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## Legends Crosby, Stills & Nash bring harmony to excited Embassy Theatre audience

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel  
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While the lyrics to one of their most famous songs "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" states 'It's getting to the point where I'm no fun anymore' that clearly wasn't the case last night as Crosby, Stills and Nash played to a sell-out crowd for over two and a half hours at the Embassy Theatre.

From the moment that David Crosby, Stephen Stills and Graham Nash took to the stage, the crowd erupted in overwhelming approval as the group proceeded to take them on fun-filled journey through some of the best rock songs of the past 40-plus years.

The legendary group, who have sold millions of records since they first performed together in the famous Laurel Canyon neighborhood of Los Angeles in the late '60s, dipped into their sterling catalog of hits providing passionate readings of such classics as "Long Time Gone", "Helplessly Hoping", "Guinnevere", "Wooden Ships" and the aforementioned "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" (all from their classic self-titled debut album) plus "Our House", "Teach Your Children", "Southern Cross" and a blazing version of "Almost Cut My Hair" among many others.

Stills in particular was in very good form on the guitar filling the show with several stinging guitar solos that added an urgency and zest to some very well-known and well-loved songs.

CSN's legendary vocal harmonies were also in abundance last night as well. Yes, there were a few vocal flaws but while the years may have diminished their power somewhat, the sound Crosby, Stills and Nash create together is still magical.

Crosby and Nash's voices in particular remain remarkably unaffected by time. Both men sang strongly and quite a few times during the evening sounded as if they had stepped right out of 1969 or 1970 with a passion in their vocals that was quite impressive.

Stills's voice, while still passionate and effective, has taken on a much more weathered tone. Most of the time he was quite good but there was an occasional rasp that crept into his vocals that gave them a rougher, more bluesy sound than the group's more famous recordings.

Appropriately Still's current side project away from Crosby, Stills and Nash is a blues group that he's a part of called The Rides.

As he introduced a song called "Don't Want Lies" from The Rides 2013 CD called "Can't Get Enough" he quipped about his new group, "I have been unfaithful ... no I haven't voted Republican."

Crosby, who underwent a cardiac catheterisation and angiogram just last month and had to cancel several solo performances, seemed to be in good spirits and looked much trimmer than he has in years.

I have to say one of the highlights of the evening for me was the haunting song "Lay Me Down" (song beautifully by Crosby and Nash) which was written by Crosby's son James Raymond who played keyboards and piano throughout the show.

Raymond was fathered by Crosby but put up for adoption in the early '60s. The two met each other for the first time in the mid-1990s and now perform, write and record together on various projects including touring as part of Crosby, Stills and Nash.

Crosby seemed to revel in his son James' musical contributions to the show and Raymond, along with a stellar array of musicians, provided the perfect musical backup for the group.

Another highlight of the evening, which underscored the group's still current political awareness, was a powerful new song called "Burning for the Buddha".

Nash described the song as being inspired by the plight of over a hundred Tibetan Monks who have burned themselves to death recently in protest of the conflict between the Tibetan people and the Chinese government.

While some may find the political tone of the group's music off putting, I find that the subject matter of CSN's songs still resonates powerfully and that the group's more humanistic approach to politics has enabled their songs to stay relevant and allowed them to stand the test of time.

Clearly the group's political views didn't bother the audience last night as Crosby, Stills and Nash's political comments were greeted with cheers several times throughout the performance.

Paul and Shery Copeland of Angola sat beside me at the show and said they really enjoyed the group's performance.



Both are lifelong fans of Crosby, Stills and Nash and have seen them perform several times over the years, most recently two years ago.

"Awesome," was Paul Copeland's response to the show. "Their harmony is still so beautiful. There are some new songs (since they had last seen them) and I'm loving the new ones. They haven't lost anything that's for sure."

"Incredible performance," his wife Shery added. "Their vocals are spot on. It's bringing back a lot of good memories."

"I think their vocals are more in tune and the harmonies are better than the last time we saw them," she said.

Brian Federspiel, a Fort Wayne resident and casual Crosby, Stills and Nash fan, also attended the show last night and thought the show was very good.

"I am not a big fan but I appreciate a good show," Federspiel said. "The guys did a good job. The sound can be tricky in an historical building like the Embassy but overall I think it went well."

"Fort Wayne should be proud of the concerts it pulls off and the audiences it caters too," Federspiel added.

Crosby, Stills and Nash are a part of rock royalty so to speak.

Not only have Crosby, Stills and Nash been inducted to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a group but each individual has been inducted as a member of other legendary groups - Crosby with The Byrds, Stills with Buffalo Springfield and Nash with The Hollies.

Like the pedigreed performers they are, Crosby, Stills and Nash showed the crowd last night that sometimes time does indeed stand still and age is no barrier when it comes to creating timeless music.

*James Grant works for the Allen County Public Library, is a former librarian for The News-Sentinel and occasionally covers music for The News-Sentinel.*