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Lady A looks good

Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood, Cal, June 3, 2017

Reviewed by Dan MacIntosh

The case can be made for better singers and songwriters in Nashville, but it'd be tough to find a more entertaining live act than Lady Antebellum on their "You Look Good World Tour." The trio put on a highly professional performance that was heightened even more by the artists' bucket list excitement over playing Hollywood Bowl for the first time.

Even before Lady Antebellum (Hillary Scott, Dave Haywood and Charles Kelley) took the stage to party with "Downtown," a trumpeter and a trombonist charged out and fired up the crowd with some funky playing. The trio was joined by even more brass players later in the show, which bolstered the fullness and energy of many familiar Lady A's songs. These players enabled the act to perform a truly funky cover of Beyonce's "Crazy in Love," which featured Scott with opener Kelsea Ballerini strutting and singing the R&B song in sparkly jackets.

There were other well-chosen cover songs tonight, though. They also sang an acoustic version of Shania Twain's "Still the One," while Kelley received vocal help from the night's other opener, Brett Young, on Tim McGraw's "Something Like That." After encoring with "Need You Now," which Kelley said was the vocal group's usual show closer, he then saluted his Georgian roots by covering "Midnight Rider" in tribute to the late Gregg Allman.

Although this show slightly predated the outfit's upcoming "Heart Break" album, Lady A found room in its setlist to sing the album's title cut, as well as the immediately enjoyable "This City," which included a neon backdrop hometown shout out to Los Angeles. Fans of Scott's recent gospel album were surely pleased when she had this outdoor theater audience hushed while she sang "Thy Will Be Done" from that release.

Orange County native Young opened with an extremely short half-hour set dressed in a Lakers jersey. Nevertheless, Young - who sings with the kind of soulful voice that would fit R&B just as much as country - still had reason to be in a good mood. His "In Case You Didn't Know" was the number one song the week of this show.

Ballerini followed Young with a set that revealed more confidence than her recent opening slot for Alan Jackson in Anaheim. She sang her literary "Peter Pan" and even had a pre-teen girl sing a bit of "Dibs" with her. Ballerini also included a few new songs from her upcoming second album, which included a humorous song lyric about how much she hates love songs.

Sure, you could have over analyzed Lady Antebellum's music and pointed out how few overt country music instrumental elements are included in it. But that would be a waste because these sincere performers easily led this sold-out house into having a good time. They were having the time of their lives, which was simply irresistible.