

Petty, Idol top long weekend of rock

South Florida experienced a rock 'n' roll explosion this weekend -- more concerts than a fan could attend or afford.

It was a weekend of rebel rockers and Rebel Yells; wailing slide guitars and underdog anthems; smoldering performances and intense humidity.

It was a weekend of 32-ounce beers and \$22 T-shirts, of 13-year-olds dressed in black mesh stockings, black lace, black minis and ruby lipstick.



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In some cases it was rock 'n' roll at its best: pensive and provocative, raucous and unbridled; a couple hours of escape from whatever a mind and body wanted to flee.

In other cases the music was uninspiring, filled with flurries of rapid notes with no purpose, screaming with no communication, vol-

ume without a voice.

Billy Idol, with his Elvis sneer, Jim Morrison black leather and fist-clenched stance, drew the biggest crowd: 10,000 at the Hollywood Sportatorium Sunday night.

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, however, made the biggest point to 6,500 at the West Palm Beach Auditorium Saturday night.

And Gregg Allman proved Friday night at Six Flags Atlantis that he has the nine lives of a stubborn cat and a survivor's somber but defiant blues growl.

Petty's musical fire

The high point of all this rock 'n' roll came in the middle of a show in the middle of the weekend.

Tom Petty was standing alone under a yellow spotlight strumming two chords. Drummer Stan Lynch was tapping out a dirge. Petty was telling the crowd about his fondness for Florida when he quietly shifted into the classic Buffalo Springfield protest song, *For What It's Worth*.

Petty brought the song to a full boil on the chorus. The whole band kicked in, and so did the audience.

While the Heartbreakers laid down a low, don't-mess-with-me beat, Petty asked: "I want to know if you trust Ronald Reagan?"

The crowd replied with a rousing "No!"

While the music bubbled in the background he also asked his fans if they trusted George



Tom Petty's Saturday night concert proved to be the high point of the weekend.

Bush, the CIA, the FBI, the PTL, the PTA, Admiral Poindexter and Oliver North.

Each time the crowd yelled a fierce "No!"

The rest of his concert contained even more musical fire.

The finale was remarkable. Petty and company ran through *Even the Losers*, *Jammin' Me*, the band's latest hit single, and *Refugee* with unrelenting enthusiasm and energy. Ringing guitars, a galloping bass, propulsive drumming and sparkling keyboard work combined to steal the audience's emotions. Fans erupted into song and dance.

The Georgia Satellites, one of two opening acts, put the crowd in the proper frame of mind with engaging personalities and a set of good-time, blues-edged frat rock.

The other opening act, the Boston-based Del Fuegos, didn't have the material or personality to capture the audience.

Lead vocalist Dan Zanes' monotone drone quickly becomes grating. The addition of a percussionist and keyboard player to the quartet's lineup wasn't much help.

Allman still casts a spell

Gregg Allman, on the other hand, has a voice -- and a backup band -- that can seduce the emotions.

On a humid Friday night when even the trees seemed to sweat, Allman deftly mixed songs from his comeback album, *I'm No Angel*, with standards such as *Whipping Post* and

Statesboro Blues. Guitarist Dan Toler's soulful, less-is-more playing style had the crowd swaying under a clear black sky.

Opening act Blackfoot, however, got the weekend off to a disappointing start.

The Jacksonville-based rock band took the stage in long coats and proceeded to aimlessly scream and wail away, proving to be nothing more than a glorified cover band performing second-class versions of others' songs.

Allman, however, overcame that abysmal performance and in a voice filled with pride and pain stirred the crowd of some 6,000 people that ranged from bankers to bikers.

Shake 'em up, Billy

The most disappointing and most surprising performances were delivered Sunday at the Hollywood Sportatorium.

Billy Idol is so image-conscious he's a sex god in case you didn't know -- it's easy to forget that his voice and songwriting talents are substantial. So is his following, which is young, appreciative and vocal.

The white-haired Idol, dressed in trademark black leather and silver studs and chains, whipped 10,000 teenagers into a sweaty, cheering, dancing army.

Idol opened with the up tempo *Dancing With Myself* and never let up.

He ran through a battery of hits that included *White Wedding*, *Flesh for Fantasy*, *Whiplash Smile*, *Rebel Yell* and *Sweet Sixteen*.

Idol's stage show was the most elaborate of the weekend with the requisite rising smoke, colored strobes, taped sound effects and a stage designed in the form of a pair of spread legs.

While many bands use this razzle and dazzle to hide a lack of talent, Idol's stage show fortified an already tough, energetic presentation.

His four-piece band, featured the guitar wizardry of Steve Stevens and seductive backup vocals of keyboard player Susie Davis.

The opening act, The Cult, a British band that is so post-punk it's a throwback to Cream, Led Zeppelin and Free, made a big noise and little impression.

Lead vocalist Ian Astbury was so frustrated at the crowd's lack of adulation he resorted to epithets and insults to get crowd response. With psychedelic guitars blazing, The Cult would have been better off as an instrumental outfit Sunday night.

The Cult performance couldn't dampen a rousing rock 'n' roll weekend.

Billy Idol's final number summed it up nicely. South Florida, he sang, was "shakin' all over."