

Into the great wide open ...



By ERIC RIFE
Daily Aztec Contributor

Long time fans of Tom Petty can be excused for thinking the show of two Wednesdays ago at the Sports Arena was a little, well, subdued.

Compared to his show four years ago – if that's fair – last week's concert was surprisingly low key, without any of the elaborate stage settings, chandeliers or giant trees which made his previous tour such a visual as well as an aural banquet.

But being the American institution they are, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers can afford to make the rules. Their set, which drew long and hard from the new album, "Wildflowers," featured the band with little more than a few candelabras perched behind them and Persian rugs beneath their feet.

New material, most particularly songs like "Time To Move On," and the Dylan-esque harp of "You Don't Know How It Feels," dominated the better part of the first half of the two-hour show. Only after introducing the as-of-yet unrecorded, high-decibel "Goin' Down To Georgia"

did the band switch gears, deftly segueing into the equally high octane "Runnin' Down A Dream."

While most of the show's quirks could be attributed to artistic license or design, other moments seemed surprisingly anticlimactic. Lead guitarist Mike Campbell's electrifying bridge that is the signature to "The Waiting," was sadly omitted to allow Petty to strum through it acoustically.

Other disappointments included the curious omission of such concert standards as "Don't Come Around Here No More," and "I Need To Know" as well as a complete disregard for any songs from "Southern Accents" and "Long After Dark."

Of course, after playing for nearly two decades the man does have every right to dictate what he wants to play and how he wants to play it. And in all fairness, few, if any, of his fans could have walked away feeling let down.

After all, he is Tom Petty.



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(1) **B-Side Players** have a funky-jazzy beat with a Latino edge. Their danceable grooves floated through the night air mixed with congas, flute and trumpet riffs. (2) **The Grey Boy Allstars** were the hottest ticket of the festival. They played a blinding set of funky acid-jazz tunes on the indoor Groove Stage. (3) **Unwritten Law** makes their own laws and makes their own sound. Singer Scott Russo and Co. drew a huge crowd with their punk attitude and music. They sounded great! (4) **Hall** has an ambient-pop sound that set them apart from the other bands of the day. Unfortunately, **Snakepit** hissed from the other stage with enough venom to kill Hall's music. When pro-surfer Rob Machado isn't winning trophies in the water, he is mak-



ing waves with his band (5) **Sack Lunch**. Aside from Rob's entertaining hairdo, the only waves felt were waves of nausea. Rob, stuck to surfing 'cause your Sack Lunch is like a tuna on rye – it stinks!!



By Alison Scott