True/False Film Fest's Saturday Night Showcase filled the room in spirit

Energy filled the Kimball Ballroom floor to ceiling despite a less-than-stellar turnout

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Tennessee rapper BbyMutha performs in front of a crowd on Saturday, March 7 at the Saturday Night Kimball Ballroom Showcase in Columbia, Mo. BbyMutha was the last performer, ending the night with a lively energy and style.

To call True/False Film Fest's Saturday Night Kimball Ballroom Showcase at Stephens College on March 8 a packed house would be a lie. The venue, which has a maximum capacity of around 370, barely missed being even half full. Audience members, however, were some of the most passionate music fans Columbia has to offer and served as a reminder of why this festival is so important.

For nearly three and a half hours, hipsters danced with cowboys, students danced alongside gray-haired adults, and even members of local bands such as drona and Pink Houses showed up in full support of the city's music scene. The night's eclectic mix of hip-hop, lo-fi, footwork and indie rock created an air that made the crowd feel 10 times more powerful.

"Last year, I went to see as many music showcases as possible, and it was the time of my life," Charlie Warner, Pink Houses lead guitarist, said when asked why he chose to attend this year's Saturday Night Showcase. "I'm just trying to replicate that."

The night opened with artist Jane Wave taking the stage to deliver her signature hip-hop-inspired lo-fi. She masterfully blends soft reverb-heavy vocals with 808 hi-hats and a synthetic beat to quickly get the crowd swaying in time. Then, just as soon as she'd begun, Wave sang her last note, and a roar of applause emerged from the ballroom.

Audience members weren't anticipating, however, the next performance of the night from Chicago juke group CASH TOO. Rapper Liza Holmes, a.k.a "Someone Somewhere," stepped out in a custom "F— ICE" boiler suit, and from that moment, music took a backseat to political expression.

While the beats made by producer Joseph Robson were technically impressive, they were overshadowed by his encouragement of queer militancy. The crowd showed their support by echoing the same message Holmes sported on her outfit.

Following CASH TOO, indie rock artist Winston Hightower wasted no time redirecting the energy back into music. His classic sound was instantly recognizable as something familiar in Columbia's local music scene. Drummer Mario Slagle delivered an electric performance that felt like a climactic car chase for 45 straight minutes. As the audience moshed back and forth, the venue suddenly didn't feel so empty anymore.

It was Tennessee rapper bbymutha who delivered the night's final and most lively performance, though. Her braggadocio and confidence instantly hooked the audience and had them hanging on her every word. With an intricate triple-syllable rhyme scheme and a slab-like flow, it was impossible not to fall in love with her swagger.

Despite having never performed in Missouri before, she involved the crowd like they were old friends, and isn't that what the T/F is all about? Performances like these show crowds that they can be part of something greater than themselves, no matter how big or small, and that together, with enough love and passion, any space can be filled, regardless of how many people are inside.

You can keep up with The Maneater's 2026 True/False Film Fest coverage here.

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