

NO DOUBT, BLACK EYED PEAS, GREEK THEATRE, 7-28-2000



Me and the Significant Other took the teen to see No Doubt do the Greek theatre. Warmups were the rappers Blackeye Peas and the very metal Lit. Sound troubles plagued the Peas -- who lost most of their vocals in audio mud -- as well as Lit -- who lost their lead guitar for three songs or so. The Blackeye Peas deserved a little better, as their version of rap encompasses a live horn section and strings as well as a real drummer. Their blend of vocals with music

approached acappella at times and it was a shame to lose the most essential element of rap -- the message -- for most of their energetic set, which featured capoeira-styled breaking and popping.



Lit is a darling of LIVE105 and brought its own alt-rock energy with the lead-singers acrobatic aerial spins and jump kicks.



No Doubt pleased the crowd of 9,000 teen girls and some 1000 boyfriends with their special brand of fluff-pop. To give them credit, Gwen Stefani's voice appears to have matured beyond the irritatingly cutesy nasal singing she used to inflict the airwaves with and their harmonies fronted by David Chapman on lead guitar were played tight and precise. The use of the very capable horn section could have been extended somewhat, as the appearance of trombone and horn came as a delightful treat amidst all of the usual guitar/bass/drum thing. The lyrics were mostly forgettable, dealing uniformly with teenish variations on "I used luv 'im, now I hate his guts", with a few fairly decent "riot grrl" rants tossed in.

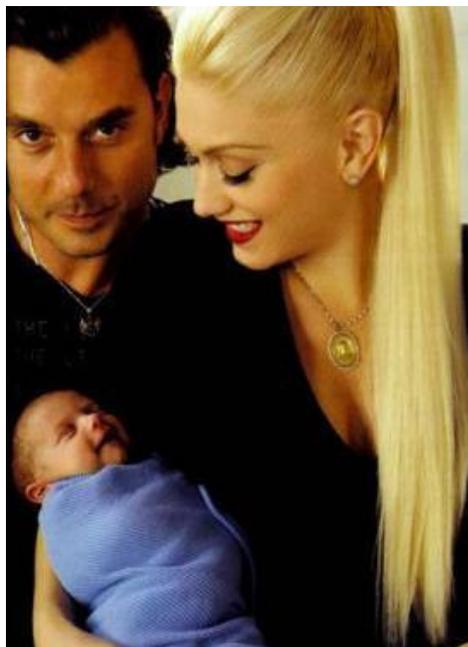


The memorable songs that had hit top-40 were sung almost exclusively by the crowd as Stefani, dressed in opaque hot-pink "harem trowsers" and gold

bangles, pointed the mic out over the mosh pit. She is, no doubt, entirely a favorite with the seventeen-something set for good reason, as the band conducts a very energetic show devoid of the cock-rock pretensions and basic meaness that puts off so many would-be concert goers. As Stefani spun dervish-like with her arms out while proclaiming, "I'm a GIRL; Look at me!", thousands of screamers voiced their approval.

``Why do the good girls always want the bad boys?" Stefani wondered on one new song, ``Bathwater." The way she tells it, it's the story of her life. Famously linked with another pop star, Bush's Gavin Rossdale, Stefani milks her lovelorn tribulations as an open conversation with her fans.

It's the daydreamy stuff of middle school, with professional, hard-boiled musical accompaniment. The No Doubt sound is rooted in punk and ska but has become hungrier for embellishments -- New Orleans funeral-dirge horns, funky '70s bass lines, deliberately chintzy New Wave keyboards.



While one sometimes longed for a little more edginess as exemplified by, say, PJ Harvey, No Doubt's ultimate message is joyous unification, as symbolized by the ethnically diverse crowd that showed up and by the encore which fielded all members of the previous warmup bands on stage. The SRO crowd cheered and sang enthusiastically in a warm spirit of harmony at the end, which exemplified the communal nature of Pop at its best. And that is not a bad thing at all.