

'Psycho' crowd gets Kissed at Bryce Jordan Center

Review and photos by
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"Alright State College! You wanted the best, you got the best! The hottest band in the world, KISS!"

With that, the band that an anxious Nov. 18 Bryce Jordan Center crowd was waiting for stepped onto the stage. Kiss is on the road again, wearing their seven-inch heels in support of their first new studio album by the original members in nearly 20 years.

For Kiss fans, the excitement began building on April 16, 1996, when the original members — Ace Frehley, Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons and Peter Criss — held a press conference aboard the USS Intrepid to announce their plans for a two-year reunion tour. The first show of that tour was at Tiger Stadium in Detroit, Mich., where 40,000 tickets sold in just 47 minutes, a new record.

Upon completion of the 200-show tour, Kiss took some time off then headed back to the studio to record their new album, *Psycho Circus*. Now their tour in support of their album is creating just as big a frenzy for the four kids from the streets of New York.

As the red carnival drape that surrounded the stage fell to the floor, the crowd took to their feet and fireworks ignited, the amplifiers started to hum and Kiss opened the show with the title track to their latest album.

They followed up the raucous start with 70s classics like: "Deuce," "Cold Gin," "Dr. Love," "Do You Love Me?" and the seldom performed "Makin' Love." It might say 1998 on the calendar, but that Wednesday night it was the 70s all over again.

For those lucky enough to see Kiss in full make-up the first time around (1977), it was hard to believe 20 years had gone by. Dressed in their Destroyer-era costumes, the band looked exactly as they had then — the cruelties of time seemingly passing them by.

The crowd's response was as loud and crazed as it has ever been. The only difference was they didn't have to squint through a fog of cigarette and pot smoke to see the stage.

The show had all you would expect to see at a Kiss concert. Gene's fire breathing at the end of "Firehouse," his blood spewing



(L to R) Gene Simmons, Ace Frehley, Paul Stanley and Peter Criss (not pictured) rocked an enthusiastic crowd Nov. 18 at the Bryce Jordan Center in State College.

intro to "God of Thunder" and his 40 foot flight to a small platform in the front-stage lighting rig brought the crowd to a deafening roar.

There were also some new tricks as well. The biggest was the world's first use of a new three-dimensional technology during a live show of this size. The effects were stunning,

with three screens throwing images at the fans from behind and beside the stage.

Criss's usual 30-foot ascension during his drum solo was replaced by a hovering platform that was lifted into the

air, then moved out over the first few rows.

And at the beginning of "Love Gun," Stanley clung to a mechanical zip line that lifted him above the crowd and ferried him 70 feet to a small stage in the middle of the rear floor section of seats. Again the crowd went "psycho."

After playing for nearly two hours, Kiss finished their regular set with the classic "Rock 'n' Roll All Night" and Stanley's traditional guitar-smashing finale. The climax was accompanied by a pyrotechnic display that sent a snowfall of multicolored confetti and streamers around the arena.

But they weren't done yet. The crowd urged



the encore and got what they were yelling for. Criss started the extra set, singing the 70s ballad "Beth" to a sea of Bic lighters. The timeless "Detroit Rock City" followed, and again the fans responded with raised fists and deafening cheers.

While other acts from the 70s have faded into the history books or gone on "barstool reunion tours," the band that critics called "a flash in the pan, with no substance to their music" is still playing as hard as ever. And they're packing large arenas in the process.

It's simple, really. Their commitment to their fans keeps everyone coming back. As their chorus goes: "The fans wanted us to play, we hear, and we obey . . . You wanted the best." On this night in State College, the fans got the best.



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