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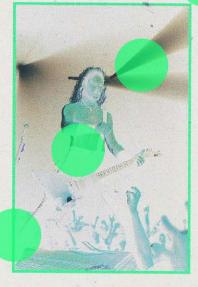
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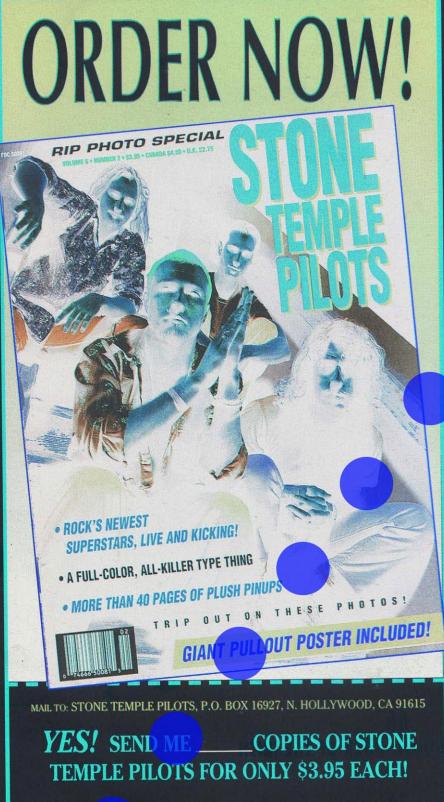


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GIG OF THE MONTH

NEIL YOUNG/STONE TEMPLE PILOTS/BLIND MELON Sports Arena

Los Angeles, California

by Katherine Turman

"Does it make sense?" asked one confused music-biz type.

"Perfect sense!" I replied, somewhat indignantly. He was referring to the pairing of hippie rock legend Neil Young with various and sundry up 'n' comers—including Soundgarden, Pearl Jam, Stone Temple Pilots and Blind Melon. It seems Mr. Biz just couldn't see how the bill jibed.

Of late, the venerable Mr. Young has been crowned the "grandaddy of grunge," and indeed, one listen to Rust Never Sleeps, and it's clear that long before the Seattle sound was a gleam in any flannel-shirt wearer's eye, Young was making what might be termed grunge. Thus, with music barriers crashing down like they are and the resultant reunification of rock 'n' roll, these groundbreaking gigs were actually pretty inspired.

Round L.A. way, Blind Melon was the choice for show opener. The mood was ultra-casual, positive and genuine as they bounced through a too-short set. In a tribute to their roots, they covered Traffic's soaringly mellow '60s gem "Dear Mr. Fantasy" and jammed on some stuff that had them sounding like a Midwestern Santana. It was their breakthrough song "No Rain," however, that whipped the crowd into a frenzy. The 30-



"Wicked Garden" and new song, the heavy and mysterious "Lourgeffy, they also jammed on way-weird jazzho version of "Sex. Type Thing" and an equally strange and manderful take on their notative of the was sung through a megaphone. The only moment that marred the otherwise

groovin' show was Weiland's rather nasty tirale at an audience member who'd apparently offered the singer an upraised middle finger. Still, it was a fine performance from a band who, despite naysayers and their shouts of, "Seattle bandwagon," has captured the ears of postmetallers everywhere.

After a longish break, Neil Young and his ackup band, the legendary Booker T. And The G's (of "Green Onions" fame), took the stage.



STONE

TEMPLE

PILOTS

Hopping around like a disjointed puppet, Young and Co. (including his sister Astrid on backup vocals) delivered a passionate, well-paced set that featured loud and raucous versions of both old and new favorites. So he didn't play "Cinnamon Girl"—it was still a tremendous display from a seemingly ageless rock stalwart. A solo acoustic version of the pointed "The Needle and the Damage Done" and Young's spirited harmonica playing ruled, as did "Heart of Gold," "Down by the River," "Keep on Rockin' in the Free World" and "Southern Man."

If the body of the set didn't hold too many surprises, the encores were definite departures from the canon: a laid-back version of Otis Redding's "(Sittin' on the) Dock of the Bay" and the inspiring Bob Dylan song made popular by Jimi Hendrix, "All Along the Watchtower." Young's legendary protracted endings and his use of noisy guitar feedback were compelling and never forced. Come to think of it, there's more than one young band out there that could learn a thing or three from his balls-out, "better to burn out than fade away" vibe. Long may you run, Neil. • Photos by Lisa Johnson

minute show was over in a flash, but not before relaxed but energetic singer Shannon Hoon offered the crowd a little parting homily: "Every day above ground is a good day." Indeed.

Way above ground are the Stone Temple Pilots, who, in light of the immense and immediate success of their debut album, Core, earned the middle slot on this show. They had the audience on its feet—even the aging parents there only for Neil—for nearly their entire performance. Decked out in plaid pants, singer Weiland led STP through a strong set that included the expected hits plus a couple cool surprises. Besides

BLIND MELON