



November 8, 2007

Mould keeps volume turned up

By Jonathan Perry

The phrase "singer-songwriter" somehow seems far too tame a term to describe what Bob Mould does - and has done loudly - for most of his 47 years. Even a handful of soul-baring songs, a grown-up solo career, and an acoustic guitar aren't safe in Mould's hands, and why should they be?

more stories like thisThe onetime guitarist for '80s thrash-punk legends Hüsker Dü and '90s power-punk volume wholesalers Sugar has rarely played his rock 'n' roll safely, or predictably. Try as Mould might, quieting down and growing older gracefully just doesn't suit the guy. Even alone in the most spartan of settings Monday night - in this case, a modest Paradise Lounge stage that was all but empty save for a microphone stand, white movie screen, and black curtain backdrop - Mould had little trouble conjuring a mini-maelstrom of untidy volume through sheer force of will.

The torrent began early with the hard-strummed opener, "Wishing Well," and never let up. Mould's seething, sour voice hurtled headlong through his catalog, sounding less like a vocal instrument than an electric power source that frequently overwhelmed his acoustic guitar. Remarkably, even selections such as the billowing blast of Sugar's anthem "Hoover Dam" or Hüsker's "Hardly Getting Over It" lost little of their drama or bracing roar.

The evening's itinerary originally called for him to play a 30-minute acoustic set and then conduct a polite Q&A with the audience as part of an ongoing "DVD tour" to promote and screen his new concert documentary, "Circle of Friends." Except for watching the movie, Mould ditched that plan altogether.

Instead, he plugged into a temperamental, teal-colored Stratocaster at the 45-minute mark - "awright!" came the response from an audience of roughly 75 - and lit into a beautifully corroded "Lonely Afternoon" and Hüsker-era sprints such as "I Apologize" and "Celebrated Summer." Undeterred, Mould pressed on through ragged amplifier noise that kept cutting in and out.

"Yes, there is a new album, and it's coming out in February," Mould announced midway through what turned into a 60-minute set. "It's called 'District Line,' and yes, there are guitars on it."

More whoops from the grateful-dude contingent.