

# MACOMB DAILY

## Review: Lady Antebellum tops top-rate package at DTE



**Lady Antebellum is joined by opening acts Hunter Hayes and Sam Hunt for Aerosmith's "Walk This Way" on Friday night, June 19, at the DTE Energy Music Theatre (Photo by Gary Graff)**

INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP -- You can always tell who the true Big Dogs are in country music by the opening acts they take on tour.

The true superstars -- like Lady Antebellum on Friday night, June 19, at the DTE Energy Music Theatre -- aren't afraid to put other acts on their bill who are a) hot and b) might give them a run for their money. The Nashville trio, after all, benefited from being taken out by Tim McGraw and others, and on this summer's Wheels Up 2015 tour Lady A is paying it forward with the likes of Hunter Hayes and Sam Hunt.

New hottie Hunt, in fact, had the lion's share of the sold-out crowd in their seats or lawn space at DTE despite an early (7 p.m.) start for his half-hour set, and each song was greeted with One Direction-level screaming. It was much the same for Hayes, who headlined The Palace during November, but dispersed over a 65-minute set whose energy flagged a bit in the middle, there wasn't the same sense of mania.

Nevertheless, that kind of tandem could well have derailed the headliner -- but not Lady A.

From the time the group hit the stage with "Long Stretch of Love," the latest single from 2014's "747" album, it showed a command and polish that, to paraphrase one of its hits, insured Lady A owned the night. Smooth and highly personable, with Charles Kelley regularly stepping into the general admission pit in front of the stage, the trio made its case with a sharp light and video show, plenty of hits and quite a few special moments.

Among the latter were Hayes joining Lady A for "Compass" (Kelley joined Hayes during his set for "This Is Where It All Begins," a brand new song they wrote together) and a foray up the aisle to a second stage in the middle of the pavilion, where it performed acoustic renditions of "One Great Mystery," a version of Ed Sheeran's "Thinking Out Loud" and "Dancin' Away With My Heart." Back on the main stage, "Downtown" segued into a Hilary Scott-sung cover of Shania Twain's "Any Man of Mine," which Hayes joined towards the end. Then Hunt came out for a full-cast romp through Aerosmith's "Walk This Way."

The show could well have ended right there, but Lady A showed it still had a little in the tank to hold the crowd's attention with an encore that included "747's" dramatic title cut and the chart-topping hits "Need You Now" and "We Owned the Night." It was a gentle cap to as potent a package as you'll find on the road in any genre, but there was no question which of the three was the Big Dog on Friday.

Before the show, meanwhile, Lady A and its tour sponsor, Detroit's Quicken Loans, played host to Rick and Rhonda Gustafson of Banks, Ore., one of the seven winners of a contest that's paying one year's mortgage for seven winners over the course of the tour. The couple used the trip as part of their 50th anniversary celebration.