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CONCERT REVIEW: Aerosmith, fans come together again

High-energy hits, dazzling light show mark band's return

By JON WOODHOUSE, For The Maui News

POSTED: October 20, 2005

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HONOLULU

A thunderous roar greeted Aerosmith as the legendary band landed at the Blaisdell Arena on Sunday night, in its first public gig since Steven Tyler fell off a stage in South Dakota in August. Within minutes these veteran entertainers proved that Aerosmith is still one of the greatest rock bands of all time.

Having tested the waters at a private gig for Oracle in San Francisco on Oct. 14, the energized group blazed through a mega-hit-laden show drawn from their close to 40-year career.

Opening with the ferocious, hard-edged strains of "Eat the Rich" from "Get a Grip" with its demand to "wake up kids!," Aerosmith rocked the house, drawing ecstatic screams as band members pumped out one huge crowd pleaser after another from "Rag Doll" and "Love in an Elevator" to "Walk This Way."

Helmed by one of rock's tightest rhythm sections with guitarist Brad Whitford, bassist Tom Hamilton, and drummer Joey Kramer, Aerosmith's charismatic frontman often led a mass karaoke love fest with thousands singing along to every word.

A consummate showman, Tyler commanded the stage like a wild shaman strutting and grating, kicking and dramatically whirling, fused to his scarf-draped mike stand. Making full use of a catwalk extended into the crowd, he even dropped to the floor to receive a maile lei from a thrilled fan.

Some songs like "Same Old Song and Dance" gave the band time to stretch out with Hamilton unleashing a furious bass solo, and Joe Perry typically blazing on lead guitar, and riffing madly on slide guitar on "Draw the Line."

Giving the crowd a breather, they occasionally shifted gears, sprinkling a few memorable power ballads like "Cryin'" and Armageddon's "I Don't Want To Miss A Thing" in between the hard rockers.

As to covers, they transformed Rufus Thomas' soul classic "Walking the Dog" into an incendiary boogie. And after announcing, "It's been way too long since we played this place, so I thought we'd do a little blues Boston style," Perry launched into Fleetwood Mac's "Stop Messin' Around," with Tyler wailing on harmonica, while Perry and Whitford frenziedly jammed.

Drawing the show to a triumphant climax they powered through the old Yardbirds' rave-up "Train Kept A-Rollin'."

Aiding the evening's excitement, the concert was embellished with the most spectacular light show ever presented at the Blaisdell Arena. In a Maui News interview, bassist Tom Hamilton had noted that the band loves to present "a really nice visual show to go along with the songs we're playing. For us, that's the way it's supposed to be."

Among the evening's other notable delights - a superb, stretched-out, semi-psychedelic "Sweet Emotion," where Perry switched from guitar to playing a theremin (look it up); Perry playfully collapsing backwards into Kramer's drum kit, so that the drummer could then tap out the beat on guitar; and the lead guitarist dueling with his "Guitar Hero" counterpart. As they finally left the stage, Perry thanked the massed fans, calling out: "See you on Maui."

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Article Photos



Led by Steven Tyler's emotive vocals and lead guitarist Joe Perry's blazing musicianship, Aerosmith had Honolulu's Blaisdell Arena crowd on its feet for the entire show Sunday. The band will perform tonight at War Memorial Stadium.
JON WOODHOUSE photo