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**Grace Potter and the Nocturnals, Joe's Pub, NYC- 8/15**  
 Rob Ronanea  
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There's something special about a band that is just about to break through and explode. You know something extraordinary is about to happen when the musicians begin to utilize a room's tension and nervous energy. You can feel a band's anxiety and almost worry for them, hoping they'll play to the best of their abilities. A few mistakes in front of the wrong people can really hinder the band from "making it," but it helps when you have a beautiful woman with an unbelievable voice in the lead.

Grace Potter and the Nocturnals were slated to take the intimate stage Monday night at 9:30 at Joe's Pub in NYC, promoting their sophomore release "Nothing But the Water." At 9:15, the doors still weren't open and the line extended down Lafayette. After crowding into the venue, we opted for a spot at the edge of the bar providing a perfect view of the Hammond B-3 organ on stage right. By 9:45, still no Grace. 10 o'clock rolled by and Grace appeared at back of the audience. Clapping to her own beat, Grace walked through the crowd singing some beautiful a capella blues. She met her band mates on stage and treated the crowd to 45 minutes of sultry blues rock.

Grace's songs are well-crafted and her organ playing adds a perfectly textured addition to the band's grooves. Her lyrics seem a little out of place--her songs of broken hearts and lost loves just feel too old and mature for someone who is only 22, but her voice makes you forget all that. The crowd was treated to a few songs on acoustic guitar (including a cover of the Rolling Stones' "No Expectations"), though luckily she had Scott Tournet behind her to pick up the slack, as he switched between slide and regular lead guitar with a delicate ease.

She filled the time between songs by noting that someone booby trapped the show--several of the mikes and monitors weren't working--and making fun any industry people in the audience (she's pretty outspoken about not wanting a record deal). She also related the story of the band's bus breaking down in Colorado only four days after purchasing it, which led to her premiering the song "Stop the Bus."

The band closed the set with the title track from their new album "Nothing But the Water," and as the studio version does, the live version featured Grace singing a capella followed by the band joining in for a disco-blues version.

And as things in life tend to come full-circle, Grace closed the show by walking through the audience clapping to the beat.

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