

Tom Petty – 'He's a good boy'

Rebel star rocks the Redbirds

By Erich W. Zander
Staff Writer

As the lights brighten and the black valance is lifted we see a stage dotted with objects as eclectic as the crowd. A stuffed polar bear and a large totem pole with brightly painted birds flank the stage. Two very large African drums, a full suit of armor, an alligator, the skulls of two ruminants and a big black trunk find their place in a set straight out of theatre macabre. Plush red velvet curtains and sumptuous patterned fabrics in opulent lengths, draped the edges of the stage and to the rear a large ship's mast loomed and several screens awaited.

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers bounded on stage and launched into "Love is a Long Road," embarking on a musical journey that was to last well over an hour. The Heartbreakers played songs from *Full Moon Fever*, Petty's first solo album, with as much alacrity as they played the older favorites. The ease with which they played together proved they are one of the more outstanding back-up bands today.

By the fourth song "Freefalling," Petty engaged the crowd in singing along on the choruses, a technique which he used to his advantage several times throughout the night. During this song the screens were awash with color slides of clouds.

For the next number, drummer Stan Lynch, atop a black riser decorated with gold hieroglyphics, sang the R&B classic "Down the Road Apiece."

Then Benmont Tench, still in a boogie-woogie mode, soloed on the piano only to be joined by the other Heartbreakers as Petty took a break. That number turned into a psyche-



Photos by Erich W. Zander/The Argus
Master musician Tom Petty's mood lifts spirits up with his *More Strange Behavior* Tour. The Heartbreakers joined Petty in braving arctic weather to delight fans with a mix of old and new.

delic intro for "Don't Come Around Here No More," with guitarist Mike Campbell on hammer dulcimer, and bassist Howie Epstein and Petty on African drums.

As the screens displayed vibrant patterns of mixing oils, Petty strapped on his guitar and ceremoniously opened a chest, which emitted an incredible white light. Reaching slowly in, he pulled out a worn brown hat and donned it.

During the song the screens alternated between mixing oils and patterned lights, vibrantly hued. Smiting into the churn-

ing conclusion of the song, the lighting changed to strobes and the armor came to life, chasing Petty as he parried about the stage. He eluded the armor long enough to put the hat back in the trunk, ending the melee and the song.

Working the audience with finesse, Petty kept things moving with his monologues between songs. He told the audience how impressed he was that they were all able to come, and urged them to check out the people from Greenpeace in the lobby. Stressing the urgen-

cy of their cause, he invited them to "make up their own minds about it."

Petty blended a delightful mix of material from circa 1977 "Rebel" and "Refugee," with his latest hits ending with "Running Down a Dream."

As the band left the stage, the near capacity crowd roared in approval even louder than the music had been. After a short span of time, the band returned to the light of thousands of lighters.

Petty played a solo version of "The Waiting," with the band

joining him for the revved-up ending. That number was followed by an audience participation on Dylan's "Knocking on Heaven's Door," which Petty dedicated to Del Shannon.

Shannon, who was a guest musician on "Full Moon Fever," committed suicide the week before the show.

The nineteenth and final song was the perennial favorite "American Girl." The band, waving a last time before departing, smiled with cheshire grins.

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