Cars open for the Pope, but no Thrills

From a musical standpoint, the Cars proved that they were just as good live as they were in the studio. Elliot Easton's lead guitar work was phenomenal, often carrying the rest of the band through the lighter material. The keyboard contributions of Greg Hawkes became much more evident on stage, where one could hear that he was more than background filler. The most surprising aspect of the performance was the vocal work; Ocasek and Orr's lead vocals were clear and powerful, and Easton and Hawkes' harmonies never missed the mark.

The performance would have been brilliant - if the sound system had been adjusted properly. The sound through most of the set was much too bass heavy, and the attempts to provide more response in the upper registers resulted in distortion. Wednesday night Elliot Easton, while guesting on WBCN, apologised profusely about the poor sound quality, explaining that the PA system used was for a large arena rather than a theatre; but it was too late to obtain the adequate equipment. For most of the wasted songs this apology was unnecessary, since they probably thought the sound was fine. For those of us in an altered state the concert was at best marred, and I hope the Cars will get the chance to vindicate themselves.

- David Shaw

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