

Las Vegas, it's the B-52's

by Tricia Romano

The B-52's are a little bit like a dumb blonde; they're perky and spacey, but fun overall.

Alternative rock's premier psychedelic hipsters brought their frivolous brand of pop to Bally's last night, pumping up the sold-out? crowd. After the opening act The Violent Femmes warmed the audience up with their feet-stompers, namely, "Blister in the Sun," and the classic "Add it Up."

The B-52's entourage arrived onstage in all of their funky glory. Lead singer Fred Schneider and singers Kate Pierson and the newest B-52, Julee Cruise were resplendent in their glitter outfits. The stage added to the surreal trippy setting with its futuristic space decorations in bright colors in addition to the unconventional light show.

Looking great is fine, but if the band can't play, then they will go the way of Milli

Vanilli. Fortunately, this is not true of the B-52's. Schneider played his part well, and when he was performing, he was the center of attention. It is important to note that while videos and the media portray Schneider as something of a sidekick to the women, in reality, this is not the case at all. The B-52's worked onstage as a band, a single group with no members hogging or taking the spotlight. Sure, Pierson seemed to be the crowd favorite, but it didn't seem that she thought so.

Pierson stole the crowd's heart, and with good reason. Her voice, which is strong on tape, came across very clear and crisp in concert. She proved there definitely aren't any studio tricks being played on her voice. As a performer she was top-rate; she played the kitsch thing up without being too cutesy. Cruise, on the other hand, did not have Pierson's onstage elegance. While

Cruise's voice was powerful and she sang well, her on-stage antics appeared forced.

The band was raving about the audience backstage, saying that it was the best group they have encountered thus far on their tour. Musically, the B-52's gave both die-hards and newcomers their money's worth. Performing old standouts from their distant past, as well as newer, more popular hits from *Cosmic Thing* and *Good Stuff*, they had the Vegas crowd dancing on their feet for the entire span of the show. Things really picked up toward the end when they played "Roam" and "Good Stuff," both newer tunes. Returning for two encores, they treated the audience with the ever-popular "Love Shack," and closed the show with their legendary hits "Planet X" and the underground classic, "Rock Lobster," which, suffice to say, rocked the house.



Singer Kate Pierson (above) lives it up at Bally's. Below, Keith Strickland or Keith Richards, you make the call.

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