

Back to the '90s

Weezer and Pixies sets at Golden 1 Center draw on inspiration and innovation



Weezer frontman Rivers Cuomo (left) and bassist Scott Shriner wailing away at Golden 1.

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Mutilation” and “Where is My Mind?” with a sizable chunk of new songs such as the tense, edgy “Graveyard Hill” and “This is My Fate.”

The Pixies remain cult favorites—a Velvet Underground among Beatles. Critical and revered, but not necessarily marketable.

Which brings us to Weezer, the slick dude-bros of alt rock who manage to be pleasantly banal hit-makers and occasionally just weird enough to find musical salvation.

Cuomo kicked off the show with guitarist Brian Bell, bassist Scott Shriner and drummer Patrick Wilson, sans instruments, to deliver flawless harmonies on the band’s barbershop quartet version of “Beverly Hills.”

Then, as a replica of the *Happy Days* diner set dropped down behind the band, Weezer took to its gear to launch into “Buddy Holly,” its 1994 slice of preppy, peppy nostalgia rock.

From there, the band segued into “My Name is Jonas” and “Into the Garage,” with a poorly timed autoshop set-change that only served to highlight that, in its weaker moments, Weezer sometimes feels like a gimmick—’90s irony epitomized.

Its recent penchant for straightforward covers, collected on its latest record, the *Teal Album*, underscores this with mixed results.

Weezer’s chart-topping rendition of Toto’s “Africa,” for example, seems purposeless. Why cover such a famous song note-for-note?

Not that the Golden 1 crowd minded—indeed, a pair of slick dude-bros fist-bumped as Weezer played the song’s first notes.

There were plenty of actual fist-bump worthy highlights, especially when Cuomo took a spin in the “S.S. Weezer,” a one-man pirate ship that sailed around the arena as he ripped into Black Sabbath’s “Paranoid” with zeal. Likewise, the band’s mashup of the Turtles’ “Happy Together” and Green Day’s “Longview” was inspired, while later the band’s encore take on TLC’s “No Scrubs” felt like an homage and a fresh take on the ’90s hip-hop gem.

The show played to Weezer’s strengths: Clever, zippy and 100 percent there to serve the audience. That speaks to the band’s longevity, if not its originality. □

The Pixies are art school weirdos who know how to craft jagged, hook-laden songs woven together with provocative imagery: the Old Testament, space aliens and wicked sex.

“We wouldn’t be here without the Pixies.”

Weezer frontman Rivers Cuomo’s nod to the iconic band wasn’t polite deference, it was rock ‘n’ roll truth.

Weezer may have headlined the Golden 1 Center show on April 9, but it was the supporting act, the Pixies, that helped define a generation and arguably inspired Weezer’s very existence.

The night’s music, performed to a nearly packed arena of geriatric rockers, middle-aged hipsters and fresh-faced kids, created an aural snapshot of ’90s rock. Even the opener, the U.K.-based Basement, evoked the era with a grungy, dirgey sound.

The Pixies kicked off with “Cactus,” from its 1988 debut *Surfer Rosa*. With lyrics including “Bloody your hands on a cactus tree / Wipe it on your dress and send it to me,” the song embodies the band’s arid surrealism. Fronted by vocalist-guitarist Black Francis, the Pixies are art school weirdos who know how to craft jagged, hook-laden songs woven together with provocative imagery: the Old Testament, space aliens and wicked sex.

These days, the band is rounded out by original members Joey Santiago (guitar) and David Lovering (drums), with bassist Paz Lenchantin, who ably occupies the vocal range vacated by Kim Deal (and briefly filled by Muffs’ singer Kim Shattuck).

The band’s set tightly wound through classics including “Here Comes Your Man,” “Wave of

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