

Rolling Stones rock Los Angeles

Guns n' Roses, Living Colour added bonus

By Chuck Squatriglia
Of The Battalion Staff



Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhart

The Rolling Stones perform at the Los Angeles Coliseum Saturday.

LOS ANGELES — Time is definitely on their side . . . After 26 years, the Rolling Stones proved they still are among the best bands in rock history. They kept 110,000 people on their feet for more than two hours, and they did it for four nights.

Saturday's show at the Los Angeles Coliseum was the third in a four-night stand featuring the Rolling Stones, Guns n' Roses and Living Colour. By Sunday evening, almost half a million people had seen the extravaganza.

At about 9 p.m., the thundering Moroccan beat of "Continental Drift" blasted through the massive P.A. system, and explosions rocked the stage. When guitarist Keith Richards strummed the opening chords to "Start Me Up," the Rolling Stones started a 24-song set which spanned their entire career.

From the very start, Mick Jagger was determined to prove that, despite their age, the Stones can still provide one of the best shows around. His voice was in top form, and his dancing was fantastic; his energy and personality quickly silenced any jokes about Geritol sponsoring the tour.

The band started the trip down memory lane with excellent performances of "Tumbling Dice" and "Miss You," during which the audience sang along enthusiastically.

Jagger then slowed the trip down with "Ruby Tuesday," which drew cheers from the older fans and looks of bewilderment from the under-16 set.

Never ones to remain sedate for too long, the band promptly picked up the pace with two new tunes, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," which featured a meaningless video accompaniment, and their latest hit, "Mixed Emotions."

The remainder of the concert was purely classic Stones. Starting with a rousing rendition of "Honky Tonk Women," (featuring two 80-foot tall inflated bar floozies) the band tore through "Midnight Rambler," and several other Stones classics.

Drummer Charlie Watts then played the opening drum beats of "Paint It Black" and got the adrenaline going again with the psychedelic hit "2,000 Light Years from Home" from the 1967 release, *Their Satanic Majesties Request*.

Jagger sang "Sympathy for the Devil," from a platform 100 feet above the stage. Lit from behind, he cast a gigantic shadow over the entire coliseum; it was a perfect visual accompaniment to a song about the effects of evil on society.

The Stones appeared for one encore, "Jumpin' Jack Flash," and ended the concert with an incredible fireworks display.

All in all, the Stones provided an excellent show. Jagger was as lively and energetic as ever, and Richards seemed content to let his guitar playing do the talking. Guitarist Ron Wood, bassist Bill Wyman and drummer Charlie Watts let Jagger take the spotlight and remained in the back, providing the foundation on which the show was built.

No expense was spared in the production of the concert. The stage is a massive structure, 296 feet wide and 100 feet tall, built to resemble a dilapidated factory. It includes pipes, steel girders, cables, chains, scaffolding and a light show so incredible it can't be described; the entire stage must be seen to be believed.

While it may have been the Rolling Stones' tour, it was Guns n' Roses' town, and L.A.'s favorite sons

received as great a response as the Stones.

The Guns n' Roses show was incredible. All five members (vocalist W. Axl Rose, guitarists Izzy Stradlin and Slash, bassist Duff "Rose" McKagan and drummer Steven Adler) were in top form. They were clean and sober, and it showed. Rose's voice sounded the best it has since the release of *Appetite For Destruction*, and the other members' playing was equally strong. The entire band was animated, running around the massive stage and interacting with the crowd.

Their hour-long set highlighted their biggest hits from *Appetite*. Opening with a powerful rendition of "It's So Easy," the Gunners tore through blazing performances of "Mr. Brownstone," "Out to Get Me," "Move to the City" (from 1986's *Live Like a Suicide LP*), an electric version of "Patience," their anthem "Welcome to the Jungle," and "Sweet Child of Mine," among others.

Guns n' Roses chose to play faithful renditions of the original songs, adding few, if any, embellishments. There were three exceptions to this. The first was an extended jam dur-

ing "Rocket Queen," featuring McKagan on percussion and Rose on bass. The Latin-style beat proved an interesting diversion from the "raunch and roll" style.

The second example was a spirited sing-along between Rose and the audience during a cover of Bob Dylan's "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," and the third came during the encore, where the Gunners pulled out all the stops and delivered "Paradise City" with all the force of a runaway train.

Living Colour got a raw deal because of the sheer size of the venue. They hit the stage at five, when more than three-quarters of the audience were still caught in traffic. Additionally, the majority of people there had little enthusiasm for the band. Despite this, vocalist Corey Glover and the rest of the band got 110 percent.

As usual, the band's performance was impeccable. All four members (Glover, guitarist Vernon Reid, bassist Muzz Skillings and drummer William Calhoun) are virtuoso musicians. It is unfortunate the audience didn't support them, because they missed one of the best new bands the country.

Pixies' Houston performance disappointing

By John Righter

Of The Battalion Staff

HOUSTON — Expectations for a concert can run so high sometimes that it is almost impossible not to feel let down when the show actually takes place. Saturday night's performance by the Pixies was one such occasion.

The show, which took place at Houston's Numbers, was not a bad one, but it definitely failed to capture the sensual allure and manic vitality of the group's three recorded efforts.

The Pixies, who hail from Boston, have been skyrocketing up the college and British music charts during the past year. Their latest release, *Doolittle* recently joined the '87 *EPCome On Pilgrim* and last year's full-length *Surfer Rosa* as a number-one indie album in the United Kingdom and a top-ten independent release in America.

Add to this bullish rush a brief stadium tour with Love and Rockets and the Cure, and a hot single in "Here Comes Your Man," and you can see just how close the Pixies are to really breaking through.

In fact, in the more alternative waves of Europe, the Pixies are already major headliners, and even on the east coast of the United States the Pixies are only a step away from R.E.M.-type status. This made Saturday night's performance especially significant for the 4AD (Britain's prestigious record label) artists, since it marked their first appearance in Texas.

Lead singer, guitarist, and all around dough

boy Black Francis, bassist and singer Kim Deal (no longer Mrs. John Murphy, as she was listed on the band's first two albums), drummer David Lovering, and lead guitarist Joey Santiago hit the stage around 10:30, beginning their 25-song set that lasted until midnight.

The Pixies kicked their set off with an instrumental that broke into "Bone Machine," the first track from *Surfer Rosa*. Immediately I was wary of the low level of madness and spastic nonsense that had so endeared me to the Pixies on vinyl. I had naturally assumed that their spontaneity and high energy would be at least equal, if not greater, live. Most alternative groups drop their aesthetic pretensions, strap on the turbo chargers and turn everything up a notch when performing live.

Unfortunately, the Pixies seemed determined to subdue the evening, only peppering their set with the thrash-style rage I had so vividly imagined. Instead of a full, slammin' pit with flying elbows, fists, knives and sticks, there was just a bunch of annoying, pogoing idiots who looked really stupid (except for me, of course).

Black (Charles Thompson IV) Francis, was especially disappointing. The pudgie frontman was anemic on excitement and quite slim on intensity. Actually, the psychotic dough boy from hell (on vinyl) couldn't carry his weight live (not that I could carry that weight either).

The man who screams, hips, heps and whines on albums more than any singer since Iggy Pop, was as proper and well behaved as Stoner Bill Wyman. In fact, Francis only spoke once through

the entire set. (I strained so hard for these words of sweet, delectable wisdom, that I missed what he said. Sorry.)

It was Deal, the former Mrs. John Murphy who did the PR, which was OK, since Deal is quite a bit prettier than Francis. In fact, by the time their set was through, I was quite infatuated with Ms. Deal. (Then again it might have been the alcohol and the fact that I was squashed with a few hundred smelly high school punks.)

Basically, the show really lagged except for a few moments Francis let loose and got wild, as he did during "Vamos," a cerebral rocker that ended with Francis head-butting an amplifier, taunting it and then repeatedly kicking it. Now that's quality entertainment!

Other bright spots were "Debaser," "Gigantic" and "Where Is My Mind," complete with audience sing-along. Unfortunately, the band really blew it on "Wave of Mutilation," performing the arsenic crusher as if they had a bottle of valium crammed up their wazooz.

All in all, the Pixies weren't really all that bad but we all have our expectations. They seemed lifeless and dull. From a band that played their songs in alphabetical order, reversing the direction every night (first A-Z, then Z-A the next night), you just kind of have to expect more.

But please don't let this prevent you from buying the Pixies' albums. The Pixies on vinyl and the Pixies live are two different things. Next time, I'll listen to the Pixies at home . . . with a twelve pack and Kim Deal poster.

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