



“Thanks For Another Incredible Year!” from the second annual Rothbury Music Festival.

If you hadn't already heard, Rothbury Music Festival once again commenced over the 4th of July weekend at the Double JJ Ranch. The headliners included The Dead, Bob Dylan and his Band, and The String Cheese Incident (SCI). But the excitement did not stop there.

Walking from the camp sites visitors are engulfed in a certain type of energy created only by some of the nation's best bands and strategically placed decorations to keep everyone wide-eyed for their commutes from stage to stage.

Joined with members of longtime friends, SCI, Keller Williams started the festival out with a bang. Anyone lucky enough to have ever seen what is commonly referred to as The Keller Williams Incident knows that it has become a rare scene as the years pass. They also know the musical treat these musicians bring to the stage, fusing Keller's funky folk sound with the mind-bending jams SCI are famous for.

Lotus fans were definitely in for a treat too. Shortly after Keller Williams finished, Lotus took to stage. By now the sun had set completely and the decorations and light shows started to dominate the 80 acres The Double JJ Ranch devoted to the stage areas. Lotus played a set that will go down in history for any loyal fan, distracting the masses from the fact that you could see your breath early in July.

“I've seen [Lotus] a few times now but none of the shows hold a candle to this performance... they came to play,” said Mike Barz, a two-year vet of Rothbury.

For any newcomer, Lotus was the first show that really turned on the visual experience only available when the sun goes down.

“It was unbelievable... I was mesmerized,” said Annie Jeffry, festival newb.

Later that night the kids came out to play. First The Cool Kids gave all



Sherwood Forest. Photo Courtesy of Michael Weintrop

the hip hop fans their fix in a shorter 45 minute set. Just after The Cool Kids, The Cold War Kids came with a performance that would seriously impress and surprise anyone there – indie rock fan or not. Playing hits off both internationally acclaimed records “Robbers & Cowards” and “Loyalty to Loyalty,” The Cold War Kids knew what everyone wanted to hear and they gave it to them.

SCI, after warming up with Keller, finally played together for the first time in about 3 years. The Colorado based jam band was graced with two sets, back to back, and no competition. 3 stages were dark as The String Cheese illuminated The Odeum – Rothbury’s main stage – for about 4 hours with their light show and upbeat classics such as *Miss Brown’s Tea House* and *Rollover*. It just wouldn’t be right to credit only SCI for the display of light and energy. There was a constant bombardment of glow sticks that made one feel as though the sky was falling into a psychedelic array of neon lights which was coming down all around you. Near the front of the stage, just about one of every five people was holding some kind of blow up animal. Usually reserved for kiddie pools, these inflatable rafts were bounced around creating a zoo unlike any other, just over the fans’ heads.



Glow sticks & a giant ball at SCI. Photo courtesy of Annie Jeffry.

The animals weren’t the only thing bouncing around. A giant red ball, about 20’ in diameter, seemed to be floating in slow motion toward the back of the venue. There was a cluster of fans that would chase it, making sure to stay under it to keep it afloat. Like Children, they had reverted back to a simpler time when everything was as big and exciting.

As if that wasn’t enough excitement, the late night scene was about to get started. First STS9 amazed countless fans with their electronically fused jam

band style. Playing behind lights shining everywhere, and in front of three LED panels, it was clear that STS9 has perfected their musical and visual performance. Because STS9 had 2 sets scheduled many went to go see Chromeo, Girl Talk or The Glitch Mob – all who have also perfected their own unique dance party atmosphere.

“The Glitch Mob will be one of the best shows this weekend,” explained Steven Rubin, a devoted 10 year STS9 fan.

4th of July: tens of thousands of eager fans wake up hardly able to believe they are on the latter half of the festival but this gloomy thought was quickly forgotten once looking at the schedule – Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad played for those who were up at noon, followed by Railroad Earth, Zappa plays Zappa, The Black Crows and Les Claypool all kept the music coming before one of the most eagerly awaited shows Rothbury had to offer; The Dead in their only summer performance.

Though just about everyone there was pining for Jerry, the remaining members of The Dead showed everyone they still have what it takes to thrill the masses. As if their performance wasn’t enough, their encore was accompanied by a breath-taking fireworks display – the official one that is. Every time the

sun went down each of the camping grounds had their own fireworks army who seemed to try to outdo the adjacent legions.



Fireworks over The Dead's encore at The Odeum. Photo courtesy of Dave Vann

Following The Dead's pretty lights was... Pretty Lights. There was a mass exodus through Sherwood Forest to the Tripolee stage, nestled in the trees under a canopy of decorative tarps and fake smoke. Pretty Lights's Derek Vincent Smith and Cory Eberhard put on a show that truly put some meaning behind their name – but it wasn't just the visuals that had everyone talking. Pretty Lights produced some of the most electronically fused dance party beats that Rothbury had to offer. (If you missed them just check out their website and get their double CD "Filling up the City Skies" for free!)

If you were still on your feet at 2 am you would have been expecting STS9 to play a PA set. Maybe you took notice around 1:50 that there were instruments set up instead of turntables which could only mean one thing – another regular set. If they left anything unsaid the night before, this second set definitely made up for it. They played until around 4 am and closed with their new instant classic, *Shock Doctrine*, and an old favorite, *EHM*.

"I felt bad going to see Girl Talk and missing most of the only regular STS9 set, but when I saw them setting up I knew we were all in for something special," said Doug Clark, Rothbury veteran.

After 3 days and nights of more music than you could possibly listen to, the fourth day offered a great



Taking it easy in Sherwood Forest. Photo courtesy of Rae Jean Erickson

lineup of bands to relax to. They included the reggae sounds of Toots and the Maytals, the ever popular Yonder Mountain String Band, Ani DiFranco, Willie Nelson & Family, and of course Warren Haynes's Gov't Mule. The final headliner, Bob Dylan and His Band, finished up at 11 PM, but Rothbury wasn't over yet. Umphrey's McGee played a nightcap which was a relaxing way to end the 4 day frenzy of music, dancing, fireworks, and hula hoopers.

Aside from the music, Rothbury also offered a Think Tank where artists, fans and leading scientists discussed creating and maintaining a green economy. They weren't all talk though; Rothbury takes their waste management seriously. No matter where you were there was a trash station very close by. These stations included 3 bins: landfill, compost and recycling as well as a volunteer who stood by to make sure each piece of trash made into the proper bin. Last year they were over 94% accurate!

Rothbury is relatively new on the festival scene, looking up to some of its big brothers like 10K Lakes, Wakarusa, Langerado, All Good, and of course, Bonnaroo. Unfortunately for these big brothers, Rothbury casts a pretty big shadow.



Fireworks over the Odeum. Photo courtesy of Michael Weintrob