



PHOTOS BY ISAMU JORDAN The Spokesman Review

Tom Petty's ageless pop-rock lights up the Spokane Arena at his Aug. 1 show.

## Tom Petty fans die hard

STAR HOLDS HIS MUSICAL EDGE OVER DECADES

Jeanette Ward, 43, had seen Tom Petty in concert once before.

It was in her hometown, Baton Rouge, La., when she was in high school. Petty was in his prime then, but Ward was blown away when she saw Petty at the

Spokane Arena last week with her two teenagers.

Ward won a pair of front-row seats through a radio raffle (then bought a third seat). For her



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daughter, Alyssa, it made her first concert surreal.

"We were screaming at the top of our lungs," said Alyssa, 15. "I was so close my heart was racing."

Whether you were seeing Petty and his band for the first time or for the first time in 20 years, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers proved that earnest songwriting, a no-frills stage persona and timeless material appeal to any generation.

An opening set by Phish frontman Trey Anastasio also boosted the show.

From the opening of "Listen to her Heart" to the close of the "American Girl" encore, Petty brought the nearly packed Arena to its feet for the two-hour concert.

Petty played and sang stoically but sneaked in a smile or two during the sizzle of applause between songs. He played his expected classics, such as "I Won't Back Down," "Mary Jane"



Jeanette Ward and her son, Alec, get ready for Tom Petty to take the stage at the Arena.

### '80s Song of the Week

**"Don't Do Me Like That"**

Artist: Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers  
Release date: 1980

and "Don't Come Around Here No More," which were rendered masterfully.

Much credit goes to the Heartbreakers, who played tremendous solos and held down grooves with gravitational force.

Ward's son, Alec, 17, used to sing "Free Fallin'" in third-grade choir. He told his mom after the show that Petty sounds as good on stage as he does on the CD.

And the songs from Petty's new album, "Highway Companion," fit seamlessly with his classics.

Not only was Petty precise when it came to his own material, but he also was a marksman with his covers, especially Fleetwood Mac's "Oh Well," during which Petty pumped the maracas like a

madman.

Shortly after that, Petty's longtime friend Stevie Nicks, of Fleetwood Mac, joined him onstage. Nicks sang beautifully and looked fantastic in her flowing black and white dress, but she seemed detached. During her miniset she mostly faced Petty and away from the audience, which added some intimacy between them but took away from some crowd connection.

But Ward didn't seem to mind. Fleetwood Mac was the first concert she saw as a child, so she was elated to see Nicks again.

For Ward, everything was perfect, except the crowd. "I was totally getting into it and dancing, and I looked around and hardly anyone else is moving," she said.

"Is that a Northwest thing? In the South it's frickin' pandemonium on the floor. Everyone is so tame here."

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