

C.C. Deville



# Poison Kills in the Heartland

By Jake Feldman

**In an age where most music is manufactured like junk food and has a shelf-life all of ten minutes long,**

only a few artists of the moment will be around in five years, let alone 25—and still have any drawing power. Poison—a band synonymous with hair metal—has managed to survive addiction, trends, and reality TV to remain one of the top touring party bands still around. The band, led by the consummate performer Bret Michaels, made its way through the heartland and transformed “America’s Place to Race” into “America’s Place to Rock.”

From the first strains of “Look What the Cat Dragged In,” it was clear that guitarist C.C. Deville, bassist Bobby Dall, and drummer Rikki Rockett still possess the same chops that put them on top of the LA scene in the mid ‘80s and thrust them into the national spotlight a short time later. The main set consisted of singalong hits like “Fallen Angel,” “Somethin’ to Believe in,” and “Ride the Wind.” Interspersed were tracks from their new studio album *Poison’d*, a collection of covers

Who: Poison  
 When: August 4  
 Where: Iowa Speedway, Newton, IA  
 Grade: A-

recorded throughout their quarter century career. Their set predictably closed with the Poison power trifecta: “Unskinny Bop,” “Talk Dirty to Me,” and “Nothin’ But a Good Time.” The massive cell phone “lighter” singalong of the evening was of course “Every Rose Has its Thorn,” an anthem so huge that its effects are still being felt on FM at least twice a day in every major market.

The real appeal of a Poison show, however, is the pure unadulterated fun that permeates everything from the pre-show tailgating to the guy passed out at the end of the show, three rows down. The whole time you are surrounded by hard-working, fun-loving reminders of a time when life was easier and a vacation consisted of a drive around town with

Bret Michaels



the windows down and *Open Up and Say... Ahh!* blasting from your speakers. Back in the day, there was music that made you think and there was music to make you drink, dance and...well, you know. The nerds were into new wave; Reaganomics was in and Bret Michaels was encouraging us all to talk dirty. Fast-forward to 2007, on a warm summer night in Iowa...Bret and Poison made it 1988 all over again. **M**