

Joan Jett, "It's good to be in Halifax."

by Michael Brennan

There was one concert this summer in Halifax that was worth hanging around for. The local scene was absolutely dead this year and I hadn't any idea such a great performer would ever make it here. I was quite surprised to hear of Joan Jett and the Blackhearts coming to the Metro Centre: I had only recently bought her records and the more I listened, the more I really loved her music.

Jett plays and sings very much in the spirit of the early Beatles when they did many covers, with a touch of the innocence and adolescent sexuality of the great girl groups like Ronettes and the Shirelles. She loves simple rock and she gives rebellion and sentiment a renewed vitality. As a normal middle class girl, these things meant something to her.

Jett opened the concert with her best number, "Bad Reputation". Let me tell you, "My Generation" has nothing on this one and she

played it with the speed and fury of the Ramones. Joan Jett and her band, the Blackhearts, played a tight, clear and loud set. They ran through the better songs from her two albums and a few that she had not yet recorded. One of these was

Eddie Cochran's "Summertime Blues", with her bassist doing great harmony.

Joan Jett is quite sexy, as she certainly was that night, wearing a tight jump suit and black sneakers. She pouted out her lyrics with an

inner delight and bounced around at every chance. The band was just as sexy and lively. Her bassist looked like an Italian Sid Vicious and her guitarist a near Mick Jones. They all had such fun performing I couldn't help admiring

them. Introducing her big hit "I Love Rock and Roll" was a highlight of the show. "Halifax," she screamed in a scratchy voice, "Halifax, Halifax! I love many things, but I love Halifax! I love rock and roll!"

Gagnon pleases Cohn audience

by Kim Rilda van Feggelen

It's hard to say anything negative about Andre Gagnon's concert at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium on Sunday evening.

In the years since his AM radio hits like WOW and the theme song for the Montreal Olympics, Mr. Gagnon has become a polished and professional entertainer.

As always, he gives me the impression of an imp: he's short (he jokes about his 52 height to the

audience) with a Prince Valiant haircut and an incredible exuberance and energy. In fact, he seemed almost on the point of nervousness -- he'd hardly finished playing the last note of a song and he was on his feet to bow and lead the band into a new number. Combine all of this with his naive use of English (Andre is a Quebecois), and I am always surprised at how talented the man really is. The audience loves him.

Gagnon is, no doubt, feeling the economic strains of touring. Five years ago, he played concerts accompanied by a thirty piece orchestra. Nowadays he has traded that in for a synthesizer that can imitate the missing strings. A more "rock" sound was provided by that and an electric bass, flute, two drummers (one kit and one percussion set up) and a guitarist who dabbled with both acoustic and electric. And the band is very slick, very

tight. Andre Gagnon himself is personal and friendly on stage. He communicates well with his audience and I am sure that all who paid to see him were satisfied. Gagnon is so nice he even announces the titles of his songs for the benefit of those not already familiar with them. This was the only problem with the concert for me: it was too nice. I mean, don't they play his records at the bank?

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