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Two days



POP/ROCK
When stars collide
Bruce Springsteen, Billy Joel, Sting, left, Stevie Wonder, Paul Simon and Crosby Stills and Nash are just a handful of the performers who showed for the first of two Rock and Roll Hall of Fame anniversary concerts. Read Jay Lustig's review. Page 13



Rock 'n' roll heaven

Bruce Springsteen jams with special guest Billy Joel during the finale of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame concert.

THEO WARGO

Superstar summit highlights opener of Hall of Fame concert series

BY JAY LUSTIG
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

NEW YORK — “Long Island is about to meet New Jersey,” said Bruce Springsteen.

And since a grand piano had been wheeled out to the front of the stage, you knew who was coming. Billy Joel — who is to

Long Island what Springsteen is to New Jersey

— joined Springsteen to add a final exclamation mark to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame’s 25th-anniversary concert Thursday night at Madison Square Garden.

Starting at 1 a.m., they and Springsteen’s E Street Band (with two of Joel’s regular backing musicians added) teamed up for three Joel songs (“You May Be Right,” “Only the Good Die Young,” “New York State of Mind”) and Springsteen’s signature hit, “Born to Run.”

Occasionally Springsteen and Joel sang each other’s verses, and since both men’s older work — and these were all old songs

— were powered by a similar blend of streetwise attitude and late-night romanticism, it wasn’t exactly a stretch. Springsteen sang the “Only the Good Die Young” lines “I’d rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the saints/The sinners are much more fun,” for instance; they sounded like words he could have written. The same went for the Joel-sung “Wendy let me in, I want to be your friend/I want to guard your dreams and visions” section of “Born to Run.”

Both men also participated in the evening’s grand finale, a joyful, epic run through Jackie Wilson’s “(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher and Higher” with help from John Fogerty, Darlene Love, Tom Morello and Sam Moore (who all also performed during Springsteen’s set), as well as Jackson Browne and Peter Wolf.

Joel, who wasn’t in the official lineup of this nearly six-hour, once-in-a-lifetime show (the highest-priced tickets were \$2,500), represented one of many notable surprises.



STEPHEN LOVEKIN/GETTY IMAGES

Sting, left, and Stevie Wonder rock onstage during the concert at Madison Square Garden.



HENNY RAY ABRAMS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerry Lee Lewis, above; Graham Nash and David Crosby, above right; and Art Garfunkel and Paul Simon perform.



Jeff Beck, who was on the bill for the second anniversary concert last night, showed up on Thursday, too, to play guitar on Stevie Wonder’s “Superstition.” Wonder also paid tribute to Michael Jackson by singing the Jackson hit, “The Way You Make Me Feel” with the help of John Legend, and brought out Sting for a medley of Wonder’s “Higher Ground” and the Police’s “Roxanne.” (Both songs were well played, in their own right, but were too different to fit together in a medley.)

David Crosby and Graham Nash sang backing vocals on Paul Simon’s cover of the Beatles’ “Here Comes the Sun,” and Crosby, Nash and Stephen Stills performed an unplugged version of the Allman Brothers Band’s “Midnight Rider” with Bonnie Raitt. Crosby and Nash also backed Raitt on a slow, aching version of “Love Has No Pride” — a standout moment in an evening that was really more about reliving glory days than plumbing emotional depths.

Springsteen and Fogerty paid tribute to the late Roy Orbison by singing Orbison’s “Oh, Pretty Woman”; Springsteen said he wouldn’t have dared to attempt this quasi-operatic rock song on his own. Springsteen, who was onstage the longest of any co-headliner (about an hour and 45 minutes), also talked about seeing Moore, when he was part of the duo Sam and Dave, at the Satellite Lounge near Fort Dix, and said he learned a lot about leading a band from watching Moore work.

Tom Hanks made a short speech at the start of the evening about the power of rock ‘n’ roll.

After an opening number by the 74-year-old Jerry Lee Lewis — a creaky solo version of “Whole Lotta Shaking Going On” — the show comprised four sets, anchored by Springsteen, Wonder, Simon (who reunited with Art Garfunkel for “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” “The Sound of Silence” and other songs) and Crosby, Stills and Nash. The same strategy was planned for last night, with co-headliners U2, Metallica, Aretha Franklin and Jeff Beck welcoming guests ranging from Lenny Kravitz to Ozzy Osbourne.

The shows will raise funds to establish a permanent endowment for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Foundation, and its museum. Highlights will air on HBO on Nov. 29.

For set lists and more coverage, visit NJ.com/entertainment/popspot.

Jay Lustig may be reached at jlustig@starledger.com or (973) 392-5850.