

Metallica show too much of a "show"

by **Tim Holsopple**
Asst. Entertainment Editor

Militant morons packed the Bryce Jordan Center at University Park on Sunday, Mar. 2, to witness a canned Metallica "show."

On tour in support of their new album *Load*, Metallica enlisted fellow aging band *Corrosion of Conformity* (C.O.C.) to warm up the crowd.

C.O.C. opened the lid, mostly playing songs from their most recent albums.

They were terrible. Rock star posing and mediocre crunch-riffs made me wish I could stick my head in my ass. The only song I recognized was "Albatross," a lame attempt at bridging the micro-chasm between grunge and heavy metal.

The bass player seemed to be the only member of C.O.C. who wanted to be there. He was juiced, bobbing his head up and down as he thumbed his thunderboom.

I couldn't help but laugh at the Tom Araya look-alike guitarist walking around the stage, raising his guitar, and sticking his tongue out while nodding his head. Hmmmmm.

I was disappointed that they did not play any of their older stuff, the music that put them on the map.

After only a half-hour, C.O.C. cut out. never to return.

Almost another half-hour went by before the night's main attraction took to the stage. In this time, Metallica's army of technical assistants ascended rope ladders to situate themselves in their swivel spotlight stations. Sixteen tech assistants were in the air by the time Metallica began their show with "So What," a cover of a song by the Anti-Nowhere League.

After that song, the lights were painted out and they ripped into "Creeping Death." From then on it was vintage Metallica tunes mixed with the new, and a brilliant light and pyrotechnic show illuminated the arena.

They snatched songs from every one of their albums, mixing up the set and managing to keep the crowd in it for two and a half hours.

In the middle of the show, lead guitarist and singer James Hetfield roped the crowd in with a chant of "hey, hey, hey" while pumping his fist in the air. The crowd followed suit as Hetfield went into the opening ladder-riff of "For Whom The Bell Tolls," a song that, performed live, is all that and a bucket of French Creek Tavern's wings.

Hetfield then told the crowd that they were in for some old stuff. Jason Newsted, bass, Kirk Hammett, guitars, and Lars Ulrich, drums, obliged by kicking off "Seek and Destroy," from their

first album *Kill 'em All*.

While they played, flames and firecrackers furnished the crowd with an eye-pleasing backdrop. Their two-stage set-up, connected by a platform, made it possible for each member of the band to play in front of every section of the arena. Even Lars had one drum kit on each stage, and he alternated.

The stage they began the show on had four colored-light cranes, located at the four corners of the stage. The cranes moved up and down by winch and pulley systems, while the different colored lights pulsed with the beat of the music.

About seven songs into the show they moved to the other stage, which had two gigantic towers on either side of it. The towers also had huge light fixtures, and they also pulsed.

The problem I found was that

THEY SNATCHED SONGS FROM EVERY ONE OF THEIR ALBUMS, MIXING UP THE SET AND MANAGING TO KEEP THE CROWD IN IT FOR TWO AND A HALF HOURS.

The Songs (not necessarily in this order)

- So What
(an Anti-Nowhere League cover)
- Creeping Death
- For Whom The Bell Tolls
- Enter Sandman
- Fade To Black
- Sad But True
- Seek & Destroy
- Nothing Else Matters
- Battery
- Until It Sleeps
- Hero of the Day
- Master of Puppets
- One
- Poor Twisted Me
- Wasting My Hate
- Ain't My Bitch
- King Nothing
- Last Caress
(a Misfits cover)
- Cure

Metallica was no longer about the music; they were about putting on a "show." Let's face it, their new album pales in comparison with their old music, and their message, if they have one, gets lost in the flames and firecrackers. At times, it seemed as if they were running out of gas.

I know that they are getting on in years, and they put on one heck of a show despite. But soon, they will face the question of whether or not they can continue their reign as kings of heavy metal.

After they played "Master of Puppets," the lights went down. The crowd went crazy, demanding an encore or two, or three. In fact, they came back out and played four encores.

During the show, accidents were feigned to give the idea to the crowd that the two-stage rig had structural flaws. First, one of the four cranes "malfunctioned" and began smoking and jerking up and down. Two technicians pretended to be cautious and then anxious to fix the "problem." Later, Lars noticed a "glitch" in his drum set, and had the drum tech come out and look at it.

Finally, after the third encore, the stages came crumbling down. The two light towers on the one stage fell swiftly, the lights fizzled and went out, one of the techs on the four-crane stage fell from the rig, and an unidentified man caught on fire and walked

around the stage. This was all planned of course, and it was pretty cool.

Then, four lights were unwound from the rig and lowered down to the stage. Metallica played their final song of the night, "Battery," under the four light bulbs, giving the stage a club feel. At that moment, it was like Metallica was replenished. They played with a fury that I did not see during the show, and it made me appreciate where they had come from.

There were other surprises during the show as well. Kirk Hammett occasionally broke into goofy cover songs, such as the "Mission Impossible Theme" and "My Sharona." The song that most people wanted to hear, "Sanitarium," was not played. They teased the crowd with the opening lines of it, but they went into another song. Some people felt robbed.

Well, the show was definitely a wicked experience. However, I can honestly say I do not want to go to another show like it again. It was too much of an impersonal thing, and I'm a personal guy.

NOTES: Special thanks to Bart Gaskey for his help with this article.

Also, remember to mark down April 25th on your calendars as the date for the Behrend Battle of the Bands. Come out and support the music.

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