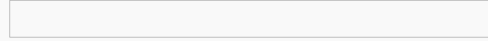


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## Steely Dan -Durham Performing Arts Center 6-9-09

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| June 14, 2009



The ever elusive ingenious twosome that is Steely Dan graced the Triangle with their presence last week at the impressive Durham Performing Arts Center - or the DPAC if you're into the whole brevity thing. Most of you know that Steely Dan isn't a guy you can talk to or ask for an autograph. It's actually an ever-changing cadre of incredible musicians handpicked (or should I say cherry picked ) by Walter Becker and Donald Fagan, the founders and wizards behind the curtain of the whole operation. I assume everyone knows that, but someone the other day did ask me "what does he look like?"

I was undoubtedly one of the youngest Steely fans in the room, proving that "all those day glow freaks who used to paint their face have joined the human race." The entire venue was packed with couples from their mid- forties through to their sixties who left behind their Blackberries and thoughts of the suffering economy to hear The Dan perform hits such as "Reeling in the Years," "Peg," and "Hey Nineteen."

Fortunately, everyone in attendance got plenty more than they thought for their dollar. Throughout the show Becker and Fagan drew from a well stirred cocktail of songs dusted off from late 70's albums "Aja", and "Katie Lied" with a few others from 1981's "Gaucho" (not to mention a fan favorite "Kid Charlemagne" from 1976's "The Royal Scam.") The romantic and sinister "Babylon Sisters" was a crowd pleaser, to say the very least. Fagan handed over the mic to Becker to handle vocals for a rousing rendition of "Daddy Don't Live in that New York City No More."

Each tune was plain perfect and only made incredibly more vibrant by the five-piece horn section, John Herrington covering rhythm and some scorching lead guitar work. The siren like back up singers swung their arms in harmony just like their soul-sister vocals. Donald Fagan hunched over his keyboard, standing occasionally to rock the not often seen or heard instrument--the Meldodica--while Walter Becker ripped through each song on guitar with quicksilver perfection, joking with the crowd about the landscape of our great state, verifying that these real deals had a sense of humor and humanity.

In a live setting Steely Dan is a dispensary of jazz, rock, funk and some things in between. Within the lyrics of all Steely albums Becker and Fagan create an alternate universe of late nights, beautiful women, classy affairs and shady activities. It may not be for everyone, but if you look beyond the accusations that Steely Dan is nothing but elevator music, you will find a forbidden city of musical gold and literary brilliance matched by no one else in the world of music. Who else put out albums throughout the 1970's, steadily winning Grammy awards and other accolades, and then abruptly stopping in 1980 with a multi-Grammy winning record (Gaucho) - only to return some twenty odd years later with a new album (Two Against Nature) which sweeps the Grammy Awards? Steely Dan.

To try and sum up what Steely is all about I'll take a line from Gaucho's "Time out of Mind" (which they played early in the show): "It's perfection and grace. It's the smile on your face."

-Dan Reeves