

Duff McKagan – live

Guns N' Roses bassist and co-songwriter Duff McKagan arrived in Scotland after a prolific solo writing period.

The beating punk rock heart of Guns N' Roses has a style all of his own. Still, at the same time, it's not difficult to imagine Axl Rose singing while Slash solos all over opener Forgiveness but respect to Duff while there's currently no sign of his band putting out an album he's brought out two strong solo studio records in recent years while touring around small clubs capturing something of the spirit of those halcyon days from the mid to late 1980s.

He remains effortlessly cool in a black shirt and jacket with aviator shades, not unlike the ones depicted on the skull illustration from the Appetite For Destruction cover. The audience is an eclectic mix of new and younger fans as well as GN'R diehards; they all sing along to the likes of the country-tinged Chip Away, an earworm that demonstrates McKagan's ability to write a catchy tune. Rod Stewart should have a shot at singing this one if he ever wants to return to Faces style rock n' roll.

Duff was responsible for some of the best songwriting from Guns N' Roses Use Your Illusion era, his track So Fine is a case in point and the likes of Tenderness suggest that vintage. The biggest shift is seeing him trade his white Fender P bass for a Gibson Hummingbird while resembling an alt-country troubadour on I Don't Know. During the middle of the set, he switches to an electric white Telecaster perfectly matched for a version of I Fought The Law. It's followed by an

electrifying You're Crazy that recalls the Steven Adler last gang in town era Guns N' Roses. Mike Musburger on drums plays slightly behind the beat and remains on just the right side of not letting everything fall apart just before Tim Dijulio rips into a blistering solo.

The Garage by now is a sweaty and wild sea of bodies moving as much as they can in this cramped venue. Duff carries the spirit of Johnny Thunders with You Can't Put Your Arms Around A Memory, a song which feels as much his as the late New York Doll. It segues beautifully into Bowie's Heroes; its solid version that summons the same motivating force of the original. It encourages one older gentleman with a long white mane to start head-banging in the front row.

During the epic end coda of Don't Look Behind You, McKagan jumps into the front row to press flesh with his "Glasgow cousins", some pat him on the back, others offer a handshake while he raises his fists enraptured by the moment. The punk rock beating heart of Guns N'Roses still pumps and clearly leaves a bit of itself with a compelling performance that lifted the spirits of everyone in room.



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