Jon Bellion – Live from Cove City

I decided to do my last concert review on one of my all-time favorite artists: Jon Bellion. Jon has one of the coolest histories of any modern musician I know of. Out of high school he enrolled in the music program of a private college in New York City, where he made music in his free time and eventually made a ‘mixtape’ that he tried to sell but was mostly unsuccessful. After some difficulties with school, he was considering dropping out and working at his family’s restaurant when a producer happened upon a copy of his mixtape and loved it. She reached out to him and told him that she wanted to sign everybody that contributed to this tape to a record deal, to which he told her he was the only person that worked on it.

A couple years later, Jon was very successful, writing and producing for big names like Eminem and Jason Derulo. He went on to create several albums and go on several tours. He continued to write and produce some of the most popular songs in the U.S. and worldwide, including songs for Justin Bieber, Katy Perry, Halsey, and many more. He eventually started his own record label in 2019 called *Beautiful Mind Records* and continues to write and produce music that tops charts worldwide.

One of the incredible parts of watching Jon live is the way he improvises every performance. Not only is he wildly talented, but the many musicians with him are also the best of the best. None of the songs performed live are exactly how you would hear them recorded in the studio. Instead, the musicians follow Bellion’s lead, as he throws in little instructions like, “Just strings here,” or makes hand motions to adjust the tempo or dynamics of the band while he’s singing. This is all topped off with an improvised verse to finish the concert with a humorous bit about Covid and quarantine.

This concert was held over a live stream to an online audience, who would request songs for them to play. However, the songs that were eventually played weren’t his more popular ones. This was a particularly interesting point to me, as some songs that I didn’t particularly love on his albums really came to life as all the musicians were genuinely having a good time and just jamming together. It was incredible listening to these modern songs being played but with less electronic keyboard and more jazz, including full improv sections from the saxophones and trumpets throughout.

The entire feel of the concert was extremely unique in that almost all concerts I have attended, while great, are well rehearsed and played the same most of the time, while this one was anything but. It really emphasized the joy of music as you could see just how much fun everybody was having building off each other to create something familiar yet totally new at the same time. The relatively small room that it was recorded in also contributed to the air of familiarity that could never be achieved on a large stage or in a stadium.

Overall, it is easy to see why Jon Bellion has achieved as much as he has. The incredible talent displayed through vocals, improvisation, and conducting in just this concert would leave anybody amazed. Though the entire concert consisted of eight of his less popular songs, the improvisation and modifications to the songs doubled or tripled the length of each song with such an incredible display of talent that it felt like each was shortened instead. This was definitely one of the most impactful performances I have ever had the pleasure of listening to.