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Michael Schenker Group - Austin's Fuel Room, Libertyville, IL 3/1/12

There's no need to explain the connection between Michael Schenker, UFO, or Scorpions, and Chicago. It's just natural. When any of these performers play, people come out of the woodwork. Such was the case the at recent MSG appearance in Libertyville. MSG had to add another date due to an overwhelming demand.

The show started with two opening acts: Sacred Dawn and T.D. Clark. Sacred Dawn played a great set of their classily influence heavy metal. The band appeared to be very tight, had good catchy songs, and went over impressively well. There is definitely potential here. T.D. Clark is a guitar wiz, who plays with a lot of feel and emotion. His set was electrifying, and his guitar did all the talking. It was a perfect match for T.D. Clark to play with MSG. He is a great performer who knows how to get the crowd going!



MSG took the stage to an enthusiastic sold-out crowd who eagerly awaited the return of The Mad Axeman. From the opening instrumental "Into The Arena" Schenker appeared to be very focused and determined to give his best. Then Robin McAuley took the stage to the opening riffs of "Armed and Ready." Only to follow it with two classic Scorpions tracks: "Love Drive" and "Another Piece of Meat." Right away it was evident Schenker was going to be digging deep into his catalog. And we were not mistaken. It was great to see Robin McAuley again after nearly 20 year break from MSG. He sounded great, even better than in his prime time in the 80s when he fronted the band. Schenker's newest album, "Temple of Rock," was represented by "Lover's Sinfony," a track on which McAuley can also be heard. It was followed by "Save Yourself" with possibly the most blistering lead of the evening. The fans of UFO were also treated to a feast, MSG unleashed 8 classics tracks. The heat was definitely on, with "Let It Roll" being the surprise and the highlight of the evening.



Schenker's tone still is so beautifully preserved, and the man truly had fun being on stage. It was a solid back up band that gave Schenker a lot of room to do what he does best. And as the Schenker fans know, only few years ago he was seriously down on his luck. So to see him recover, and perform with such drive is truly a miracle. The man behind the flying V was absolutely brilliant. No words can describe what an inventive player he is when he's at his best.



The band encored twice, and the crowd just wasn't ready to let them go. Many applauded the incredible set list, and they were absolutely right. Schenker gave a great overview of his 40 years as an recording artist. A magical evening of classic tunes, blistering guitar, and powerful showmanship.

Mark Kadzielawa