

Sisters of Mercy Tune In, Turn On, Cash Out

The Sisters of Mercy played its first North American concert in six years at Philadelphia's Dark Harvest III Festival on Saturday June 28. Local promoters Dancing Ferret Concerts negotiated with the band for a year to confirm the show, which attracted more than 3,000 people from across North America and beyond.

Although successful, the concert was not without controversy. The Sisters' mercurial mastermind Andrew Eldritch was granted permission to personally select the bill's opening acts. After hearing their music, he chose Sunshine Blind, Switchblade Symphony and The New Creatures. Then, just four days before the show, Eldritch saw the band's photos and cancelled the acts, saying they looked "too goth." The Sisters, he says, are industrial/alternative. California's Switchblade Symphony was allowed to remain, and gave a better performance than replacement acts Heavy Water Factory and Tapping the Vein. The audience responded to the issue by sporting "I'm Too Goth For Andy" stickers.

Eldritch's antics aside, The Sisters of Mercy's set was intense and majestic. The newly blonde Bowie-esque Eldritch prowled the stage with a lit cigarette in hand, all savage charisma, surrounded by a haze of not-at-all-goth smoke and lights. His infamous voice was rough and raw at first, but soon warmed up. Dance floor favourites "Alice," "Body Electric" and "Temple of Love" were performed, as well as older material like "On The Wire," "First And Last And Always," Leonard Cohen's "Teachers," "Anaconda" and the Sisterhood's eerie "Giving Ground." Thankfully, the most recent Sisters single, "Under The Gun," was omitted in favour of new material like "War on Drugs." Surprisingly gracious, Eldritch thanked the audience before launching into a stunning cover of Pink Floyd's "Comfortably Numb," and then closed the show with "This Corrosion." Eldritch may decry all things goth, but he can still deliver angst and irony with the best of them.—Stephanie Quinlan



The Sisters of Mercy's not-at-all-goth leader, Andrew Eldritch