

Petty gives Lowcountry dose of 'Full Moon Fever'

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A candelabra smoked on stage while fans barked between songs.

Beer fell from above on puzzled concertgoers who looked overhead in wonderment.

On stage, as Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers churned out the hits, a T-shirt and a beach ball landed on stage.

"You're getting me really excited really early. You're getting me all worked up," Petty said dryly.

In fact, it was Petty who was getting the crowd all worked up. Most every seat in North Charleston Coliseum was sold

but hardly anyone was sitting down. It was as if some 10,000 people had been struck with "Full Moon Fever," the title of Petty's first solo album.

The 44-year-old singer, songwriter and guitarist opened his show Thursday night at the coliseum with a song from his new album, "Wildflowers." As he sang, "You Don't Know How It Feels," the crowd joined in, as it did repeatedly during the evening.

Petty's longtime bandmates — Benmont Tench on piano, Mike Campbell on guitar and Howie Epstein on bass — joined him for the show.

Petty and his band have sold more than 40 million records

worldwide and he ranks alongside Neil Young and John Mellencamp as an ageless rebel among pop music veterans.

The Petty mystique prompted Phillip Foiles, 35, of Charleston to stand nearly two hours outside the coliseum waiting for a glimpse of the star getting off his tour bus.

"I just want to see him, maybe get him to wave," Foiles said.

It wasn't to be though. It became apparent that Petty was already in the coliseum when his show cranked up at about 8:40 p.m.

The show opened at 7:30 p.m. with Pete Droge, an American Recordings artist on tour for his debut album, "Necktie Second."



Staff Photo by Wade Speers

Tom Petty won't back down.