25.04.16 My first experience at Groovin the Moo: Oakbank 2016

Preface: I wasn’t planning on attending this music festival. It was simple; if I didn’t win the GTM tee competition, I don’t get to go. Naïve ‘ol me thought that I had even a sliver of a chance to win even the smallest of prizes, but was let down greatly when they released the top 60 finalists. Let down not because I lost, but because half of those ‘top 60’ designs were sorry excuses that shouldn’t even be called a design. They lacked any thought for creativity and execution. I lost, and no longer had the desire to go. Then, during one fine day, I was presented with a ticket. At first, I thought it was a ticket to the Tigertown gig later that week. It was quite the pleasant surprise when I realised it was a ticket to GTM! My dear friend had gifted it to me as a birthday present, which I greatly appreciated. TWENTY ØNE PILØTS hype!

I was familiar with only a few of the acts, and they were scheduled to play in the latter half of the day… it was going to be a long wait. The day’s forecast saw no rain, and while that’s nice, I didn’t appreciate that there was not a single cloud in sight. So bright and warm :/.

Security check was…surprisingly lax. They didn’t even inspect my camera; not that I am complaining, mind you. It’s just that compared to Laneway security (blog post coming), they practically bore a hole through it.

Past the security checkpoint, I was quite underwhelmed by the setting before me. Being hosted at the Oakbank Racecourse, this comes as no surprise. However, I thought there would be more to break up the plain field besides a giant stage, a tent and some food and toilet stalls.

For myself, there was a lot of mindless wandering and discovery as I was led like a sheep to the various acts playing around the field. The music was pretty good, but not quite good enough for me to actively listen to.

Fast forward a couple hours, and I am now in the “Moolin Rouge” tent for British India. What transpired here was… a new… experience. Everything was normal, so to speak, and I was enjoying their music. It was relatively calm and there was some head bobbing. That is until they started playing this song that was more intense and hard, for lack of a better word. That was when a fraction of all hell broke loose. It started with the occasional push forward; it was unwanted and slightly uncomfortable, but nothing to ruin the experience over. Then the pushes became more frequent and with more force. It became incredibly stuffy; I was practically bathing in sweat of other’s and my own; and every time a pocket of ‘fresh’ air circulated through, it was like I struck gold. At this point, it was just a battle to fend off the body barrages to keep my feet planted and my camera intact. As soon as that song finished, a few of us left mid-set, because it was way too stuffy and a tad uncomfortable – just a tad. Nothing was more pleasant (at that specific time) than walking towards the light at the end of the tent and finally stepping out into the stuffy/sweat-free world. I was still in one piece; my camera - that I clutched onto with my life - was still in one piece. Unfortunately, the pad arms on my Ray-Bans® got slightly bent. Bent, but not broken! It was an easy fix, thanks to its quality and strong robust build. That was all the damage sustained after that mosh, and considering that my pair are thin and fragile - that’s amazing (*cough*Ray-Ban®sponsorme*cough*). With all that said though, in a way, it was somewhat enjoyable being jostled around like that…

More time passes and the sweat had fully aerated, and there was more wandering and music to discover again.

It was just about time for twenty one pilots to play, and I had left the previous set early in hopes to get a good spot right at the front. Boy, was I wrong… by the time my friend and I had gotten there, it was already packed to the rafters. We were able to score a decent spot, but I obviously wanted to be much closer. The wait was only 20-ish minutes, but it felt so much longer. In that time, I enjoyed the music of Jarryd James; all the while, our backs and legs were giving in (r.i.p.).

18:15 finally rolls around, and out comes Tyler and Josh (cue fangirling). The mic slowly descends from the on-stage crane, to which Tyler then belts out the first verse to ‘HeavyDirtySoul’. I, among many others, incoherently try to rap along until the chorus hits, and Tyler shimmies the tambourine and the crowd sings along. It was an awesome opening, which was then followed with their ever so popular ‘Stressed Out’. That was awesome, too.

Tyler brings out a ukulele and proceeds to play ‘We Don’t Believe What’s on TV’. I absolutely adore their ukulele songs and really wished they had played ‘House of Gold’. It was (pinch emoji).

Next was ‘Lane Boy’, the wicked song with the wicked drum solo. I think it was at this point or when they started to play, the aches and pains had subsided. Before the drum beat down, we did the crouch thing and when the time came, we jumped up and bounce, bounce, bounced. It was great! We were able to get closer :3.

Following that was an oldie - ‘Holding Onto You’. Tyler, as usual, climbs into the crowd and begins to sing and Josh does his flip off the piano. *Lean with it, rock with it…*

We then go back to the final ‘Blurryface’ track for this set – ‘Ride’. Here, Josh crowd surfs with a drum set. It was a glorious sight to behold. Luckily, they weren’t heading down our way, since we were surrounded by teens (read kids) and they could barely support a person that had tried to surf not too long before. Thinking about it now, it must kind of suck having to hold it up; you don’t get to view much…

The ski masks came out and that could only mean ‘Car Radio’ was next. Of course Tyler being Tyler, he climbed up the side of the stage like the adorable monkey he is. I didn’t even notice until most of the crowd had their attention on him. It was very high up…don’t know how he does it.

Finally, the guys closed with ‘Guns for Hands’. It was a lovely end to the set with a confetti explosion and both of them pound away at the drum, whilst atop the crowd. Awesome.

While I knew what their live performances were like, seeing them in the flesh and experiencing it first-hand was nothing short of amazing. They were by far my favourite set of the night. The energy from them and the crowd was awesome. Side note: while my friend and I left early to get a good spot, my other friends who stayed and came later, found a spot…at about the same distance…tch.

Hunger decided to kick in, and we chilled just outside ODESZA playing. ▶▶ again and I am, yet again, discovering more musicians. I was a fan of most of what I listened to, except Danny Brown. The final act for the “channel [v]/ triple j” stage was Alison Wonderland (I keep getting her name mixed up with Alison Gold’s…). She was alright. It was only just a filler set for me, before the awesomeness that is Ratatat. I left when the confetti cannons fired, and it felt like a badass exit on my part.

Ratatat! What a way to end the night. I was able to get close to the stage, which eventually led to me being at the front. I have little to no knowledge about these guys and am only familiar with their songs, so it came as a wonderful experience seeing them play and watching the really cool laser/lights. It was an amazingly chill set with the best jams, and I loved every second. Although, I would have loved it if they played ‘Lex’.

Side note: before Ratatat played, I had lost one of my spare batteries and the two I had were very low on juice…so throughout the set, I had to meticulously plan my shots and turn the camera on and off constantly. It also didn’t help that I brought in half charged batteries.

All in all, I had a tonne of fun at Groovin the Moo, and would have still enjoyed it if I only saw twenty one pilots and Ratatat alone. My undetailed recount of the events doesn’t compare to what I experienced; it was just a “you had to be there to know” kind of thing.

Thank you for reading.