

Better Late than Never

Axl brings the Guns N' Roses experience to Ames

By Jake Feldman

For a moment at Hilton Coliseum, it was almost as if we were seeing the Guns N' Roses of old. If you squinted your eyes real hard during the encore of "Paradise City," the band that burst out of the LA club scene and onto an opening slot for the Motley Crüe "Girls" tour and released what some have called the bible of debut albums, was back.

Taking the stage at 1:30 a.m., Axl and his band tore through a sturdy set for nearly two and a half hours. The openers (There were four) consisted of two indie style bands, a burlesque strip show (The Suicide Girls), and crowd favorite Sebastian Bach—who was touring with his bud Axl for the first time since the early nineties. One has to wonder, though, why Sebastian was not put directly into the pre-guns slot (he was 3rd). The next-to-headline band Helmet's set was greeted with jeers, cups of beer and middle fingers. People, it seems, will wait for Axl forever. And then—nothing.

We waited for nearly two hours as the crowd became restless and more and more

drunk, and the event staff circled both the stage and the mix position. I was so convinced that a riot was going to ensue that I was looking for an escape route. Then, as if by a divine act of mercy, the house lights turned out and the opening strains of "Welcome to the Jungle" filled the cavernous



don't feel tardy!" This not only calmed the crowd, but loosened up even the angriest (drunkest) fans.

Late in the set, we were treated to three new cuts off of the decade-and-a-bit in the making album, *Chinese Democracy*. While China may indeed have democracy by the time this album is shipped, it was nice to hear that he's actually been working on something. I would call the new songs...different.

What struck me as one of the coolest concert moments I have witnessed happened when Axl, who was "on" this night, tossed his show-used mic into the crowd amidst a barrage of pyro and confetti, showing us all that he's still "got it." I asked the front-of-house engineer about it afterwards and he said that this happens at every show. Some lucky

fan got one hell of a souvenir on this night!

Overall, I would call the show loud, mean, and entertaining. While the wait was long, it was worth it to see a world-class showman do what he does best, although not with the original band. Axl not only made up for the absence, but his nine-piece band sounded like the real thing. In these situations where only part of an original band is on hand for the "comeback" tour, it's rare to be able to suspend disbelief, but on this night the vision rained down like the pyro and confetti storm that was the finale. **M**

space. Axl bounded onto the stage, a bit beefier than in the early days, but still more than capable of stopping the show with his screams, twists, and howls.

The rest of the show played like a textbook on one of American rock & roll's most legendary bands. After the second song, a blistering "Mr. Brownstone," we were treated to the best line of the night: "In the words of David Lee Roth—I

