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“I’m going to my grave grateful for this night,” Breaking Benjamin frontman Benjamin Burnley told the KeyBank Pavilion crowd near the end of their Friday night show.

It was an expression of gratitude that captured the night’s mood. The hard rock band, formed in the late 1990s in Wilkes-Barre, seemed touched by the reception they were getting in this return to their home state — the latest stop in a nationwide tour alongside longtime peers Chevelle and Three Days Grace.

“If it were not for Pennsylvania, Breaking Benjamin would not exist,” Burnley said.

Following openers Dorothy and Diamante, Three Days Grace was the first of the main acts to take the stage. Though only third on the billing, the angsty Canadian group brought a headliner’s energy to its nine-song set. The band’s devoted fan base was out in droves, greeting the rockers with three-fingered salutes and chanting mid-2000s hits like “Never Too Late.” An uninspired cover of The White Stripes’ Seven Nation Army was met with less enthusiasm.

At times, the group tried to coax a bit more energy out of those in attendance than the crowd seemed willing to give.

“This is your last chance to start a mosh pit,” Matt Walst pleaded before the group’s final song. The folks in the front row didn’t oblige.

Second-billed Chevelle took an entirely different approach, dispensing with Three Days’ flashiness and constant exhortations to the crowd. The three-piece band, looking humble on the wide stage, let its music do the talking instead, building its sound around Pete Loeffler’s plaintive vocals and grumbling guitar.

Though it seemed few in the KeyBank crowd had come for them, Chevelle won a good chunk of them over by the end of the set. The group put a fresh spin on old hits like 2002's "The Red," leaving Loeffler alone onstage to quietly sing the first two verses before kicking in the drums and bass.

A curtain went up to hide the stage while Breaking Benjamin's crew constructed its set, ahead of the 9:15 p.m. start. What was revealed when the curtain dropped wasn't really worth the mystery: a Sauron-style pupil as a backdrop plus flame-shooting cannons and sets of stairs that the band climbed and descended over the course of the set.

Burnley, liberated from the constraints of guitar playing, patrolled the stage with authority, periodically dropping down to the audience's level to invite a fan onstage. An easy way of getting the crowd on your side, maybe, but the gestures seemed sincere. As the band pulled evenly from albums new and old, the crowd seemed familiar with nearly everything — especially a well-done medley of covers midway through the set that began with Star Wars' Imperial March (dedicated to the nerds in attendance, Burnley said), touched on Nirvana and Metallica and concluded with a respectable drum solo by Shaun Foist.

A highlight was "So Cold," a melancholy tune in which the band wisely darkened the flashy stage set, letting the crowd focus its attention on the song's distinctive riff and ambiguous lyrics. After five acts and several hours of bright lights and screeching vocals, it was a welcome pause.