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Up and coming New York City band, Marwood, visits The Blue Star in Lanc.

Music Commentary Marwood The Blue Star

The Blue Star at 602 W. King Street played host to Marwood, an up and coming New York City local band, this past Saturday. Opening for local group Capital Air, Marwood caught the attention of the audience with their sound that has been described as a blend of catchy melodies with a guitar-driven edge reminiscent of the Black Crowes. Despite their recent breakthrough success with the single "Souless" that has received high honors on New York City, Albany, Staten Island, and Delaware radio, the musicians have been developing their craft for years.

Singer Benji Rogers has been recording, writing and performing since the age of 16. His experience on the road began as a teenager while working as a "roadie" for Def Leppard, Phil Collins, and Genesis.

About ten years ago, he met lead guitarist Rob Overbey when Overbey answered his ad for a bass player. The two formed a band named Jones and eventually Overbey traveled across country to help Rogers record his solo album *Another Day Gone*.

The third core member, Brett Conti, was a friend of Overbey from the Nashville music scene who met up with him in a bar in New York City. It turned out the two lived only blocks apart. Soon the three began to collaborate for what would become Marwood.

In 2002, the band released a studio album called *Regular Fips* featuring the drunken romanticism of "Get Lucky" with such lyrics as "She says I'm tired of drinking/I can't hardly taste it/I'm bored of these candles/I can hardly see/It's not that you're boring/So take your clothes off/I'm not gonna sit here/just to watch you sleep."

Soon after the release of *Regular Fips*, the band published an EP of live and acoustic tracks called *Radio Personalities* including the live track for "Souless," the song responsible for pushing Marwood into the

limelight.

Now the band is out on the road promoting their past albums and honing songs for their forthcoming full length album. It is this touring effort that brought them to the Lancaster bar scene.

On the band's official website, www.marwoodband.com, lead guitarist Overbey said, "Marwood is simply who we are. This is what we love to do and we don't really have a choice; we're not good at anything else. We just want to be ourselves and we hope that some people will like this as much as we do."

This modest love for their art was displayed clearly in front of the crowd at The Blue Star.

After some kind conversations with the sound technicians who had some problems setting the monitors correctly, the band thanked everyone for waiting through the extra minutes of technical difficulties.

They then played a nine song set consisting of four unreleased songs that teased of the album to come. After nearly every song the band thanked the audience for coming out, especially the small group of dedicated fans who followed the band all the way down from NYC.

The combination of two or three part harmonies with catchy lyrics and powerful riffs caused tremors of conversation between onlookers who wanted to know more about the band.

A consistent reminder from Rogers between choruses and "thank yous," that their albums were on sale in the back had people seeking out the girls in charge of merchandise. While selling merchandise, the girls were dancing around the floor and beaming about the band during the entire show.

Finishing strong with a memorably powerful rendition of "Souless," Marwood thanked everyone one last time with sincerity and a smile that put finishing touches on driving the show home. Lyrics, "don't it leave you feeling/ a little bit souless a little bit hopeless" echoed in everyone's minds as they grabbed themselves another round of drinks and possibly a CD or two.

Marwood is a down-to-earth band that gives everything it's got to every show no matter how large or small the crowd. Anyone who hears their music will be humming it well after

listening to it but will never find themselves annoyed that the songs are stuck in their heads. The new album sounds very promising, but until then, *Regular Fips* and *Radio Personalities* will have to satisfy the itch between catching their live shows. Keep an ear out for Marwood.

--Sean O'Mara