

Loud and Proud: Clutch bring their unique brand of heavy, blues-infused rock to Missoula in support of their latest record, *Earth Rocker*



After energetic opening sets from **Scorpion Child**, **Lionize** and U.K. metal titans **Orange Goblin**, Clutch kicked things off with the swaggering crowd-pleaser “The Mob Goes Wild.” A view from the balcony provided an impressive panorama of the crowd: The mosh pit churned with seething intensity while

dancers filled the wings and plastic cups half-full with beer sailed from one end of the theater to the other.

The band kept up a steady onslaught of favorites, with drummer **Jean-Paul Gaster** often segueing between songs without stopping. The swampy jam of “Cypress Grove”

preceded the title track off their new album, *Earth Rocker*, and guitarist **Tim Sult** established himself as the king of the riff, conjuring slow-burn, psychedelic solos out of his Les Paul throughout the night.

Singer **Neil Fallon** delivered his signature baritone with the wild-eyed fervor of a fanatical

street preacher—one whose church has been built on whiskey rock and delta blues. No one-trick frontman, he picked up a guitar for “The Regulator,” and got the crowd howling with harmonica lines between the fiery verses of “D.C. Sound Attack!” “We’re not even close to done with you,” he bellowed at the crowd. The audience clapped along to the cover of Mississippi Fred McDowell’s “Gravel Road” and Sult pulled out his tastiest licks on the acoustic “Gone Cold.”

After closing their set with a full-throttle “One Eye Dollar,” Clutch encored with the classic “Pure Rock Fury” and reached back to their 1993 debut album for a ferocious rendition of “A Shogun Named Marcus.” From stoner-metal riffs to sweaty boogie-blues, Clutch once again proved that it’s all rock and roll in their book. *Jed Nussbaum*

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