



*By Ken Volpe - GJD*

Picture this... Madison Square Garden. New York City. May 30, 2008. Don Henley, Glenn Frey, Joe Walsh, and Timothy B. Schmit. A New Record, a New Tour and better than ever. EAGLES.

The first surprise of the evening was when the Eagles walked out on stage in black suits, white shirts and black narrow ties. I must say, it was a perfect fit for them at this point in their careers.

They started with two new numbers, "How Long" and "Too Busy Being Fabulous." After that, Mr. Glenn Frey warmly introduced the band to the audience. Right away, it was apparent that the Eagles seemed genuinely happy to be back playing at MSG in the "greatest city in the world," and the audience, of course, responded loudly to that declaration. The 13-piece band, including the four main stars, rocked the Garden and churned out their songs in supreme fashion.

As the first set progressed, they played more cuts from their new record, "Long Road Out of Eden," and a slew of classics from the past. My crew all thought that the new songs came across even better live than on the band's CD. When the band played "Waiting in the Weeds," describing the performance as "incredible" wouldn't have done it justice. The sound system in the Garden was dialed in perfectly. The music was crystal clear and the volume levels were perfect. I'm happy to report that my ears were not ringing the next morning. About the fifth song in, they did a blazing rendition of "Hotel California." It sent chills up and down my spine. If there was one negative about the first set, it was that the backdrop video production seemed a bit disconnected from the music and lacked creativity.

In the second set, they continued with such songs such as, "Long Road Out of Eden," "Take it to the Limit," "One of These Nights," and many more. The band was really heating up during this set and the intensity built as the night wore on. I might also add that the video production was far better in the second set. My wife, and my friends, Dave and Carol, all agreed that Joe Walsh stole the show for most of the second set. Joe is so relaxed on stage, and it was obvious that he was just having the time of his life.

I believe what sets the Eagles apart from any other popular band is the following: Stylistically they appeal to three separate audiences—rock, pop and country. On top of that, they have four lead vocalists who are all equally amazing in their own unique way. To top it all off, their

multiple vocal harmonies always seem effortless regardless of who the lead singer is. I can't emphasize that point enough. Their harmonies are incredibly tight and simply astounding.

Even though I've been a fan of the Eagles' music since the mid-70's, I had never seen them live. Prior to the show, I had my doubts about whether they could pull off the sounds of the studio recordings on a live stage. During the concert, those doubts were washed away. From a song standpoint, they absolutely play to the audience. Each individual performer nailed just about every distinctive hook from the studio recordings. As a guitarist, however, I would have personally liked to see a bit more improvisation on some of the guitar parts. On the other hand, the Eagles have always been known for their precision, perfectionism and highly polished sound, so the lack of free-form guitar solos hardly comes as a surprise.

Joe Walsh played more than a dozen different guitars including ones made by Fender, Ibanez, Gretsch, Carvin, PRS, and more. The entire band used their trusty Takamine guitars to cover most of the acoustic guitar duties. Stuart Smith played all the Don Felder parts with 100% precision, both in note choice and in tone.

The Eagles played about thirty songs, and truly gave it their all. In a totally professional manner, each band member humbly steps aside to allow another to take the spotlight. A few key things really stood out in my mind. Number one, Don Henley's voice is as good as it ever was. As a matter of fact, it's scary good. Number two, these guys have so many hits that there are plenty that they never get to, even in two long sets.

I highly suggest that you go hunt down some tickets and check this Eagles tour out. I guarantee you will leave that show with a huge grin.