

TWO DIVERGING VIEWS OF THE CRÜE

1 1/2: (Expletive deleted) ❖❖❖❖: Slammin', dudes

It wasn't about Vince Neil's feathered hair. And it wasn't about Tommy Lee's broken drumsticks or even his flying drum set. Not Nikki Sixx's infantile posing nor Mick Mars' play-it-fast-and-hope-nobody-notices-it's-bad guitar solos.

What it was was Heavy Metal. What it wasn't was music.

Now, don't take that the wrong way. There was a good heavy beat and there were guitar licks and bass lines, and for the most part the three played together. And there was a blond with big hair who yelled along. But Saturday night's Motley Crue concert wasn't about music so much as it was about skinny white high-school kids waving their arms in the air out of time to the beat.

A heavy metal concert is performance art writ large.

From the preachers and scalpers without to the groupies and posers within, every member of the cast had a role and a copy of the script.

And they played their parts to perfection: Vince Neil exhorting the crowd to shout obscenities in unison, the tautly-worded confrontations between metal worshippers and would-be evangelists ("Motley Crue has nothing to offer you." "Yeah, well Jesus loves Motley Crue") in the ticket line, opening band Warrant's obligatory Bic-lit ballad and the cliched displays of pyrotechnics and laser-beams.

It was just soooo high school!

And that's the whole point. Alisa says a heavy metal concert is no place for uptight schmucks (which is interesting, if you think about it literally, which you shouldn't).

Warrant opened up with a quick set that wasn't as flashy as Motley Crue's, but then they didn't have the Crue's fireworks. The Los Angeles-based quintet made up for their lack of hardware with more heart than Motley Crue had even before Nikki Sixx died the first time.

Warrant fanned the fires of fans' hot, youthful passions with their power ballad "Sometimes She Cries" and then rocked the house with their Empty-V hit, "Where the Down Boys Go (whoa-whoa)," both off *Dirty Rotten Filthy Stinking Rich*, the band's debut album.

Warrant does need to work on their footwear, though. (Special note to Warrant: Lose the Adidas shoe contract, boys. And if you can't get out of it, at least wear different color Adidas shirts. *Alisa's Note: What? Break the black uniforms? What do you want 'em to wear? Pastels? Yes, break the black uniform. Perhaps you should even consider pastels. And thanks guys, you kicked our ass, too. Special note to Jani Lane: Stop Touching Yourself! It's illegal in this state, and besides you'll go blind.*)

Motley Crue leapt on stage like the devil-worshipping Sons of Satan that they are, a mere 45 minutes after Warrant left the spot-

light. Bassist Nikki Sixx greeted the crowd with a patented SECRET DEVIL SIGN HAND SIGNAL, and the Dean Dome, 18,000 of Tommy Lee's "best friends," responded in kind. Raleigh and Fayetteville were well-represented, if you know what we mean.

FLIPPO & PARKS

3 Martini Concert

The Crue has been on the ropes as of late. They haven't put out quality vinyl since *Theater of Pain*. (*Alisa's note: Even Girls, Girls, Girls was better than Theater of Pain.*) and the boys are looking to cash in on *Dr. Feelgood*, their first number-one album. Neil plugged the album almost as

often as he said, "Chapel Hill! Chapel (expletive deleted) Hill!" (A bit of trivia for you movie buffs: Vince Neil was considered and rejected for the lead role in the classic early '80s rockumentary, *This is Spinal Tap*. Well, not really, but it would have made sense.)



Mick Mars nearly explodes from his boundless enthusiasm

Mick Mars, one of the few heavy metal guitarists who is too old to be on thirtysomething, should be put out to pasture. He wandered the stage for 120 minutes looking bored and, at times, lost. Mars' phrasing during solos left something to be desired, and while it's real cool that he can still play 32nd notes up and down the neck of his axe, it would be nice if he didn't have to stop and think between licks.

But the group's back-up singers, the Nasty (expletive deleted) Habits, Donna and Emi (We don't know, maybe it's a West Coast name) were decked out in the coolest biker babe leather and lace.

Laser fu, gratuitous "Chapel (expletive deleted) Hill" 's, gratuitous hyper-reflective electric guitar, pyrotechnics fu, gratuitous power chords, pentagram fu, headbanging fu, four-letter word fu, gratuitous exploding speakers, gratuitous MIDI, gratuitous nurse costumes.

Two-and-a-half martinis. You should have been there.

If anyone tells you anything different, they lie. The real reason anyone wants to be in a heavy metal band is so they can make as much noise as possible. So they can be loud and obnoxious.

It's about noise, and it's about spectacle.

The Warrant/Motley Crue concert Saturday night was a testimonial to the fact that the Crue dudes are the original masters of flash and trash. From the opening (class-c) fireworks to the closing (class-c) fireworks (has the fear of another lawsuit got the boys down?) and all the fireworks in between, the Crue strutted and posed their way through the flashiest, slammin'est, noisiest music to bulldoze through Chapel Hill in, well, an eternity.

Warrant, plugging their debut release *Dirty Rotten Filthy Stinking Rich*, played an obscenely

equal parts music and spectacle. (*Tom's Note: Music? There's more music in one 30-second breakfast cereal jingle than in any Motley Crue concert I've ever seen*)

(This from someone too ignorant to punctuate his sentences?)

Yes, there were the pyrotechnics and the lasers and the "hyper-reflective" guitar and even the scantily-clad Nasty Habits. But that was just the icing on the cake.

There was also the two hours of pure, unadulterated, head-slammin' rock'n'roll: the sleazy, driving beat of

Nikki Sixx's bass and Tommy Lee's drums, punctuated by Mick Mars' guitar and highlighted by Vince Neil's smoldering voice. And if the stage show was tamer than days of yore, the Crue pulled out all the stops on the music, playing songs from each of their albums, including a particularly driving rendition of "Dr. Feelgood," a manic "Too Young to Fall in Love" and the Bic-lighted "Home Sweet Home."

The one disappointment of the evening was the guitar solo by Mick Mars. In the dictionary, somewhere under *heavy metal concert* it says something about "an obligatory axe-fest, characterized by lean, mean, killer chops, during which the groupies, who are only there to drool over the lead sinner (oops, that's singer), can go get something to drink without fear of missing anything." The guitar solo is the epitome of heavy metal. It's the last ancient relic of days past when men were men, women were women, metal was metal and 11-year-olds running around in their mothers' high heels weren't the predominant metal audience. Supposedly.

Not even the hard-core Crue fans were still on their feet at the end of this one. The most exciting part of the guitar solo was the drunk guy one row over who was flailing around in some kind of dance (to his own inner guitar solo) that he obviously improvised on the spot.

It was not a highlight. 'Nuff said.

Tommy Lee's drum solo had the potential to be the same kind of long, drawn-out affair. A music sampler? Is that like a Whitman's Sampler? You can never find anything you quite like in those either. But somehow it turned into the highlight of the show. Carried by Lee's boyish exuberance and repeated exhortations to "Check this shit out!", the episode of the flying drumkit was, like the best of Motley Crue, something that had to be experienced. (Special note to Tommy Lee: Sorry, Tommy, but it still doesn't quite match the rotating drumcage and playing upside-down. You'll never be able to beat that.)

He was having (gasp) fun. He was having so much fun it oughta be illegal. (As a matter of fact, it probably was illegal.) So, of course the audience had fun too, because it's impossible to not have fun when there's someone above you having that much fun.

Four iron crosses. I'm speechless.

ALISA DeMAO

Heavy Metal Maiden

ALISA'S RATINGS

- * — kill 'em all
- ** — I used to love her, but I had to kill her
- *** — what's not to like?
- **** — 'check this shit out!'
- ***** — I lost my underwear

ERIK & TOM'S RATINGS

- Y — a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing
- YY — the opening band was better
- YYY — every rose has its thorn
- YYYY — spandex from hell
- YYYYY — I banged my head twice and enjoyed it both times