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Performer Magazine, a nationally distributed musician's trade publication, focuses on independent musicians, those unsigned and on small labels, and their success in a DIY environment. We're dedicated to promoting lesser-known talent and strive to be the first to introduce you to artists you should know about.

October 26, 2009

Live Review: Owen at CMJ



The Bell House // Brooklyn, NY // Oct. 23, 2009

The second Mike Kinsella – tour-de-force of solo project Owen – so much as hinted he was getting ready to go on, the crowd in the Bell House swarmed towards the stage. By the time he had played his last chord, those remaining – many fewer than had gathered forty minutes earlier – were left scratching their heads.

Owen's CMJ appearance had been hyped through his MySpace as "playing with a full band," which, for the usually-acoustic performer, was an enticing announcement for fans. Playing electric, with a guitarist, bassist and drummer, Kinsella ripped into the set's first song. But the track, while familiar to some, wasn't what most had been expecting: "Hello" by Oasis (yes, that Oasis). Kinsella and band spent the entire set playing Oasis' What's the Story, Morning Glory in

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sequence. Not an Owen chord was so much as hinted at.

Of course, the lack of Owen songs – Kinsella's stripped-down, signature croon over thoughtful composition – was at the crux of the disappointment (and for some who had traveled to the out-of-the-way Brooklyn venue at Second Avenue and 7th Street, disappointment turned to infuriation). What's perhaps more irksome, though, was how Kinsella seemed to disregard the fact that the crowd was gathered to see him, absorb his music, and be touched by the opportunity to see Owen songs live – something not often an option. A cry of, "Play some Owen songs, please!" was answered with a sneer while Kinsella looked down at his guitar and tuned up. Even the set that he was playing could have been simply good live music, but throughout the night, Kinsella often turned his back on the crowd, laughing with the other band members, and fumbled lyrics out of carelessness. Watching his raw smiles as Owen is a moving thing; his connection to the music and natural stage presence is what's made him the stuff of idol for many. But during the cover set, Kinsella's grins merely said, "The joke's on you."

With most subway service in Park Slope suspended after 11:30 p.m. on Friday for track repairs, the saving grace of Owen's set was that it ended early enough to hop over to the Fourth Avenue-9th Street station before the trains stopped running.

-Review and photo by Meredith Turits

www.myspace.com/mybandowen

Posted by PerformerMag at [1:23 PM](#) 

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