

Reviews

Talib Kweli Rocks the Cradle

A review by nadera a. malika-salaam

Real hip-hop returned to the Cat's Cradle, when hip-hop artist, Talib Kweli, performed for a packed house on Feb. 27.

Doors for the sold-out show opened 50 minutes late, and getting in the club was like being pushed through a funnel. Fans who were unable to score tickets to the show stood around outside begging to get in. One fan even offered to trade a CD he had autographed by Kweli during an in-store appearance at The Record Exchange in Chapel Hill, earlier that day. Those who managed to get inside, were met by a choice selection of old-school beats and rhymes, courtesy of DJ Bro Rabb.



Spinning hip-hop classics like "Passin' Me By" by the Pharcyde and "Mic Checka" by Das Effects, Bro Rabb kept the crowd hyped and got them in the mood for the evening's main event.

The opening band, who was never properly introduced and just "appeared" on stage, received a less-than-stellar reception from the crowd. Perhaps, their blend "rap" lyrics over rock guitar and bass riffs were not suited to the hip-hop audience. Bro Rabb returned to the stage and saved the day, playing selected songs by A Tribe Called Quest, "Simon Says" and the "Ante Up Remix" by M.O.P. DJ Chaps followed Bro Rabb on stage, providing a variety of newer hip-hop material and entertaining the crowd with his DJ skills, spinning behind his back and using his nose and feet to spin the

records.

When Kweli finally took the stage, and the crowd got hyped! Embodying all the qualities essential in a good hip-hop performer (lots of energy, good stage presence and a voice that doesn't fade out) he engaged the crowd in the performance, and had them chanting his lyrics, in unison, throughout the entire show. Starting off with "Move Something," Kweli and his backup singers, the ShockBody Rockers, kept the entire show high energy. During a brief intermission and comic moment, Talib pulled a disruptive, drunken fan on stage and sat him in "time-out" backstage so that he could enjoy the rest of the show without disturbing the rest of the crowd. After which, he promptly began to freestyle about the drunken fan, commenting on his likeness to Ricky Schroeder.

Kweli and his performers put on a live show full of surprises. At one point, he was briefly joined on stage by local artist, YahZarah, who sang a freestyle, showed love to the crowd, Kweli and his crew, before returning to the audience.

At the end of his hour-long performance, the crowd wanted more and chanted "Kweli, Kweli, Kweli..." until the rapper reappeared on stage. Performing "For Women" as his encore, Kweli had the crowd in a frenzy. Insatiable, they chanted for a second encore, but to no avail.

All in all, the show was dope. It could have started a little sooner, but for 8 bucks, it was definitely one of the best hip-hop shows at the Cradle in the last five years. Despite the fact that the audience reflected the fact that 70 percent of the consumers of hip-hop music are white males, there was an air of unity and respect throughout the evening.

Talib Kweli definitely enjoyed himself. He interacted with the crowd and even commented on the lack of melanin in the audience as he mimicked a group of teens in the front row, "Dude! Kweli rocks! Man, he is the BEST rapper! Freaking-A!..."

A peaceful hip-hop show, no fights, no guns, just music, peace and love.