

Snider rocks Louisville hall

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Two men and two guitars. That's all a shivering, near capacity crowd was witness to Friday night at Headliner's.

The shivering was elicited from a broken-down heating system, but, thankfully, that didn't last long, as Todd Snider and Cory Branan soon whipped the crowd into a well-heated frenzy.

On a stage decorated by a lonesome table, seemingly set for one, the two singer-songwriters produced a memorable night for all those in attendance.

The scantily adorned stage was certainly apropos to the musicians, as both employed just their strings and straining vocals to tell their stories.

Snider was the big draw for the evening, but Branan certainly proved to be a worthy opening act.

A no-nonsense crooner from Memphis, Tenn., he injects a healthy dose of humor into nearly all of his country and folk music.

A gifted lyricist, his skill definitely comes to the surface on songs like "Miss Ferguson," with his "tongue wrapped like a tetherball six times around my heart."

While his well-crafted words illustrate the majority of his songs, Branan's impressive guitar chops frame the lyrics perfectly.

Given that he was on his own, Branan's performance allowed for equal give and take between both, creating a unique onstage dichotomy.

While there were a good number of devoted Branan fans belting out every word right along with him, the karaoke was definitely in full swing when Todd Snider hit the stage.

The self-proclaimed hippie from Portland, Ore. took requests, told stories and tore the roof off the joint, all with just an acoustic and a harmonica.

And while the folk rocker certainly proved he can jive and joke with the best of 'em, songs like "City Blues" showcased a weary, roadsick traveler looking for a place to call home.

Moments like these begged for a display of swaying lighters (though it didn't happen), but that is not to say that the audience wasn't involved.

Shouting requests among hoots and hollers of approval, the massive and diverse audience was enthralled throughout the entire performance, becoming especially adamant during "Alright Guy" and "Tension."

Snider's storytelling provided ample laughs and ultimately gave him a well-earned place among this generation's greatest "everyman" songsters.

All in all, the two artists proved that there is still a place in this world for a Bob Dylan-esque musician; a musician who, above all else, is unafraid to paint a picture of the world as he or she sees it.

And even though everyone may not always like it, its importance and entertainment value cannot be understated.

Undoubtedly, there is a unique atmosphere created by these types of performers, and while it is indeed difficult to describe, once it is experienced, it is not soon to be forgotten.

For more information regarding Todd Snider, visit his Web site at www.toddsnider.net.