

Burrn Magazine Review (Japan)

How on earth do you follow that?! Tough question for sure, but one with a deceptively simple answer ... **FM!** Playing their first gig together in far too long, the FM boys took to the stage to probably the biggest cheer I've ever heard at Rock City. Visibly amazed at the warmth of their reception, they launched straight into 'Breathe Fire' with gusto. As soon as Steve Overland opened his mouth, it was clear 'that voice' was still intact, and from then on I, like the rest of the crowd, was completely sold. An 'Indiscreet' medley of 'Face To Face', 'I Belong To The Night' and 'That Girl' tore the roof off ... the band gave it their all, and it was amazing to be part of a near word perfect crowd just lost in the joy of the moment.

The sound was rich and powerful (certainly befitting their headline status), and even when the microphone died again they made light of it and kept the crowd on side whilst the roadies sorted the problem (Jorn take note!). The stage was flanked by two video screens showing their promos from back in the day and the band were grinning from ear to ear, not quite believing that they were back and doing the business after all these years. Drummer Pete Jupp still frequently stands up to act as the cheerleader and the band still put across the image of five great friends who just happen to be in a band together. As their set wore on, it really struck home just how much classic material this band produced in their day ... 'All Or Nothing', 'Burning My Heart Down', 'Only The Strong Survive', 'Closer To Heaven', 'Bad Luck' and 'The Other Side Of Midnight' (with Jem Davis joining in the posing with his portable keyboard), all delivered like no time had passed at all. The hits just kept on coming. The entire band was having a blast .. they might have been a little older, and a little greyer round the temples, but to all intents and purposes it could have been the late 80's all over again!

There was a contingent who had travelled from Greece and during a lull in proceedings (due to technical difficulties) they passed a large banner to the band for them to proudly display, much to the amazement of Steve and bassist Merv Goldsworthy, and especially guitarist Andy Barnett who was clearly overwhelmed by the gesture and the whole occasion. 'Blood And Gasoline' finally segued into The Beatles 'Hey Jude' and after a truly rapturous cheer from the crowd, the band left the stage, only to return again a couple of minutes later for the obligatory, and much deserved, encores.

Steve strummed the opening chords to 'Frozen Heart' on his guitar, and gradually the whole band joined in as the song wound up to a tumultuous crescendo. Their parting shot was a souped up cover of 'Heard It Through The Grapevine', yet another old FM live favourite that saw an openly weeping Barnett completing the big finish whilst standing on his monitors, throwing shapes with his famous stars and stripes guitar. And then it really was all over. Taking their bows, the look of incredulity on their collective faces was a picture. "Do you think we should do this again sometime? I don't know where yet", beamed drummer Pete Jupp, "but we'll see you all again in 2008" ... from a bittersweet weekend of goodbyes, that was the best news we'd had in two days!

Despite the fact that I didn't think Firefest III could be topped, Firefest IV turned out to be the best yet, the fact that the main day was a sellout making it taste all the sweeter. Congratulations once again to Kieran Dargan and Bruce Mee, and to everybody else who worked so hard behind the scenes to make this a reality. See you all at Firefest V!

Dave Cockett & Phil Ashcroft