

On the scene: 'True Colors' tour in New York City

Jun 19, 2007, 03:05 PM | by Michael Slezak

Categories: [Music](#)



Last night's [True Colors show](#) at Manhattan's Radio City Music Hall was a lot like tour organizer Cyndi Lauper's feathered, rainbow umbrella hat — colorful, funny, and very, very gay. Of course, considering the show (which also featured Margaret Cho, Erasure, Rosie O'Donnell, Debbie Harry, the Dresden Dolls, and the Gossip) supports the Human Rights Campaign, anything less would've bordered on objectionable.

Despite the packed bill, though, the star of the show was undoubtedly Lauper, who stalked the stage and engaged the audience with the kind of youthful energy that makes it easy to forget her landmark album *She's So Unusual* is close to 25 years old. It helped that Lauper wasn't afraid to strap on her guitar and breathe fierce new life into old gems; "When You Were Mine" never sounded more desperate, and a slowed-down, honky-tonk-ish "She Bop" made you half expect to see a tumbleweed roll across the stage during the song's trademark whistle breakdown. Even better, a back-to-back assault of two of Lauper's greatest achievements, "I Drove All Night" and "Money Changes Everything," proved her voice has only grown stronger and more poignant with age. Who else can make a shriek sound so glorious? (Bonus points for dusting off obscure hits like "Hole in My Heart (All the Way to China)" and "Goonies 'R' Good Enough." Yay!)

Lauper was joined on stage for her last two numbers, "Shine" and "Girls Just Want to Have Fun," by guest drummer O'Donnell, who thwacked away to the beat like she was still unleashing some post-*View* hostility. Her earlier standup set didn't aim high, but played well to the friendly crowd, particularly her abortion-rights zinger that, "I don't think anybody should have control of my body except me and Angelina Jolie," and subsequent comment that her wife "Kelli hates that joke." O'Donnell, clad in a black, lacy top and yellow Crocs (le gasp!) also took a swing at her *View* colleagues ("they'll stab you in the back with a high heel on live television!") and joked about tabloids overestimating her weight at 300 lbs ("I've got an 80-pound swing. Let's go to Baskin-Robbins!").

Cho, who served as emcee, scored far bigger laughs in between musical acts with material that's mostly too blue to get reprinted in a family blog, particularly a vulgar but hilarious rap duet with Diana Yanez about her nether-regions (catch [the YouTube video](#) if you dare). Cho also labeled Craigslist the "Penny Saver" of gay hook-ups, and skewered celebrities like [Isaiah Washington](#) and Anne Coulter who've uttered homophobic slurs in public. "In gay rehab, you have to direct an all-trannie version of *The Vagina Monologues*," she declared to whooping applause.

Of the remaining headliners, Erasure fared far better than Harry, partly because the band didn't skimp on its greatest hits ("Chains of Love," "Oh L'Amour," "A Little Respect"), and also because lead singer Andy Bell seemed to be having as much fun as the audience, which leapt to its feet midway through the band's set and remained standing for the rest of the night. By comparison, Harry didn't play a single hit from the Blondie years, and far worse, made no effort to engage the audience while perfunctorily performing material from a yet-to-be-released solo disc. How about a little intro to (or explanation about) those new songs? Or maybe a couple thoughts about the night's civil-rights theme? No? All you're gonna do is give a listless take on "French Kissin' in the USA"? Sorry, Debbie, not even a house full of jubilant gays are gonna get worked up over that. Maybe next time, you can take notes on the Dresden Dolls, a duo who can take a keyboard, a drum set, and a bunch of songs I've never heard before, and make me want to visit the iTunes store in the morning