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Jack Johnson strikes chord with mellow manner

By [Scott Iwasaki](#)

JACK JOHNSON, G. LOVE, ALO, USANA Amphitheatre, Aug. 13

WEST VALLEY CITY — A little show filled with laid-back tunes got the nearly sold out audience at the USANA Amphitheatre fired up Friday night.

Hawaiian, surfer singer/songwriter Jack Johnson gave some huge waves of love when he and his band took to the stage.

His low-key manner struck a chord with the audience as he struck the opening chords to "You and Your Heart" to start his set.

The night air was just right with little wind as he slipped into "Inaudible Melodies" and followed that up with "Taylor."

Johnson's reggae-influenced folk rock had the audience on the venue's grass and reserved sections swaying to the music all night long.

A large LED concave back drop flashed abstract images of Hawaii, the ocean, seagulls and oil paintings throughout the "Sitting, Waiting, Wishing," which included a verse of the Cars' "Just What I Needed," that Johnson slipped in smoothly.

Later in the evening, Johnson and the boys — keyboardist Zach Gill, bassist Merlo Podlewski and drummer Adam Topol — would play a full cover of the Steve Miller Band's "The Joker" for the adoring fans.

"Upside Down" and the mellow groove of "Go On" were not only sung by Johnson, but the audience as well.

Highlights included the title track to the new CD "To the Sea" and "Wasting Time," which featured Gill taking on the vocals for the last verse.

Another new song, "Red Wine, Mistakes, Mythology" set the stage or the vintage "Bubble Toes," and more audience sing-a-longs.

Johnson connected with the audience through his easy-going delivery and, even talked with the kids who were holding cardboard signs that read "Born and raised on Jack Johnson," or "Go Jack Johnson."

"Breakdown" and another new song "Turn Your Love," which featured Johnson's friend and guest vocalist Paula Fuga, was like a lullaby, and all in the audience felt the peace.

Opening the show was the funky Animal Liberation Orchestra, or ALO, who plucked out some sweet grooves that included "Plastic Bubble" and the title track of the band's new album "Man of the World."

G. Love's solo acoustic hip-hop blues was second in line and paved the way for Johnson's dynamic set.

Those who arrived early were treated to an acoustic set on the north side of the amphitheatre as Johnson, Podlewski and Gill came out for a half-hour jam that ended with "Mudfootball," which he played again during his main-stage set.

When all was said and done, the audience left the venue with a bunch of mellowness that would undoubtedly follow them home.

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