

## Rock Allegiance Tour 2013



US Bank Arena, in lovely downtown Cincinnati, tucked right in between the Ohio River and the Great American Ballpark, has been known for hosting fantastic lineups in the past. The acoustics are great, and a good view can be had from all areas, especially from the typically open floor.

The mood in and around the arena is purely electric. It is almost like that "calm before the storm" feeling... with this time the "storm" ironically represented by an onslaught of screeching guitars and stellar vocals. Much better than a hurricane, right?

What is absolutely unique about this tour is that all four bands hail from different countries. So, this is pretty much an international rock festival.

The Australian group Airbourne opens the festivities with wailing instrumentals and vocals slightly reminiscent of an early 90s hair band... in a positive way. Their songs all feel like anthems, and there is much fist pumping to back up this statement. They absolutely explode into "Too Much, Too Young, Too Fast", leaving the crowd warmed up and ready, which is exactly what an opening act should do.

All That Remains is the only band from the good old U.S. on this bill, and

they immediately remind the crowd that they know just what they want. Switching seamlessly from technically entrancing vocals to piercing screams, they throw out favorites like "The Last Time", "Stand Up", and "Two Weeks" with ease.

The pride of Helsinki, HIM is next to take the stage. If you are not quite familiar with this group, there are a few things that you should know. The word "fan" is not quite the correct word to describe a connoisseur of their music, but rather the term "cult follower". Ville Valo, the band's charismatic frontman, designed the logo called a heartagram, which resembles a mix between a heart and a pentacle, and this symbol can be seen on jewelery, tshirts, and especially skin. It is easy to see how the addiction can take hold. Valo is literally mesmerizing, belting out lyrics that are more like poetry, with an almost ridiculous range. With intense and talented musicians, the band moves through selections that range from melodic to metal, including "All Lips Go Blue", "Wicked Game", "Kiss of Dawn", "Buried Alive By Love", and "Rip Out the Wings of a Butterfly".

And then it begins. I am making reference to the initial low rumblings of "Volbeat! Volbeat!", which quickly erupts into all out chanting. With a nearly record breaking set change, the Danish rockers roar onto the stage with "Hallelujah Goat", which brings everyone with ears to their feet, many singing along. It is easy to see that Volbeat is a well-oiled machine. Their cohesiveness is apparent as they roll into each song, often pausing to smile... exchange a few words, before they send out favorites like "Sad Man's Tongue", "The Hangman's Body Count", and "Still Counting". Michael Poulsen grips the microphone as he delivers clear, resounding vocals, often pausing to look out into the sea of people still screaming "Volbeat".

The Rock Allegiance Tour still has a full list of dates, so check them out [online](#) and purchase your tickets. This lineup is incredible. I have no idea how they'll top it next year, but something tells me that they'll find a way.