

Our Reviews

Demi Lovato in concert is just like cheering for your best friend

By MIKE CHAIKEN
EDITIONS EDITOR

After watching pop star Demi Lovato (star of Disney's "Sonny With A Chance") kick off her North American Tour at the XL Center in Hartford on June 21, I can understand her appeal to the bevy of teenage girls filling the arena.

★★★
Concert

She is the girl you want as your best friend. She's cool, because she swings a guitar and sings rock music that's just loud enough to annoy your parents. But, she's not one of those musicians who scare you with her fierceness. She's constantly smiling, letting you know she's approachable and not stuck-up. And she genuinely seems surprised, as well as pleased, that she finds herself standing on stage, headlining her own tour, performing in front of a couple thousand girls.

Demi demonstrated a lot of energy in her show (which was rehearsed right

her in Connecticut). Moving from one side of the stage to the other, she constantly encouraged the audience to cheer for her and say hello. She sang songs from her new album, such as the new single "Here We Go Again" and songs from her last album "Don't Forget" (where she teamed up with those other pop sensations, The Jonas Brothers) such as the title track and "La La Land." The audience cheered every time they heard one of their Demi Lovato favorite.

Demi has a pleasing raspy voice that follows a grand tradition of female vocalists. She put it to especially good use when she sat at her grand piano and offered her young fans a classic 1960s soul song, Aretha Franklin's "Natural Woman." Although she admitted to being nervous, she acquitted herself quite well on that soulful nugget.

Demi did a good job in Hartford at exposing her young audiences to a little bit of pop music history throughout her performance. There were the explic-

it lessons, like "Natural Woman." However, some lessons were more subtle and might have been missed by her younger fans. But if you listened carefully to the guitar riffs in her music, you could hear a little bit of Alice Cooper and touch of The Beatles. And if you paid attention to the little bit of rock and roll attitude worked by her band and herself, you could see a smattering of Joan Jett in the mix.

In this respect, Demi is following in the footsteps of her peers, and mentors, The Jonas Brothers. If you listen carefully to the Jonas Brothers, you can tell their roots are deeper than just today's top 40. Demi Lovato also shows she's a fan of music and not just a television star on a working holiday.

In this respect, she really is a good friend to her fans.

David Archuleta, the runner-up singer for the seventh season of "American Idol," was in fine voice at the XL Center June 21.



COURTESY OF DISNEY

Demi Lovato

Sometimes, you have to wonder how the "American Idol" singers will translate their talents to an arena setting. But David's voice soared to the back reaches of the XL Center and he beautifully recreated his hits, "Crush" and "A Little Too Not Over You." And his solo version of One Republic's "Apologize" was

gorgeous. On stage, David was a charmer. Like Demi, he just seemed amazed that anyone would pay to hear him sing. His delight over his success was endearing.

The first group on the bill, KSM, had a brief set. But the all-female group rocked hard with an energetic set as soon as they hit

the stage. Like Demi, they demonstrated their knowledge of music history. You could hear a touch of The Runways (one of the first all-girl rock bands) in their sound. Their pop smarts were best demonstrated by their cover version of the old 1970s Cheap Trick song, "I Want You To Want Me."

Music listings

FRIDAY, JULY 3

OTHER
CONOR OBERST AND THE MYSTIC VALLEY BAND, Deep Sea Diver, and Michael Runion. Toad's Place, 300 York St., New Haven. ToadsPlace.com

THE FIRST ANNUAL HIP HOP JAM 2009 FOR THE COALITION FOR CHRIST. 6:30 p.m., The Space, 295 Treadwell St., Hamden. TheSpace.tk

SATURDAY, JULY 4

OTHER
UNCLE SAM JAM WITH THE BREAKFAST, The Indo Box, The

Friendly Curds. Toad's Place, 300 York St., New Haven. ToadsPlace.com

KEVIN D, Kevin D's Brother, Sarah and Mike, Chris Peters. 5 p.m., The Space, 295 Treadwell St., Hamden. TheSpace.tk

SUNDAY, JULY 5

OTHER
SET IN COLOR, Score 24, Valet Parking. 7 p.m., The Space, 295 Treadwell St., Hamden. TheSpace.tk

TUESDAY, JULY 7

OTHER

HEY MONDAY, This Providence, The Friday Night Boys, Stereo Skyline, The Bigger Lights. 6 p.m., Webster Theater, Hartford. WebsterTheater.com

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8

OTHER
ROCK THE BELLS CLUB TOUR. Reflection Eternal, Slum Village, Raekwon, M.O.P., Evidence and Alchemist, Supernatural, Pete Rock. Toad's Place, 300 York St., New Haven. ToadsPlace.com.

BAMBOO SHOOTS. 7 p.m. The Space, 295 Treadwell St., Hamden. TheSpace.tk

POISON THE WELL. Lions Lions, With Words, Moroi. 6 p.m. Webster Theater, Hartford. WebsterTheater.com

THURSDAY, JULY 9

OTHER

BARRINGTON LEVY. Toad's Place, 300 York St., New Haven. ToadsPlace.com
TOM WISE, The And Band, Derek Ryan, Chris Listorti, The

Sawtelles. urder.Over.Madison. 7 p.m. Presented by Sling Slang Records. The Space, 295 Treadwell St., Hamden. TheSpace.tk.

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