

Nick Cave live at The Hydro

Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds walk out to a roaring Hydro and immediately create a joyful energy during Frogs.

Cave is a combination of rock star and travelling preacher always in neat tailored suits with slicked-back hair defying his 67 years. He sits behind the piano for the title track of the Bad Seeds 18th studio album Wild God. The gospel backing singers call out "Bring your spirit down" and with that, the Australian performer is ignited and leaps to his feet. He soars up and down the stage while pointing at the sky, pointing at the audience and kicking his legs in the air.

Visually, the exchange with his fans in the front row is mesmerising.

Warren Ellis provides some haunting violin during the redemptive 0 Children, an early set highlight where the gospel singers help create a moment of transcendental beauty. Jubilee Street kicks in for a full-throttle Stooges-style slice of rock n' roll before Cave takes us back 40 years for a dramatic rendering of From Her To Eternity.

The nightmarish piano hammers as the tension manifests like the soundtrack to a Hammer film. Long Dark Night and Cinnamon Horses offer healing balm through his imitable gothic balladry.

The punk blues explosion of Tupelo concerns a storm of biblical proportions that happened on the night Elvis Presley was born. Once again Cave takes us into the moment, leaning into the audience who hang on for every word. As predicted

Conversion catches flame during the live performance bolstered again by the choir in long flowing white robes moving dramatically from side to side. Their spiritual power adds much to Cave's classic about an inmate on death row – The Mercy Seat.

The Weeping Song has lost none of its strange and mysterious potency, the crowd sing every word like they are purging pain and sorrow. They don't want the night to end. No one does and the band soon disappear leaving Cave to play a solo version of Into Your Arms, a blend of hymn and folksong.

The audible Scottish voices during the chorus add a Celtic lilt that turns the Hydro into a kind of church. Cave, for a moment, looks out in wonder knowing the audience has brought as much as him. Few artists can change the atmosphere in a concert arena like Cave manages tonight.

All photos Richard Purden



