

Springfest 2011 - A New Beginning

Written by Administrator
Thursday, 31 March 2011 00:00



It was a Saturday morning in March 2011 and I was waking up in a tent in Florida. Outside the only sounds were from those few brave people who had weathered the all night drum circle nearby were drifting back to their tents. I had been here many times before, under the trees in the warm sun by the Suwannee River in Live Oak Florida.

I have been coming to this place for over ten years, twice a year to two of the best festivals in America. These events bookend the festival season for me. In the winter months, I am in the studio or playing in Ireland with the Pyros, on tour as tour manager with Altan or producing something, somewhere for someone. In the summer, between the regular projects I am working on, I go to a lot of concerts and festivals. As many of the artists will tell you, I am a fixture at some of the biggest festivals in America and in Europe. And at many of those festivals you will see many big names on the music scene, certainly bigger than those you will see on the lineup for Magfest or Springfest. But here among the magnolia trees, the name of the game is not about ego, stardom or namedropping. It is about a sense of place, of a musical family and of a weekend of being with friends.

Oh, I do a lot of work here and have been a huge supporter of these events for many years but it almost feels like a vacation. At the other festivals, I don't camp. I really can't be bothered with the discomfort, the lack of amenities and the sheer hassle of it all. At Magfest and Springfest I make an exception. It is a fully immersive experience for me and Lupa. There is very spotty cell phone service down there and an internet connection is like gold dust most of the weekend. I have long since stopped worrying about getting instant reports about Magfest up on the site and instead spend all year referencing this and Springfest as models of how all music festivals should be run.

But the Springfest of 2011 was different. There was a new kid in town, a new guy running the show. I had worked with the same team for ten years and it was like a family suddenly getting a new stepdad. Would everything change? What would happen to the lineup, the feeling of being among family? This new guy could ruin it all. But since we arrived at the festival on Thursday night, the changes we noticed were cosmetic, the crowds seemed bigger and unaware of any new blood and the most important part of all of this was that the integrity of the atmosphere and

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music remained intact and true to the value that Beth and Randy brought to it for so many years. So as I lay in the tent on this sunny Saturday I felt that things were safe in the new hands and that the magic would live on.

For music from the artists on this year's lineup listen to Across The Pond on Thursday at 6pm GMT -1pm Eastern and again on Sunday at 2pm GMT – 9am Eastern on <http://icrfm.ie> or listen to the podcast.

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