

Healing of the Nation

By [Ethan Stewart](#), March 1, 2007

Solution For Dreamers Benefit Concert, Presented By Heal The Ocean. At The Arlington Theatre, Saturday, February 24.

Reviewed by Ethan Stewart



Jack Johnson (left) and Michael Franti

The Arlington Theatre felt like the backyard barbeque to end all barbeques Saturday evening. Youthful and grinning, a capacity crowd of ocean-friendly individuals turned out for the day- and night-long Heal the Ocean benefit concert, swimming in a sea of like-minded people and digging on nearly six hours of ass-shaking good music. Familiar faces, long-lost lovers, and brave new strangers stuffed the aisles and filled the bar, surfing a hopeful wave of commonality as massive jellyfish and glowing tiki masks danced through the air.

And then there were the bands. From Culver City Dub Collective and Matthew McAvene on through Animal Liberation Orchestra and Spearhead, the lineup was a non-stop flight toward feel-good groove deliverance with sparkling hints of its final destination hidden along the way.

Any notion that the set-list driven format that all too often plagues benefit shows would befall the event was destroyed almost immediately. The artists knew each other well and took full advantage of their friendships, frequently crashing one another's performances with their instruments in hand. Zach Gill from ALO sat in with McAvene, Culver City Dub Collective was joined by Money Mark of Beastie Boys fame, the not-so-retired Jack Johnson showed up and played with everybody, and a kid from the crowd answered a call from Michael Franti and subsequently brought the house down with an impressive version of Sublime's "What I Got." And then — knowing full well the beauty that is artistic collaboration — Tyler Tomblin took things to whole a new level when he gracefully defied gravity, "worming" his way across the landscape of an ALO and Jack Johnson collaboration.

It was community at its finest with nary a naysayer or testosterone-charged security drone. Well past the scheduled 11:30 p.m. curfew, the Kesien smoke was still on the rise as Spearhead delivered a downright rock 'n' roll centric set to close out the night.

And faith was restored as State Street was once again — at least for one night — a place for people to make a stand against the forces of homogeny, and blissfully smile and dance in the name of a greater good.