

# The Cars needed a jump start in Greensboro

The crowd poured into Greensboro Coliseum July 13 all revved up to see The Cars kick off their 1984 tour. Unfortunately, The Cars stalled in their half-hearted show.

The British group Wang Chung opened the show and received a burst of enthusiasm from the crowd for their energetic style, especially when they launched into their hit single "Dance Hall Days." But it was clear they were just a warm-up

for the crowd of Cars fans.

When band leader Ric Ocasek's tall, spindly form appeared, followed by the rest of The Cars on the darkened bi-level stage filled with its geometric neon-colored decorations, the crowd was not only out of their seats but on top of them with enthusiasm.

The Boston-based band then launched into "Hello Again," one of the better cuts off their new album *Heartbeat City*, which is

## Review

Ivy Hilliard

currently No. 4 on the charts.

What followed was a disheartening experience for many of the audience who tried to elicit signs of life from the usually energetic group.

Ocasek may be able to walk on water in his videos, but he was strictly immobile Friday night. Besides an occasional twitch of his leg, Ocasek was not only still but expressionless in his delivery of even the liveliest numbers such as "Let's Go" and "You Might Think." The rest of the band seemed equally catatonic, and except for a brief hello, had nothing to say to the audience.

There were only a few kinks soundwise in the technical parts of the show, which is understandable at the very beginning of a major tour, but a total lack of energy and enthusiasm at the beginning of a tour does not bode well for a band's reputation with the fans.

Not only were the performances uncharismatic, but set-ups between numbers were very slow, and the band seemed to leave the stage for a while between each number.

The Cars are credited as being the first successful New Wave band in America, and their four platinum albums have generated a lot of hits. Surprisingly, several of their biggest hits — including "Shake It Up" — were not played at the concert, despite the urgings of the audience. Many songs were

the more obscure cuts from their albums, that only the biggest Cars fans could enjoy.

Still, several of the low-key numbers, like the melancholy "Drive" (also from the new album) were beautifully executed.

The closest the evening came to real excitement was when Ocasek and the boys rocked into their new hit "Magic." Bass player Ben Orr cranked out a great solo, but even the crowd's roar of approval didn't liven things up on stage.

After playing about one hour, The Cars exited abruptly. Non-stop applause and hundreds of flickering Bics managed to bring them out for a downbeat encore, featuring the title cut from *Heartbeat City* and yet another new song.

This time the exit was permanent, and a chorus of boos was the only response from the audience, many of whom began walking out during the encore.

The Cars still have a great sound, but their stage presence needs a jump start. Next time The Cars come to town a lot of disappointed fans may save their bucks for tapes instead of tickets.

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