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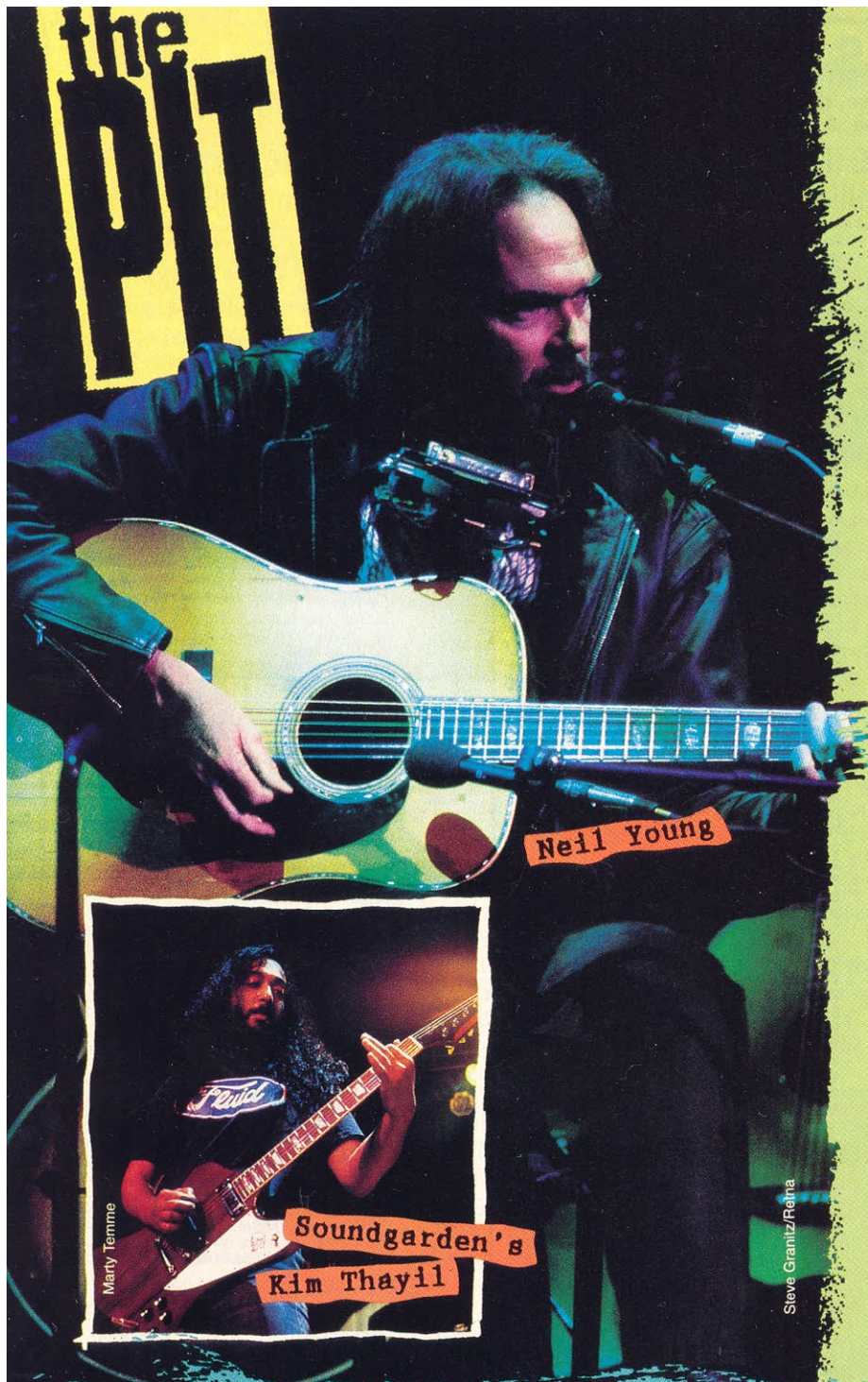
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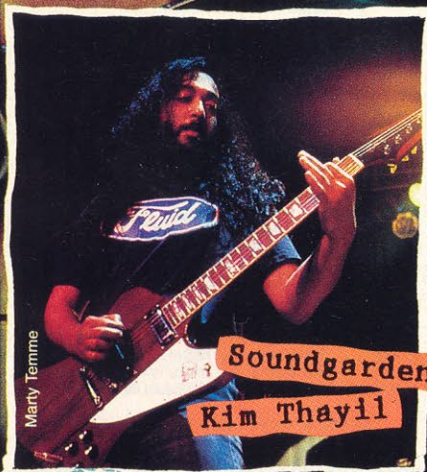
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Neil Young



Marty Temme

Soundgarden's
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Steve Granitz/Reina

NEIL YOUNG SOUNDGARDEN BLIND MELON

Jones Beach Theater, Wantagh, New York
Aug. 20, 1993

I WONDER IF NEIL YOUNG invited the likes of Blind Melon, Soundgarden and Pearl Jam to open his tour to salute them, underline his profound influence on their music, or just show them who's boss? Because at 47, Young still kicks out the jams with more power, passion and true grit than any of his young admirers.

At the Jones Beach Amphitheater, Young took the stage after a powerful electrical storm ripped through the area. It lit up the sky and pelted both the sold-out audience and the opening band, Soundgarden, with driving horizontal sheets of rain. After saluting the crowd's forbearance, Young generated his own electrical storm, unleashing a powerful, rip-snortin' two-and-a-half-hour show.

Returning to his battle-scarred black Gretsch after nearly two years of playing acoustic shows in support of his *Harvest Moon* and *Unplugged* albums, Young breathed new life into such classics as "Like A Hurricane," "Southern Man" and "Love To Burn." Backed by soul legends/Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame members Booker T. & the MG's, Young displayed a bit more finesse and subtlety than usual, but without giving up an inch of his trademark distorted wailings. Though this lineup may seem odd on the surface, the MG's proved a perfect foil for Young. Donald "Duck" Dunn's loping, rock-solid bass-lines maintained each song's form, no matter how far out on a limb Young went with his solos. Guitarist Steve Cropper traded licks with Young and spurred him onto ever-greater heights of six-string dementia. The show ended with cathartic encore performances of Otis Redding's "Sitting On The Dock Of The Bay" (Cropper co-wrote the song and the MG's played on the original) and Dylan's "All Along The Watchtower" that left the crowd dazed and deliriously happy. It was a performance that won't soon be forgotten.

Unfortunately, the same can't be said of the evening's opening bands; both played fine, but weren't exactly earth-moving. Ignoring the heavens, which were opening above them, threatening to sweep the audience out to sea, Soundgarden played a crisp and energetic, if monolithic, set. Highlights included "Rusty Cage" and "Outshined," as well as several new songs from their upcoming album, which sound...well, kind of like all their old songs. Blind Melon opened the evening with a pleasant, low-key 30-minute set. Vocalist Shannon Moon is a charismatic performer, and guitarist Christopher Thorn keeps things interesting with off-kilter rhythms and the occasional use of mandolin. He leaves lead-guy Rogers Stevens plenty of solo space. Ironically, a spirited rendition of their hit, "No Rain," didn't do anything to help the weather.

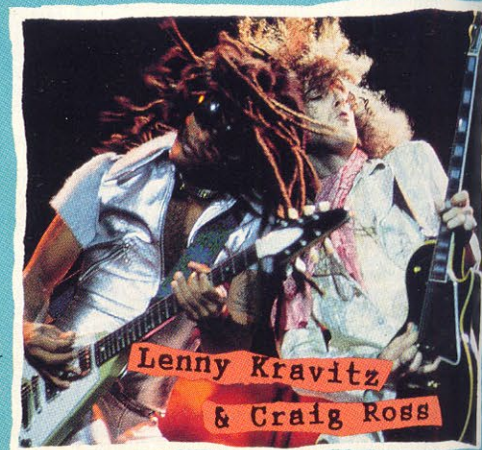
—Alan Paul

LENNY KRAVITZ Radio City Music Hall, New York, NY, Sept. 8, 1993

ATTENDING A LENNY KRAVITZ CONCERT is a bit like being an extra in a Hollywood film about a rock show. The majority of the audience is hipper-than-thou and well-coifed enough to make one feel extremely self-conscious about his wardrobe. And, of course, the sartorial splendor extends to the stage, where Lenny and his band were decked out in silver lamé, frilly shirts and flowing bell bottoms. They've also mastered every stage movement in the "How To Be A Rock Star 101" handbook. Kravitz is, in other words, a bit of a poseur, and his performances something like a pretty people's '70s revival party.

Luckily, Kravitz and his tight six-piece band delivered the goods. At his New York homecoming performance at the famed Radio City Music Hall, Kravitz and company played with spirit for over two crowd-pleasing hours. The band was tight and solid, sounding particularly good on bluesy ballads like "Fields Of Joy" and straight-ahead rockers like "Are You Gonna Go My Way," but occasionally lacked momentum during extended funk/jazz workouts. There, the horn section shined, but the rhythm section lost its way. Most of the time, however, powerhouse drummer Cindy Blackman—she of the foot-high platinum afro—held things together, while Kravitz and leadman Craig Ross formed a tasty two-guitar team. It was actually a pretty impressive performance—despite the fashion show.

—Alan Paul



B.J. Papas

Lenny Kravitz
& Craig Ross