

Def Leppard/Whitesnake: Old guys rock; old guys rule!

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At their hotel press conference, singer Joe Elliott and guitarist Phil Collen of Def Leppard and Doug Aldrich, guitarist of Whitesnake, fielded questions about their new cds and cooperative tour. They were all informative; cool; friendly; together; well-spoken and gracious to a fault with the interviewers. It would be hard to imagine a more well-behaved, gentlemanly trio of power-chord rockers.

Def Leppard issued their first album, *On Through the Night*, in 1980. Whitesnake is celebrating their thirtieth anniversary as a group this year. These people are veteran, old-school rockers who know what they're doing inside and out. This, ladies and gentlemen, is rock royalty.

Joe Elliott stated that the band is returning to their childhood musical influences for their new cd release, *Songs from the Sparkle Lounge*. "When we were kids we listened to The Who, Kinks, Sweet and David Bowie. This new album goes back to what we really loved to hear in our youth."

Indeed, Def Leppard has done just what they set out to do. The song "Love" features an arrangement and playing style similar to the work of Queen during their "Night at the Opera," and "Day at the Races," period. The track "C'mon, C'mon" has the best Gary Glitter-style boogie-stomp drums that I've heard in years and the chorus of the song is as infectious as any of the riff-rock masterpieces by AC/DC.

Whitesnake's new cd, *Good to be Bad*, contains tracks which harken back to mid-late 70s classic arena rock. In particular, the flashy piece, "All for Love," reminds one of REO Speedwagon's all-time stadium standard, "Ridin' the Storm out." If both band were twenty-five years younger, they'd be heralded as the the saviors of the rock genre, again.

The next day, July 1, they held their co-headline concert at Kairaiskakh stadium, in Neo Faliro. All ages were represented in the audience: snarly teenagers to groovy 40ish types were everywhere with the same, "starving to rock," look in their eyes.

56-year-old, poster-boy vocalist, David Coverdale took the stage with such confidence it was mesmerizing to watch. Then, he and his band Whitesnake kicked into action with the explosive track, "Best Years of our Lives," and the crowd ate it up like spaghetti.

They played a rock-solid set of hits including, "Is this Love," "In the Still of the Night," and "Here I go Again." The show's centerpiece was the on-stage guitar showdown between Doug Aldrich and Reb Beach. They squealed, chattered, scratched and shredded high-end licks at each other like amphetamine gunslingers with a limitless supply of ammunition in their guitars.

Their show closed with several sing-along barre chord anthems and then we waited for Def Leppard to take the stage.

The members of Def Leppard took the stage like they owned it and played like champions. Their material is so layered, separated and open in its construction that it is absolutely ideal for stadium play. The people in the terraces could hear as well as the fans on the floor. The sound never turned into a nightmare of sonic sludge for the people in the upstairs seats, as happens quite often in stadium rock shows.

They played their standards, "Rock-it," "Animal," "Love Bites," and "Make Love Like a Man," with high style and Buddhist-level non-chalance. The band also covered David Essex's 70s mutation-hit "Rock On" with a

mid-tempo, hard rock arrangement. New material "C'mon, C'mon," and "Nine Lives" were very well received by the crowd. It was just a great show to hear and watch. Ask anybody who went there and they'll tell you the same thing.

Def Leppard and Whitesnake play real rock and roll with style, flash, fun and infectious rhythm, as it should be played. Old guys rock; old guys rule.