

Talent in Action

**MADONNA
BEASTIE BOYS**
Universal Amphitheatre,
Universal City, Calif.
Tickets: \$16, \$12.50

THOSE OF US who figured that Madonna was strictly a studio creation and would fall apart onstage were in for a pleasant surprise when she opened a three-night stand here April 26. Madonna's show, part of her maiden tour—cheekily dubbed "The Virgin Tour"—was stylish, well-paced and consistently entertaining. It brought together sleek staging and lighting effects, a tight and graceful, fluid stage movement by the star of the show and two backup dancers.

Madonna even *sounded* good in concert, aided by the use of prerecorded backing tapes. She was at her best on "Crazy For You," making good use of a deeper, huskier vocal quality that mirrors the song's deeper lyrical approach.

Madonna was less successful when talking to the audience. She was frequently rather cold and demanding, and at one point pandered to everyone's basest perceptions of her. Bringing out a ghetto blaster, Madonna announced, "This is my box. Every lady has a box." (True enough, though ladies don't generally do *schtick* about them.)

Lapses like that were unfortunate because Madonna frequently showed a sense of humor about her image as a heartless, spoiled princess. Throwing fake money into the audience, Madonna—having seen the light at last—announced: "Do you think I'm a 'Material Girl'?" Well, I'm not. I don't need money. I need love." There was also a case of self-deprecating humor in the music itself. During "Like A Virgin," the band segued seamlessly into a few bars of "Billie Jean," the song it has frequently been accused of plagiarizing.

The vibrant dance sensibility of such Madonna hits as "Borderline" and "Holiday" had many in the sold-out audience dancing in the aisles. The engaging nature of the music—coupled with the surprising sense of command which Madonna exhibited—were almost enough to make you forgive her for the obnoxious philosophy espoused in "Material Girl."

Now that Madonna has proven that she can get through a show—a point that was hardly a given just a few months ago—she should work on being looser and warmer on stage. Her personality still seems forced and calculated. If she can drop her guard, and still retain the show's musical strengths, then she'll really have confounded the skeptics who thought she was low on talent and high on hype.

The show was opened by the Beastie Boys, a New York-based rap group that came across as amateurish and abusive. They established their level of professionalism with their opening remark: "This ain't no motherf***ing library; make some noise."

PAUL GREIN

LORDS OF THE NEW CHURCH
The Palace, Los Angeles
Tickets: \$13.50

WHEN FORMER DEAD BOY Stiv Bator and former Damned-mate Brian James got together in Lords of the New Church to outrage the public, their biggest asset was their over-the-top, totally offensive stage show. Lord knows the Lords weren't about to make it on their singing. But one tended not to mind how out of key Bator was; it was exciting watching him flail himself—and the fans—into a frenzy.

In the past year, the Lords (Dave Tregunna plays bass, Nick Turner drums, and keyboardist Mark Taylor came along for the tour) apparently decided to get professional. It was a terrible mistake.

The IRS act had played the Palace before—obviously, as the upscale nightery replaced its glassware with plastic cups for the evening—and the place was packed solid on May 3 with a crowd you would not wish to meet in a dark alley. The audience, however, was more threatening than the performers; Bator appeared wearing a suspiciously familiar Edwardian jacket and a, yes, purple shirt. He never bared his chest until the hour-long show's 15-minute encore—a cover of "Substitute" that would cause the Who to retire, if they hadn't already.

How can anyone blend punk, metal and acid rock and still come up with a stage show that wouldn't drive your mother crazy? Presumably by keeping the sound reasonable, the lighting subtle, and using a total of one four-letter word in the set. One doesn't wish to actively promote public lewdity, but that is what the fans paid for.

There were good moments in the evening: "Murder Style," the band's U.K. single, sounded great with those keyboards programmed to "brass section," and "Russian Roulette" came off well with the same stack set on "helicopter." Turner's tom-tom-heavy drumming was passionate, and the group is capable of writing some fine tunes when pressed: "Open Your Eyes" and "Holy War" are good examples.

But when a band knows that 1,200 people are waiting to hear them trash "Like A Virgin"—and then only plays a taped version of it—they are not playing their ace in the hole. And it will be a while before the crowd gets to attend a redeal.

ETHLIE ANN VARE

THE REPLACEMENTS
The Palace, Los Angeles
Tickets: \$10

THEY MAY HAVE acquired a degree of respectability through their recent signing with Sire, but don't think for a minute that Twin Cities brats the Replacements have cleaned up their act. Their April 11 set at the Palace displayed these insolent garage-rockers at their nose-thumbing best.

Singer Paul Westerberg, guitarist Bob Stinson, bassist Tommy Stinson and drummer Chris Mars have a solid body of work behind them, as evidenced by a handful of critically-acclaimed albums on Minneapolis indie Twin/Tone. They played some of it at the Palace, including the chugging thrash ditty

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BOXSCORE TOP CONCERT GROSSES

ARTIST(S)	Venue	Date(s)	Gross Ticket Price(s)	Attendance Capacity	Promoter
LIBERACE	Holiday Star Theater Merrillville, Ind.	April 26-May 5	\$561,638 \$17/\$15	35,790 39,888 12 shows 10 sellouts	In House
U2 LONE JUSTICE	Hartford (Conn.) Civic Center	April 20 & 23	\$407,737 \$13.50/\$11.50	31,011 sellout	Cross Country Concerts
MADONNA BEASTIE BOYS	Pacific Amphitheater Costa Mesa, Calif.	April 21	\$297,473 \$17.50/\$12.50	18,765 sellout	Niederlander
ERIC CLAPTON	Meadowlands Arena East Rutherford, N.J.	April 25	\$288,145 \$15.50	20,248 21,098	Concerts West
THE FIRM	Madison Square Garden New York	April 20	\$238,855 \$17.50	16,255 19,729	Concerts West/Ron Delsener Prods.
THE FIRM	Capital Centre Landover, Md.	May 1	\$234,945 \$15	15,663 sellout	Concerts West
THE FIRM	Hartford (Conn.) Civic Center	May 4	\$209,959 \$15/\$13.50	14,800 15,419	Concerts West/Cross Country Concerts
ERIC CLAPTON	Nassau Coliseum Uniondale, N.Y.	April 26	\$203,477 \$15.50	13,842 17,888	Concerts West
THE FIRM	Rosemont (Ill.) Horizon	April 24	\$198,185 \$15/\$13.50	13,769 17,506	Concerts West/Jam Prods.
ERIC CLAPTON GRAHAM PARKER & THE SHOT	The Spectrum Philadelphia	April 29	\$171m706 \$13.50/\$11.50	13,080 14,444	Electric Factory Concerts
BRYAN ADAMS AUTOGRAPH	Kansas Coliseum Wichita	May 5	\$167,750 \$13.75	12,200 sellout	Beaver Prods.
EDDIE MURPHY LILLO THOMAS	San Antonio Municipal Auditorium	May 3	\$159,918 \$17.50/\$15	9,643	Beaver Prods.
THE FIRM	Hartford (Conn.) Civic Center	May 4	\$159,319 \$15/\$13.30	12,458 sellout	Concerts West/Cross Country Concerts
THE FIRM	Richfield (Ohio) Coliseum	April 19	\$149,589 \$15	10,917 11,994	Concerts West
BRYAN ADAMS AUTOGRAPH	Lloyd Noble Center Univ. of Oklahoma	May 4	\$148,298 \$13.50	10,985 sellout	Beaver Prods.
U2 RED ROCKERS	Sun Dome Univ. of South Florida	May 2	\$147,244 \$13.50	10,907 11,200	Gulf Artists
EDDIE MURPHY LILLO THOMAS	Dallas Convention Center	May 4	\$143,707 \$19.50/\$17.50	7,981 sellout	Beaver Prods.
CHICAGO SAMSON	Sun Dome Univ. of South Florida Tampa	May 3	\$133,020 \$15	8,868 11,063	American Concerts International/ Magic Prods.
JOSÉ JOSÉ	Radio City Music Hall New York	May 3	\$128,140 \$25/\$20	5,353 5,847	Radio City Music Hall Prods.
TRIUMPH MOUNTAIN	The Spectrum Philadelphia	May 4	\$125,040 \$12.50/\$10.50	10,483 11,882	Electric Factory Concerts
GLADYS KNIGHT & THE PIPS MANHATTANS	Fox Theatre Atlanta	May 4	\$123,012 \$16.23	8,070 two sellouts	Dimensions Unlimited
ERIC CLAPTON GRAHAM PARKER & THE SHJOT	The Omni Atlanta	April 20	\$114,015 \$15	8,231 17,037	Concerts West
DARYL HALL & JOHN OATES	Birmingham (Ala.) Jefferson Civic Center	April 20	\$107,130 \$15	7,142 8,500	New Era Prods.
REO SPEEDWAGON CHEAP TRICK	BSU Pavilion Boise, Idaho	April 19	\$101,885 \$13.50	8,527 12,529	Schon Prods.
GEORGE THOROGOOD & THE DELAWARE DESTROYERS	Rochester (N.Y. War Memorial)	April 20	\$100,688 \$12.50/\$11.50	8,710 sellout	Monarch Entertainment Bureau/ WCMS
ROYAL NEW YORK DOO WOP SHOW	Radio City Music Hall New York	May 4	\$98,140 \$17.50/\$15.50	5,874 sellout	Radio City Music Hall Prods.
BRYAN ADAMS SHOOTING STAR	Tulsa Convention	May 3	\$96,484 \$13.50	7,141 sellout	Beaver Prods.
THE FIRM	Jacksonville (Fla.) Veterans Memorial Coliseum	April 16	\$96,060 \$15	6,719 11,676	Concerts West/Fantasia Prods.
EDDIE MURPHY LILLO THOMAS	Springfield (Mass.) Civic Center	April 18	\$90,024 \$15.50	5,857 sellout	In-House/Consolidated Entertainment Group
ERIC CLAPTON	Baltimore Civic Center	April 23	\$89,478 \$13.50	7,230 13,677	Concerts West
ERIC CLAPTON GRAHAM PARKER & THE SHOT	Cumberland Country Civic Center Portland, Me.	May 2	\$78,406 \$13.50/\$12.50	6,021 8,898	Frank J. Russo
DARYL HALL & JOHN OATES 'TIL TUESDAY	San Antonio Convention Center	April 24	\$77,932 \$12/\$12.50	6,385 8,228	Stone City Attractions/Pace Concerts
GENERAL PUBLIC	Hynes Auditorium Boston	April 25	\$72,495 \$13.50/\$12.50	5,554 sellout	Don Law Co.
KROKUS ACCEPT CONEY HATCH	Dallas Convention Center	April 30	\$71,140 \$12.50/\$12	5,852 8,500	Stone City Attractions
KROKUS ACCEPT CONEY HATCH	San Antonio Convention Center	May 1	\$70,437 \$12.50/\$12	5,7342	Stone City Attractions
TRIUMPH MOUNTAIN LOUDNESS	Onodaga War Memorial Syracuse, N.Y.	May 5	\$70,046 \$11.50	6,367 7,890	Monarch Entertainment Bureau/ WAOX
GEORGE THOROGOOD & THE DELAWARE DESTROYERS	Dane County Coliseum Madison, Wis.	May 2	\$64,251 \$12.50/\$11.50	5,437 8,000	Stardate Prods.
RODNEY DANGERFIELD BOB NELSON	Westchester County Center White Plains, N.Y.	April 30	\$54,172 \$15.50	3,495 4,140	Tim Drake/Pace Univ.
STEVE LAWRENCE & EYDIE GORME	Kleinhans Music Hall Buffalo	May 2	\$49,175 \$17.50/\$15	\$49,175 sellout	Frank J. Russo

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