

Music Review: 2017 Chicago Open Air Festival With Anthrax, Megadeth, Rob Zombie, KISS

Submitted by [JeffDoles](#) [1] on July 15, 2017 - 1:55pm

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CHICAGO – Watching a heavy metal band perform during daylight can be a little like watching a horror film with the lights on. The overall performance can sometimes lose a bit of its edge and intensity. Fortunately that was not the case when the main acts took the stage for the “Chicago Open Air” concert at Toyota Park in Bridgeview, Ill. First up in that daylight, on the cool and breezy Friday afternoon of July 14th, 2017 – the first night of the three-day event – was the legendary thrash metal performers Anthrax, followed by the Megadeth, and then in the evening by Rob Zombie and the iconic rockers KISS.

Anthrax, led by Joey Belladonna’s passion and high velocity vocals, matched the fury from the zealous crowd. The band opened with “Caught in a Mosh,” and bookended their performance with “Indians.” In between, Scott Ian’s shredding guitar, and the band’s fevered pitch kept the crowd’s adrenaline pumping with heart stopping performances of “Got the Time,” “Antisocial,” “Parasite,” and more. They left the crowd begging for more with their brief-but-fan-favorite set list. I had hoped to hear more of their critically acclaimed, Grammy nominated album “Worship Music” and their latest masterpiece “For All Kings.” However, the happening was just beginning, and Anthrax needed to make room for the three giants that were about to take the stage.



The Demon Rocks: Gene Simmons of KISS at Chicago Open Air, July 14th, 2017

Photo credit: [Jeff Doles](#) for [HollywoodChicago.com](#)

After 30 years, thrash metal icons Megadeth with frontman Dave Mustain still put on an incredible performance. Guitarist Kiko Loureiro, bassist Dave Ellefson and drummer Dirk Verbeuren reinforced Mustain as he sneered through the vocals. The crowd cheered enthusiastically for the lighting quick, furious and technical sonic playing.

As the sun went down the devilish came out to play, starting with electronic horror rock king Rob Zombie. Everyday is Halloween for RZ, and his fans love dressing up and joining in on the fun. The Zombie-loving crowd that swayed and danced in unison to the music embraced the haunting, hypnotic rhythms. Everything about the performance was larger than life, and theatrically produced to entertain, scare and enthrall.

RZ's band donned vampire masks, makeup and ghoulish attire. Rob Zombie himself wore black leather with fringes as he pulsed and karate kicked across the stage. The performance began with "Dead City Radio and The New Gods of Supertown" followed by the crowd favorite "Superbeast." During the hour-long set, Rob fittingly declared that he personally was inspired to become a performer by two groups – KISS and The Ramones. The band then broke into a cover of the Ramone's "Blitzkrieg Bop," and large portions of the crowd in front of the stage responded by breaking out into several impromptu mosh pits. Rob Zombie is almost unparalleled in the field of combining imagery, music and theatrics, and is a must see live performance. However, there is one band that does all three perhaps the best... and they were set to take the stage and close out the night.

Led Zeppelin's "Long Live Rock and Roll" played on the speakers, and that was only cue that the KISS army needed to rush back from the beer and rest room lines to take their seats. The lights dimmed, the stage curtain dropped and the pyrotechnic driven nostalgic trip through rock 'n roll history began. You could see the silhouettes of the "Hottest Band in the World," as they took the stage against the fireballs that lit the night's sky. Gene Simmons, Paul Stanley and the current band open with "Deuce" from the 1974 "KISS" debut album. During the performance, the Starchild Paul paid his respect to Chicago and recalled playing at the Aragon Ballroom almost 40 years ago. He also thanked the fans for their support, saying... "The Rock n Roll Hall of Fame hates KISS but they listened to Chicago!"

Gene Simmons dressed in his full Demon attire and towered over the crowd, spitting his characteristic fire and blood in every direction as he played bass. The Spaceman (formerly Ace Frehley, now Tommy Thayer) shot rockets from his guitar, and the Catman (formerly Peter Criss, now Eric Singer) played on a hydraulic drum riser. The audience was captivated by the onslaught of rock anthems combined with the visual assault on their senses. Chicago... you wanted the best, and you got the best.

Anthrax Set List

1. Caught in a Mosh
2. Got the Time
3. Madhouse
4. Fight 'Em 'Till You Can't
5. Breath Lightning
6. Antisocial
7. Parasite
8. Indians

Megadeth Set List

1. Hanger 18
2. The Threat is Real
3. Sweating Bullets
4. She-Wolf
5. Mechanix
6. Tornado of Souls
7. Dystopia
8. Symphony of Destruction
9. Peace Sells
10. Holy Wars

Rob Zombie Set List

1. Dead City Radio and the New Gods of Supertown
2. Superbeast
3. In the Age of the Concentrated Vampire We All Get High
4. Living Dead Girl
5. Well, Everybody's — in a UFO
6. More than Human
7. Never Gonna Stop
8. The Hideous Exhibitions of a Dedicated Gore
9. House of 1000 Corpses
10. Guitar Solo
11. Thunderkiss
12. Schools Out
13. Dragula

KISS Set List

1. Deuce
2. Shout It Out Loud
3. Lick It Up
4. I Love It Loud
5. Love Gun
6. Firehouse
7. Shock Me
8. Guitar Solo
9. Flaming Youth

10. Bass Solo
11. God of Thunder
12. Say Yeah
13. War Machine
14. Psycho Circus
15. Black Diamond
16. Rock and Roll All Night
17. Cold Gin
18. Detroit Rock City

The "Chicago Open Air" concerts continue at Toyota Park in Bridgeview, Illinois, on Saturday and Sunday – July 15th and 16th, 2017. [Click here](#) [16] for more details and ticket information.

*Review and Photography by: **Jeff Doles**, 238 Studios*

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