

Blue Rodeo brings it all to their Lethbridge show

Written by Michelle Greysen

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On the Lethbridge stop on their “The Things We Left Behind” tour, Blue Rodeo left nothing behind and delivered their all.

This Canadian icons have decades of history and dozens of albums. Now with the latest release, they brought their fans a career of hits and have fine tuned their greatest two assets - lyrical genius and their perfected garage band qualities.

For everyone in the house at the Enmax Centre in Lethbridge last night, Jan. 14, the entire band delivered an unforgettable evening of entertainment while bringing a seemingly down home feeling of a casual experience to the stage as if they were jamming in your parent's basement.



It is an accomplishment in itself for originals Jim Cuddy and Greg Keelor to successfully still light up the stage night after night on tour and make it unique and enjoyable to all in the house. But it is magical to watch them do it with their personal touch, camaraderie and sharing of musical minds while still looking like they are having a blast entertaining their fans.

These two musicians and friends are aging beautifully along with all their fans but to their credit they bring a youthful timeless energy with their performance which in turn brings them a venue full of fans new and old from every generation. Parents brought their children and grandparents brought their kids and grandkids. Multi generations of Canadians have grown up, fallen in and out of love, struggled, lived and laughed to Blue Rodeo music so this multi-identity for all ages and walks of life is what brought an enthusiastic energy to a family-full audience.

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The gum chewing talented Greg Keelor is eccentric-like in a wonderful way as he delivers his deep, meaningful lyrics with his musical guitar genius. For Jim Cuddy, his age and experience on the stage comes across as a looking like he has the best job in the world. Both bring an energy of doing exactly what they want to be doing and being exactly where they are supposed to be right there on the stage. That in-the-moment comfort level is what makes their talents and delivery never seem like a performance but rather an extension of who they are and what they do — brilliant entertainers who genuinely seemed thrilled that people want to show up night after night to enjoy their music.

Having seen them many many times over the years in a variety of venues and crowds I must say their performance last night was one of my all time favorites. The solid Blue Rodeo group added an amazingly talented, all female strings section and kick-ass keyboard genius which brought a new energy to the stage.[youtube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWdEMOzW3k0)zWdEMOzW3k0[/youtube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWdEMOzW3k0)

They played brilliant but seemingly safe renditions of their new tunes as if cautiously sharing their adventurous changing style. It was balanced with an all out delivery of the classics with new-found powerful energy, featuring the music over and above the well-known lyrics. Many of the classic crowd pleasers turned into jam parties all in themselves prompting floor dancers and sing-a-longs and musical interludes akin to the days of instrumental improvisation and over the top performances in a magical way.

But the best surprise bonus of the evening was the opening act, Cuff the Duke and their obvious camaraderie and influence from hanging out with the Blue Rodeo while on the road. Their brilliant fresh style was truly their own but they were definitely influenced by Blue Rodeo and rightly so as their album “Way Down Here” was co-produced by Greg Keelor. Joining Blue Rodeo on stage was Cuff the Duke’s frontman Wayne Petti who offered powerful vocals alongside Cuddy’s and had guitar skills to match.

The encore was the ultimate ending as both bands combined to deliver an unforgettable close to an audience who was on their feet and left feeling very happily ‘Lost Together’ with Blue Rodeo.

Learn more about Cuff The Duke at www.myspace.com/cufftheduke or www.cufftheduke.ca

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Check out what's up for Blue Rodeo at www.bluerodeo.com or www.myspace.com/bluerodeomusic

□ — *By Michelle Greysen, Special to L.A. Beat*