

Disco Biscuits keeps the crowd on its feet

By DAVID MALACHOWSKI
Special to the Times Union

This is not your daddy's disco.

In fact, it really isn't disco at all, at least not in a KC & The Sunshine Band, Bee Gees or Donna Summer style.

A mix of techno, jazz, soul, blues and rock that the band cleverly calls "trance-fusion," this is a thoroughly modern take.

Its main link to the past would be the marathon dancing that goes with it, as well as the trance-inducing repetition of parts, a barrage of pulsing lights and the frequent snare, high-hat, bass-drum beat the was favored back in the day. (Obviously, that was just the starting point).

Formed at the University of Pennsylvania in 1995, the Biscuits played the requisite frat parties and the like, but found their home in dark nightclubs. (They'll also bring it to the great outdoors July 15-17 at Camp Bisco in Mariaville.)

In Albany, an imposing metal barricade was in front of the stage, and the pit was open for dancing. At start time, 38 people were in the house. A half-hour later, folks flowed in (rather loudly, for the

Egg) and then the show began (is 8:30 the new 8?) as the rather unassuming, nondescript bunch — Allen Aucoin (drums), Marc Brownstein (bass, vocals), Jon Gutwillig (guitar, vocals) and Aron Magner (keyboards, vocals) — meandered out.

Brownstein was excited to be in The Egg: "When I was growing up in the Adirondacks, I used to drive by and say, 'I wanna rock out in the place someday.'"

He did.

Things kicked off with Frank Zappa's "Pygmy Twylyte," and got a juicy jam going, which eventually fell into the somewhat similar "Vassillios."

The dynamics were impressive as the group played tight and loose at the same time. As the jam intensified, it segued into Pink Floyd's "Run Like Hell" in a near-perfect moment.

For the whole first set, there was no break between tunes, which means the energetic drummer barely stopped moving once he started (talk about stamina).

There was no break in the motion of the enthralled crowd either, who danced not only in front, but in every single aisle and row. The

pulsating and gyrating were interrupted only by the occasional "Hey!" at appropriate spots, spiked by the lights, as the fans moved from bouncing to the beat to actually jumping in the air at the crescendos.

The synth-lick powered "Portal To an Empty Head" was an intense and hypnotic groove, and "Morph Düsseldorf" was more of the same. "Jigsaw Earth" held reggae elements.

Melding prog-rock and jam-band concepts, The Disco Biscuits are on quite a roll now, charting on Billboard, showing up on MTV and selling out shows, and could very well be the dance band of their generation.

► *David Malachowski is a freelance writer from Woodstock and a frequent contributor to the Times Union.*

Concert review

DISCO BISCUITS

- **When:** 8 p.m. Thursday
- **Where:** The Egg, Empire State Plaza, Albany
- **Length:** Two one-hour sets
- **The crowd:** Sold-out house of nonstop dances
- **Highlights:** "Portal to an Empty Head," "Jigsaw Earth" and "Run Like Hell"





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