

Sting captivates a sellout crowd at the Aladdin

by *laura payne*

staff writer

It wasn't 'til the day of the show but it happened. At approximately 12:00 noon on April 2, 1988, there were no longer seats available for Sting's first ever performance in Las Vegas. For the 7,050 who would attend the show, it would be an unforgettable evening.

The three hour concert captivated and entertained an enthusiastic audience. With a career spanning over a decade, Sting managed to incorporate the past and the

present to enrapture fans both young and old. The show consisted of all but one song from his new album *Nothing Like the Sun*, along with material from past solo and Police albums.

With the size of his band almost doubled since his last tour, the possible improvisations were endless. Police songs such as *King of Pain*, *Bring on the Night*, and *Don't Stand So Close to Me* were given new feeling through the incredible talents of Branford Marsalis on Saxophone. Veteran Kenny Kirkland

on keyboards also added a new and varied sound.

Sting, even though surrounded by such fantastic talent, continually held the spotlight. He has often been depicted as staunch and serious but this image was far from accurate during this performance. His portrayal of Jimmy Swagart was light-hearted and funny when interpreting the ministers denunciation of the Police song *Murder by Numbers*. "A song written by the Devil and performed by the sons of Satan," hailed the reverend. Also

characteristic of the informal setting of the concert were the playful stage antics between Sting and the band. The music was serious and tight but packaged to entertain. It wasn't a staunch artist who did the twist with his background singer during *One World (Not Three)*. "Does Wayne Newton do the Twist?" questioned Sting. "No? It must be cool," he replied.

Playful and unpredictable best describe the 22 song concert. The show included a vast variety yet many standard Police hits were left out such as *Rox-*

anne and *Every Breath You Take*. This, however, did not hamper the show. Every song was different and intense. New rhythms and ideas were present even in classic material. Branford Marsalis added the feeling and soul that only a saxophonist can project.

As I sat waiting for the band to emerge, thoughts of *Roxanne* and *Wrapped Around Your Finger* plagued my mind. The second encore opened with the mysterious song, *The Secret Marriage*, (which closes the new album). The crowd was entertain-

ed yet puzzled.

About four songs later the band would disappear and I was still wandering. However the final encore would erase all doubts. An acoustic version of *Message in a Bottle* mesmerized the crowd. I watched and remembered Live-Aid when Sting captured the attention of millions during a similar performance. I remembered watching the television set in an almost hypnotic state. Even though it was the Aladdin Theatre for the Performing Arts instead of Wembley Stadium, the feeling was just as strong.

Beetlejuice has moments, but lacking on the whole

by *c.g. reynolds*

staff writer

I wouldn't recommend *Beetlejuice* for any awards this year, but I would put in a word or two for its

trailer, which is masterfully hilarious. Unfortunately, the trailer is almost funnier than the movie.

Beetlejuice is the tale of two slightly dorky newlyweds (Geena Davis,

the world's greatest insect lover in *The Fly*, and Alec Baldwin, a Peter Coyote-type actor who's been in everything, you just can't remember what) who, upon discovering that

they're deceased, set out to drive the new residents of their beloved house out. The family that is to be the object of the haunting prove to be too dull, stuffy, or just plain weird to frighten, so our bumbling spirits try to recruit some professional phantasmic help. That's when it gets almost interesting.

The real problem with *Beetlejuice* is that it just barely avoids being another *Ghostbusters* reject, along the same lines as *Transylvania 6-5000* (also with Geena Davis). Part of the problem may be that director Tim Burton (*Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*) loves cartoons too much for this kind of project. As the film swerves dangerously close to

goofydom to the frenzied music composed by Danny Elfman, it does indeed momentarily capture a certain Saturday morning flair. It's a pity that that same unreal aspect which is striven for so laboriously that it conflicts with another surreal aspect: the storyline created by Micheal McDowell, Larry Wilson, and Warren Skaaren. These guys don't get off the hook themselves, though. Their story takes place in a reality that's too specialized, and too much time is spent trying to make us understand how things work in the spiritual world.

All these things can be forgiven by the completely offbeat performance of Micheal Keaton in the title

role. Keaton's *Beetlejuice* is a vulgar, conniving, amoral, freakish creature with his own special comedic lilt threaded through it. It's obvious the ad guys at Warner Brothers could see that Keaton is the real strength of the film, having featured most of his finest moments in the *Coming Attractions*. The rest of the cast keep the film interesting, but can't overcome the crippling conflicts in the storytelling. Catherine O'Hara is strongly in character as a bougeois bohemian sculptor who brings to mind a much nastier Lisa in *Green Acres*. Jeffery Jones is as completely dull as a suburban dolt can be, but he still

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