

Rock Returns: MTV's "Return of the Rock" Tour has revitalized the pure art of rock music

by Douglas Smith
sports editor

A lineup of Stone Temple Pilots, Godsmack, and Disturbed will entice any pure rock fan. This is the idea behind MTV's Return of the Rock Tour that kicked off in Pittsburgh at the Mellon Arena this past Friday, October 20. The arena was cut in half, making the seating limited, but adding a more club-like feel. This kind of atmosphere was appealing. The evening just got better as time passed.

Disturbed came out first with a very odd tactic of a mock execution by electric chair in which a voice came over the loudspeaker announcing various crimes of the accused. A blaze of strobe lights and a puff of smoke followed and then pure darkness until the band exploded into the light, and lead singer David Drainman arose "from the dead" of the electric chair. Dis-

turbed played nine songs off their first album, *Down with the Sickness*. That is three-fourths of their first album in a little less than an hour. The show featured nicely timed lighting, but nothing in the way of special effects. The band sounded a lot like the album, which is usually preferred in hard rock. Very few complaints were heard, and the arena joined in on the hit single "Stupify," which was the last song in the set. Drainman did make sure the audience was still with him, having a few question and answer sessions that cannot be repeated in print.

Godsmack featured gargoyles on stage, and a rotating stand for the drummer, but once again it was basically just a stage on which to play music. Lead singer Sully Erna was quoted in *Rolling Stone* saying, "there's nothing fancy about it. There's no techno rock, no rap rock, just-rock." Indeed that was the feeling. Godsmack started off with the

new single "Awake" to promote their new album coming out on Halloween day. The single "Voodoo" may have gotten the loudest reaction out of the crowd as far as singing along. Erna would often allow the audience to take over on such songs as "Voodoo" and "Whatever." Godsmack also performed other new singles such as "Sick of Life." A magnificent drum solo highlighted the show.

Still, the headliner indeed stole the show as Stone Temple Pilots took over around 9 p.m. STP mellowed out the crowd in many cases, but it felt as if that was the reason people attended. Scott Weiland and company opened up with "Crackerman," which utilizes a bullhorn and seems to be the band's favorite icebreaker. STP went acoustic when performing "Sour Girl" and "Creep." The set list included many more old favorites than new singles off the recent album, *No. 4*, although, "Sex and Violence" makes it into many

shows. Weiland announced "No Way Out" as the new single. Still, songs like "Trippin' on a Hole in a Paper Heart," "Interstate Love Song," and "Vaseline" were show highlights.

Weiland captured the essence of glam rock with his silky shirt that would soon come off and the stylish black cowboy hat. He also sported a blonde mohawk, once the cowboy hat was tossed aside. Weiland captivated the audience with the many twists and turns he made in his unique style of dance. He covered the whole stage, as well as venturing into the crowd on a small fence held by security guards during the performance of "Plush," the first STP single ever.

MTV definitely has a money-maker on their hands with this year's edition of the Return of the Rock Tour. The tour corresponds with the release of the second volume CD of the same name. The CD features Disturbed, Papa Roach, and other pure rock bands.

Sic' Em FIDO

by Deanna Symoski



BRITNEY: Dethroning Pop's Princess (you knew it was coming)

I was patiently awaiting my chalupas in the drive through when the lunchtime radio show played "Material Girl" by Madonna. My brother, who has betrothed himself to Britney Spears, listened for a second, then defended his future wife by saying that when Madonna started, she couldn't sing either.

I immediately retorted by saying that while the songs Madonna first released don't necessarily showcase her talent, it was apparent on her albums, whereas Britney's albums only legitimize the criticism. My brother relented, unable to defend the complete lack of talent his future wife possesses, but said it doesn't matter anyway.

It doesn't matter anyway. Is that really the state of things on the music scene these days? I know I'm usually the first one to complain that no one appreciates the music of today, but I never said I didn't understand why.

I guess since the day Madonna started singing, she was more of an image than a voice. And certainly she was not the first to get by in her early days on an offbeat sense of fashion. It is often the image that enables the voice to break through. But while Madonna was the pop pinup girl of the eighties, she could sing too. She could back up that image with a voice, and the combination of her business savvy and talent made it possible for her career to thrive. While her image has certainly changed as she continues to reinvent herself, her voice has only grown stronger.

And then there is Britney. She is quite probably the purest example of where looks can get a person. She can dance, I'll give her that much. But sing? Not today. The problem is that she is still somehow considered a singer, when "entertainer" may be a more appropriate term. If Britney showed any signs of hope for her voice, I would argue that she just hasn't developed it enough yet, but there isn't even a dim light at the end of this dark tunnel.

To illustrate my point, I need only mention Britney's VMA performance, where she practically stripped. I don't even remember what she "sang," but I do remember her taking all her clothes off to reveal a nude body suit. She might as well chuck the singing all together, and devote herself to the profession she actually seems to be good at.

The same goes for her *Saturday Night Live* debacle, where she attempted to prove her voice in her second musical performance. Her live rendition of a little-known song called "Don't Let Me Be the Last to Know," made us all appreciate the miracle of the editing studio. The song was slow; she performed it from a stool, and it received little notice except for how bad it sounded. It was her first act, a high-voltage performance of "Oops, I Did It Again," that was the show-stopper. Her talent, if you can call it that, lies in her navel and the choreography to which she swivels it.

And no one seems to have a problem with this. As my brother said, it doesn't matter that she lip syncs, that she can't sing, that she can't make any more changes because she just has so much choreography in her head. So what does matter? That she looks good.

I'm not a feminist. I never have been, and I never will be. And truthfully, I didn't even realize I thought this until I typed that last paragraph. But now that I see where our priorities are, it makes me a little nervous about the legitimacy of women in society. I would like to think that my talent (if indeed I have any) will be what gets me a job, not my looks (if indeed I have any of those either). I don't plan on joining the entertainment field; I plan on writing about it so maybe the issue won't arise. But the fact that this opinion of Britney is so widespread must say something about the average person's view of women.

I'm sure if I asked Britney, she would think she did have some talent, and maybe memorizing all those words to all those songs could be considered a skill. She would probably be the last person to say she has floated by on looks, and even if she admitted it, she would probably be hesitant to give back all the perks the ride has gotten her. But standing for something as shallow as her looks sends a troubling message to young girls. I'm not the first person to argue this point, I guess I'm just surprised to find myself agreeing with it.

If Madonna was only as good as her posters made her look, she certainly would have fallen by the wayside before now. Instead, she has lasted three decades. Her contributions to music (not fashion) have been documented by her numerous multi-platinum albums, not her covers of *Rolling Stone*.

I am sure that this editorial won't stop Britney from seductively posing for magazine covers. And I am relatively certain it won't prompt her to take singing lessons either. I don't think that this editorial will change anything, actually, except that maybe you'll think of it when you or someone else says "it doesn't matter." It does.

Whistlin' Dixie:

How a city girl became a Dixie Chick in Pittsburgh, PA

by Liz Hayes
news editor

This is the story of a city girl who went to a Dixie Chicks show that changed her whole world...sort of. Well, I am happy to say that I went to my first country music concert and I made it through alive. I may have even enjoyed myself. I sure did have one helluva, cow-tipping, hay-stomping, Stetson-waving, chaps-slapping time. And if more country music sounded like what I heard last Sunday at Mellon Arena in Pittsburgh, I would listen to a lot more of it.

Although the opening band has to go if the Chicks really want to appeal to the mainstream, die-hard rock n' roll crowd, they did their best to show the sold-out Arena why honky-tonk ain't all bad. Even the more country numbers, like "Sin Wagon" and "Some Days You Gotta Dance," were performed in such a rousing, get-outta-your-seat-and-dance way that even an anti-country girl like myself had to applaud them.

The girls began their set with the first big hit off their *Fly* album, "Ready to Run." After a put-me-to sleep opening by Ricky Skaggs (where there was nary a drum nor an electric guitar on the stage), the Chicks promptly reminded everyone why they shelled out the minimum \$40 for a seat. Lead singer Natalie Maines belted her way through this hit, and all the rest, leaving no doubt in my mind why she's the front-chick of the group. Sporting a sassy, shiny, thigh-exposing, burgeoning belly-showing gold dress and matching boots, Maines flew through this song and the rest with expected pizzazz. The fiddler on the stage, Martie Seidel, managed to steal the show, in my humble opinion, with an instrument that most would scoff at until they saw her kick some serious butt with that violin. Emily Robison tied it all together and kept base with the audience while blowing everyone away with an instrument I never knew existed—a dobro, which, to my vastly uneducated eye, looks like a guitar you hold flat while sliding some metal thing over the strings.

There were many great moments in the show. At one point the Chicks presented a slide show, featuring photos from their past. Seidel pointed out that while some things have changed for them since the beginning—"we won a couple of awards, Natalie got knocked up"—they still remembered their roots. I also greatly enjoyed their rendition of Sheryl Crow's "Strong Enough," delivered from a red couch center stage. From this couch, they also sang one of my favorites, the more mellow "Let Him Fly." Then there was the song that may represent the signature Dixie Chicks attitude, "Sin Wagon." While the girls engaged in their mattress-dancing and 12 ounce nutrition, a shiny red silk cloth fell to backdrop the stage. Stage hands grabbed hold of the bottom of the silk and shook it, creating the illusion of flames rising up the back of the stage. Very cool, er, hot.

The finale consisted of two obviously planned songs. First, when the encore began, the Chicks were scattered throughout the Arena to deliver the soon-to-be classic "Goodbye Earl." Then they returned to the stage to finish with their break out number, "Wide Open Spaces." As *Rolling Stone* reviewer Richard Skanse put it, "The room damn near exploded, proving that even as the Dixie Chicks spread their wings, they still know how to kick ass." All in all, it may just have been the best show I have seen all season.

Bizkit keeps on rollin'

by Douglas Smith
sports editor

Limp Bizkit released their newest album, *Chocolate Starfish and the Hot Dog Flavored Water*, on October 17. Overall, it has an angry tone, but appeals to all senses with various songs.

The album starts with a rather angered anthem, "Hot Dog." Fred Durst, the self-proclaimed Chocolate Starfish, takes a stand against Nine Inch Nails lead man Trent Reznor in a song that counts the four-letter words. Fans that just buy Limp Bizkit because they are popular will enjoy this song, but it does not really express much growth. It is more of an immature anthem for the angry-hearted.

One of the best songs on the album has been released as a video and has been looking for a spot on TRL. "My Generation" honors the generation that ends with the college student of today. The 19 to 25 year old age range can use it as their rebuttal to all who aggravate them. Actually it is a bunch of rambling about simple ideas that summarize the generation, but, oddly, it strikes a chord with the aforementioned age group.

In the on-going saga of Durst and Christina Aguilera, "Livin' it Up," adds to the controversy. This is the seventh track on the album that proclaims, "Ms. Aguilera come and get some." It samples a classic by the Eagles and is dedicated to Ben Stiller. In actuality, the song deals with stressful situations that come from being caught in the fast lane of life. Fans may recognize the end of this song as the piece that Durst performed when he came on stage with Aguilera at the VMA's this year.

Possibly the most intriguing song on the album is "The One." It's the best attempt at a sappy love song that Limp Bizkit could make. Durst seems to be

questioning his stance in life and whether or not he can continue to live the rock and roll lifestyle. "I believe that you and me, that we could be so happy and free inside a world of misery," states Durst. In the first true shot at love songs, Bizkit seems to hit the nail on the head with a twisted thought process. D.J. Lethal is virtually absent from the song and the hard-hitting guitar riffs are kept to the end, but still it is something that was bound to happen.

Many songs are worth talking about on the new release. The best crossover song is "Getcha Groove On," featuring Xzibit. Durst raps one verse, but lets Xzibit take over for the most part. This song is bound for clubs and possibly TRL, if the edited version leaves any of the song intact. The beat is different, but the tone remains consistent with "N 2 Gether Now," that featured Method Man and appeared on *Significant Other*.

Guest stars include DMX, Redman, and Method Man on the urban assault mix of "Rollin'," produced by the number one Ruff Ryder, Swizz Beatz. Scott Weiland adds his production skills and his voice to "Hold On." This song mellowly the listener out before the over-aggressive urban assault mix mentioned above. Ben Stiller brings his nerdy laugh to the outro that does nothing but annoy, and Mark Wahlberg and Third Eye Blind front man Stephen Jenkins lend their voices for interludes.

Chocolate Starfish and the Hot Dog Flavored Water deserves to be the top-selling album for a few weeks. There is also a lot of potential for many songs to be released as singles with "Rollin'," "My Generation," and "Take a Look Around" having been released somewhere and somehow already. This album will not disappoint proven fans and will probably pick up a few simply because of how huge Limp Bizkit has become.

The third chilly reception for 98°

by Susan Taylor
staff writer

It sounded so promising. When the new 98° CD, *Revelation*, debuted, there was rejoicing in the streets. Media Play opened at 7 a.m. as flocks of screaming fans scooped up the latest contender in the race for boy band supremacy.

The brand new CD is almost an hour in length and contains fourteen songs.

Cuts like "Give Me Just One Night (Una Noche)" and "He'll Never Be... (What I Used To Be To You)," are danceable, upbeat songs with catchy lyrics about love and girls. Others, such as "My Everything" are deeper love ballads that would go right to a girl's heart.

In the month since its release, however, *Revelation* has been bumped back from the top five to barely making the top 25. It was pushed out by

such artists as Paul Simon, Radiohead, Madonna and Limp Bizkit. Fellow boy band The Backstreet Boys are already looming over the future of *Revelation* with their as-yet-to-be-released album at number 40.

In fact a quick comparison of *Revelation* and the Backstreet Boys' most recent album, *Millennium*, or N'Sync's latest contribution *No Strings Attached*, shows that 98° has once again failed to gain the same kind of popularity as their

counterparts. Lacking the unstoppable energy (or marketing) of BSB or N'Sync, 98° has cooled for the third time in the shadow of those other Boy Bands, whose presence on TRL has repeatedly prompted record-breaking crowds in the streets of Times Square. It appears the quartet needs to make some serious changes, or the back burner could be stuck at 98° for good.



New Releases



Movies

Charlie's Angels
Blair Witch 2:
Book of Shadows
Lucky Numbers
Little Vampires
10/27

Video*

Anna and the King
Anywhere But Here
Fight Club
Touch of Evil

Music*

Erykah Badu
Insane Clown Posse
Master P
U2

DVD*

Anna and the King
Return to Me
Touch of Evil
Where the Heart Is

*release date is 10/31

