngblood](#) and [JusMoni](#). Thee Satisfaction was a favorite at my house (theirs was my kids' first concert) and I hadn't seen Stas perform live since they split. But I also wanted to hear the Freakout Records founders' band, ironically playing the stage curated by another festival. Physical inertia won, and I stuck around the Tractor for [Acid Tongue](#). I mourned the end of Guy Keltner's former band, [Fox and The Law](#), so it was a real pleasure to discover that Acid Tongue is possibly even more fun. I sometimes felt like the broker in *Guardians of the Galaxy*, "I can't tell if you're joking or not," but ironic or not, playing around with cute 50's soundscapes never killed the rock vibe.

Youngblood. Photo by Eric Tra.





Stas Thee Boss. Photo by Eric Tra.

Up to now, Freakout Fest felt like old Seattle, with rock bands banging it out in shoebox venues, but the next set took things in a whole different direction. Taking the stage in a venue decorated with cowboy boots, representing Sub Pop Records, was Seattle rapper [Porter Ray](#). Backed by atmospheric music, rhymes delivered in a soft, almost childlike voice obscure the deeply personal, powerful natural of his stories. One of my favorite things about watching hip hop live is the collaborative way shows unfold, with special guests woven throughout the set. Bruce Leroy brought the energy up every time he stepped on stage, and hooray, I got to see Stas after all.



Porter Ray. Photo by Jake Hanson.

[Magic Sword](#) closed out the night in hooded black robes, their faces covered with featureless white masks. Only the LED crowns on their foreheads belied the black metal imagery, foreshadowing electronic music. Though they resemble Nazgul, their webcomics and the glowing swords waving in the audience assure us their mission is to bring light to those who suffer in darkness. Bands like Ghost use so much schtick to distract from unoriginal music. While it is true that Magic Sword's music is easily digestible, they are more like Daft Punk, transcending the cheesiness of their own genre. Instead of the soundtrack to a movie you've already seen, it's a musical D&D game where you are the hero. (Their encore is the Top Gun theme, and that might be all you need to know.) Even if electronic music is not your genre and D&D is not your game, Magic Sword's show is irresistible fun. It'll buoy your spirits long after the

lights come up, even if, as I did, you've missed the last bus and have to walk all the way home.



Magic Sword. Photo by Jake Hanson.



Moon Darling. Photo by Jake Hanson.



Tomo Nakayama. Photo by Eric Tra.



Sleeping Lessons. Photo by Jake Hanson.



Sleeping Lessons. Photo by Arel Watson.



Cumulus. Photo by Eric Tra.



Psycho Magic. Photo by Jake Hanson.



Psycho Magic. Photo by Jake Hanson.



Baywitch. Photo by Andy Perkovich.



Brent Amaker. Photo by Jake Hanson.



Kelli Schaefer. Photo by Andy Perkovich.



Kelli Schaefer. Photo by Andy Perkovich.



Stas THEE Boss. Photo by Eric Tra.



Kelli Schaefer. Photo by Eric Tra.



Youngblood. Photo by Eric Tra.



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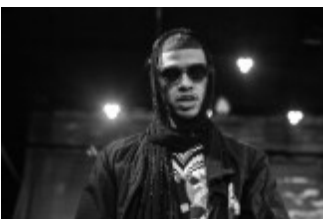
The Shivas. Photo by Andy Perkovich.



The Shivas. Photo by Andy Perkovich.



The Shivas. Photo by Andy Perkovich.



Porter Ray. Photo by Jake Hanson.



Porter Ray. Photo by Jake Hanson.



Maiah Manser. Photo by Eric Tra.



Maiah Manser. Photo by Jake Hanson.



Guantanamo Baywatch.



Guantanamo Baywatch. Photo by Arel Watson.



Guantanamo Baywatch



Guantanamo Bay. Photo by Travis Trautt.



Magic Sword. Photo by Jake Hanson.



Magic Sword. Photo by Eric Tra.



Magic Sword. Photo by Eric Tra.

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[Recap: All the Ballads on Display at Freakout Fest's First Night](#)
