

live show reviews

TALIB KWELI

April 6 @ House of Blues Sunset Strip

Talib Kweli is one of the best lyricists in the game. Not only is he clever, cerebral and crafty with his rhymes, but he's a monster on the mic.

Rapping for nearly two hours and serving up more than 22 songs, he delivered a show packed with classics from Black Star (with Mos Def) and Reflection Eternal (with Hi-Tek), collaborations with Madlib, plus rockin' solo selections and new joints from his forthcoming CD, *Eardrum*.

Not skipping a beat, he jumped onstage, backed by his faithful DJ Chaps for Reflection



Talib Kweli

Eternal staples "Move Somethin'" and "Too Late."

Switching gears, he flipped his verses from Black Star's "Definition" and "Respiration."

"Who was born in the '70s?" Kweli asked before delivering his part on Danger Doom's "Old School" from *The Mouse and the Mask*. Shouts followed.

"Who was born in the '80s?" Even more shouts erupted.

"Nah," he barked. "This is for the over-25 set." Kweli made it clear he reps for the grown and sexy folk.

Next was "Broken Glass," produced by the Neptunes and his new single, "Say Something" from *Eardrum*, featuring Jean Grae (who was surprisingly absent from Kweli's set) and produced by will.i.am.

Fans were treated to another gem off his highly anticipated CD, "Listen!!!" followed by two Madlib collabs, "Over the Counter" and "Funny Money," both featured on *Liberation*, a project which was made available for download for the first week of '07 on Stones

Throw's Web site and the two artists' MySpace pages.

Slowing it down, he launched into "Lonely People," from *The Beautiful Mix CD*.

What happened next was music to the ears. Kweli showed us why he's considered unstoppable with back-to-back freestyles over MIMS' "This Is Why I'm Hot" and the Eurythmics' "Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)."

Most people are aware that Kweli, like most successful hip-hoppreneurs, has started his own label, Blacksmith. One of his signees is the Cali super group, Strong Arm Steady, composed of Mitchy Slick, Phil Da Agony and Kronon.

The crew was on hand to deliver a pair of bangers, and producer Jelly Roll joined them for some crooning. It was all love from coast to coast as East and West rocked the house together.

Just when you thought it was over, Kweli came with the Just Blaze-produced "Never Been In Love," *Quality's* "Good To You," his verse from "Get 'Em High" off Kanye West's *The College Dropout*, "The Blast" and "Get By."

Now it's over, you think. The crowd applauds and chants his name. He can't come back ... could he, after well over an hour of performing?

Kweli did the unthinkable and returned with another new cut, plus "I Try" and "Africa Dream." He even invited a special guest, GZA from the Wu-Tang Clan, up to perform a few Wu favorites, including "Shadowboxin'."

"Anyone who calls himself a lyricist is a student of this man," he declared, pointing at the Genius.

Ending the night on a high note with "We Got The Beat," Kweli left fans feeling mighty high.

Throughout the evening, Kweli bigged up his hometown, Brooklyn, assuring us that, like the song says, if you can make it in New York City, you can make it anywhere. On this night, Talib made "it" in Cali.

—Jessica Koslow

MUSE

April 11 @ The Forum

Muse is love, plain and simple. No two ways about it, Matt Bellamy, Dominic Howard and Chris Wolstenholme are full of awesome, and now they've finally gotten a stage show that reflects it.

Not that the years of shows prior were boring, poorly performed or anything of the sort, but finally Muse is playing venues here that are big enough to hold that massive sound

they create. And even then, the Forum struggled with that a bit.

Opening with "Knights of Cydonia" the British rockers played songs spanning their musical career, giving equal attention to older material for longtime fans and newer songs for fans who jumped on board with their meteoric rise to mainstream popularity with 2003's *Absolution*.

Covering "Feeling Good," the band went back a little further into musical history, but nevertheless, its fans responded with equal excitement for the song, which highlighted front man Bellamy's unparalleled vocal range.

Going full out with the special effects that may otherwise seem cheesy for a band that has so much riding on its artistic integrity, the band members' approach to giving their audience a full show served only to highlight their instrumental skill. Each member showed his distinctive personality in his playing while seemingly, effortlessly proving to be one of the tightest, most in synch musical units in rock today.

Thrashing on his guitar through fan favorites "Time is Running Out" and "Hysteria," while maintaining perfect vocal pitch and control over his soaring vocals,



Muse

Bellamy's stage presence was definitely epic throughout the band's set. Balanced by bassist Wolstenholme's more subdued and less flashy demeanor, each of the three band members showed an understanding of how to play off each other as well as how to engage and play off of their audience.

Capping their set with "Starlight" and "Plug in Baby," effectively book-ending the night, the always progressive rockers planted their flag as the ultimate cool-kids-only band that isn't bogged down by elitism and remains undeterred by mainstream success.

—Brien Overly

cd reviews

music

MAKING THE GRADE: A EXCEPTIONAL | B WORTHWHILE
C MEDIOCRE | D SAVE YOUR MONEY | F WILL BE ON HELL'S JUKEBOX



K-OS

Atlantis – Hymns for Disco

(Virgin)

While Toronto and hip-hop may not be synonymous, MC Kheaven Brereton, a.k.a. K-OS, proves with *Atlantis – Hymns for Disco*, Canada has more going on than snow and health care. This, his third album, successfully ventures into the experimental realm, mixing old-school beats with indie rock jams, creating a sound that is no less than eclectic.

The album manages to be a masterful blend of classic sounds, yet has a freshness that could compete with Gnarls Barkley and OutKast. K-OS hops from traditional hip-hop flavor on opening track "Elektrik Heat – the Seekwill" to a ballady, slow jam with "The Rain."

While the leap works, the diversity makes the album lack cohesiveness. Aiming for indie cred, K-OS gets help on "Valhalla" from Broken Social Scene's Sam Roberts and Kevin Drew.

At times "Atlantis" comes across too contrived with the strain to be on the edge. However, the album is a crisp mix of hip-hop with a message of spirituality, celebration and emotion.

Grade: B

—Lori Bartlett

Atlantis – Hymns for Disco is currently available.

THE BASTARD FAIRIES

Memento Mori

(Bastard Fairy)

Yellow Thunder Woman is a Yankton Sioux Indian and a descendant of the Ponca tribe's Chief Standing Bear. She says that makes her a princess. She also says Ashlee Simpson should be mauled by baboons.

In her off-stage life or as half of the Bastard Fairies (multi-instrumentalist Robin Davey is the other half), Yellow Thunder Woman is not shy. With her voice double-tracked on "The Greatest Love Song" she sounds sweet, but on "Ode to the Prostitute" she sounds like a street corner Lolita with the irresistible offer, "Jimmy, I know that you want it." And so does Billy. And Tommy.

The character that YTW imagines during "Prostitute" recurs throughout the album, not as a harlot but in the form of strong women who are going to do and say what they want, consequences be damned. Fans of the Pierces, Tegan & Sara and the Waitresses will find a lot to like here.

Grade: A

—Kevin Wierzbicki

Memento Mori is currently available.

music dvd review

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WAR

Loose Grooves: Funkin' Live in England 1980

(Mvd Visual)

War was touring behind its *Music Band 2* release when the band stopped in Halifax, England for this show, but the only song off that album performed here is the sexy "I'll Be Around." The group otherwise reels off a half dozen of its hits beginning with a truncated version of the smash it had when it was still backing up Eric Burdon, "Spill the Wine."

After making a big deal out of introducing the song, the band plays only the first verse before segueing into "All Day Music." "Slippin' into Darkness," "Low

Rider" and "Cisco Kid" lead up to the film's highlight, a 12-minute jam of "Gypsy Man."

It's obvious the band is playing well, but there are many moments that don't translate nicely in this recording, both in audio and visual. It was, after all, 1980 and filming a concert at that time was not done with as much finesse as today.

The presentation has the feel of a home video, and the packaging bills the effort as such. "Me and Baby Brother" and the great sing-along tune "Why Can't We Be Friends" close out the concert.

Grade: C

—Kevin Wierzbicki



Loose Grooves: Funkin' Live in England 1980 will be available April 24.

CD REVIEWS CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 »