



## **Dave Matthews Tribute Band Caught Live at Freebird Live**

By Rick Grant

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The Freebird Live beckoned as I set out in the quiet, warm after Thanksgiving night. My mission was to cover the Dave Matthews Tribute Band—a group that has been receiving a lot of positive press lately for its improvisational excellence, a part from its Dave Matthews-styled tribute focus.

The Dave Matthews Tribute Band turned out to exceed its billing as a quality improvisational band that uses Dave Matthews material as themes to improvise. Clearly, this distinguishes them from the other so called tribute bands. The DMTB has built up a huge fan base of its own and are touring the showcase club circuit to sold out performances. Not bad for a band that plays cover material.

In fact, this band is impressive enough to start playing their own originals and drop the "tribute" crutch. However, the group has found a niche in the overcrowded circuits, and the old adage "go where the doors open for you" applies.

The core band is comprised of Ryan Clifford on acoustic guitar and lead vocals, Bill Furlong on bass, and Maurice Jones on drums, with Nate DeMaria an electric violinist and Kyle Henderson on saxophone, who were outstanding at the Freebird show.

The key to DMTB's success is their long jams on Matthews' material. The band is exceptionally tight and produces a solid groove over which the players improvise with hot chops. The Kyle Henderson on sax and Nate DeMaria on electric violinist were amazing, recreating the laidback Dave Matthews concert atmosphere, but with its own trademark sound.