

ZERO MAGAZINE

SPARTA, SOUND TEAM, AS TALL AS LIONS, LONELY KINGS

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Sparta's first show back in Northern California since their release of *Porcelain* brought a generous crowd of folks from around the Bay eager to see the new and improved band from El Paso. Most of the people I talked to before the show had no idea what the opening bands were like, much less their names, but as the show progressed there was at least one new name that would be on everyone's mind for the next coming weeks.

Lonely Kings opened the night with a somewhat weak impression of the "new" Papa Roach complete with a bit more screaming, and almost no energy at all. I'm not going to lie, I used most of this time to get good and buzzed at the bar and find a nice table in the balcony to watch the rest of the show. I sat down in time to see some random dude come out from the side of the stage, take the singer's guitar from around his neck, and continue playing the rest of the song while the singer kept screaming, and screaming, and screaming... then they said, "Thank You," and the crowd clapped nicely. I wasn't at all prepared for the next band.

As Tall As Lions are a rock band from New York with a shitload of talent. All five members sing while playing to a beautifully executed mesh of clean guitars, melodic keyboards and neat drum beats. They wowed the crowd, playing every song but two off of their newest album. I could see the faces of everyone around me and most everyone had their eyes trained on the band, completely immersed in the awesome music emitting from the stage. After they played, I headed to their merch table along with more than half the crowd to meet the band and see what cool stuff they had to offer.

SOUND Team was wierd. There was a lot of guys on stage, two with keyboards, and for some reason the only thing I could think of was that scene at the end of *Revenge of the Nerds* when their "band" plays. They were a little too dancey dancey for me so I went for more drinks and some fresh air.

I returned to a dark venue. Sparta was just taking the stage, a huge banner unraveled behind them revealing the knives from the cover of their most recent release, *Threes*. The cymbals crashed, and the rest is history. The majority of their set was from the newest album, including their single "Taking Back Control". Newley added guitarist Keeley Davis fit perfectly with the founding members, executing their older songs from *Porcelain* and *Wiretap Scars* with perfection. I was fortunate enough to see Sparta last time they played at the Avalon Ballroom in San Francisco about a year ago, and while I feel that performance was stronger, this one was certainly not the least bit bad. We left the night with smiles on our faces, and Jim Ward's unique voice resonating in our skulls.

-Jacob Fouts



AS TALL AS LIONS S/T Triple Crown Records

If you read the whole magazine (not just the reviews), you might have noticed that I saw these guys live with Sparta and was absolutely blown away. If you don't then let me tell you now...these guys are incredibly talented. Singer Daniel Nigro's has some of the greatest vocals I have heard in a long time. Mash that together with four other guys who can also sing, some righteous piano chords, and some choruses so rich with melody and charisma it'll make you dizzy, and you have As Tall As Lions' stellar self-titled album.

At best, I can compare them to Copeland or My Morning Jacket, but there really isn't much out there that compares to the immense talent, and stunning music they create. "Ghost of York", "Be Here Now", and "Song For Luna" were the standout tracks for me, but "Love, Love, Love (Love, Love)" seems to be on other reviewers favorite lists. If you have yet to check these guys out, do yourself a favor and give them a chance. You will not be disappointed.

-Jake Fouts