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Due to illness, iForward, Russia!'
Tom Woodhead (left) and Rob
Canning slashed their set.

live review

Short and loud

iForward, Russia! fans settle for just 30 headbanging minutes By **BRYAN BORZYKOWSKI**

FORWARD, RUSSIA! with **SNOWDEN** and **BLACK HAT BRIGADE** at the Horseshoe, December 1. Tickets: \$15. Attendance: 300. Rating: **MNN**

THERE ARE A FEW BASIC RULES WHEN it comes to a live performance. The first, "Leave the audience wanting more," is definitely important, but so is "Don't leave too early — your fans paid to be here."

There's no question the punctationally aggressive iForward, Russia! put on a good show Friday night at the Horseshoe, but the shortness of their set ruined an otherwise energetic and proficient performance.

iForward, Russia! hit the stage at about midnight after sets by Atlanta's Snowden and Brampton's Black Hat Brigade. The audience was wired, especially the row of fist-pumping guys at the front of the stage, and the Leeds-based foursome didn't disappoint. They kicked off their set with Thirteen, the incendiary first song off their debut disc, Give Me A Wall. The guitars were loud, the drums pounding, and singer Tom Woodhead's blistering wall filled every corner of the 'Shoe.

Second song, Fifteen Part II, didn't let up. Woodhead's arms were flailing, his neck often getting caught in his microphone cord. He — or, more accurately, his hands were definitely the focus of the show. Each song brought uncontrolled hand gestures, left-hand-to-right-hand mic tosses and a manic energy that rubbed off on the crowd. Of course, it would have been strange if Woodhead hadn't gone nuts. The band's Bloc Party-meets-Billy Talent vibe needs a wild frontman for it to work.

But after running through about nine songs from Give Me A Wall, the group called it quits. Before iForward, Russia! launched into Nine, Woodhead warned the crowd it would be their last song. It seemed like a joke — they'd only been playing for maybe 30 minutes.

Sure enough, when the song was done, the group left and never came back. Turns out Woodhead was sick. As the diehards in the front row yelled with even fiercer fist-pumps for iForward, Russia! to return, drummer Katie Nicholls grabbed a mic and said with slight irritation, "I hope you appreciate that we've come out here tonight." She then proceeded to apologize for having to leave early.

At least the show's intensity was about as amped up as it could get. ☺

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