

Song for a star

Bryan Adams may have hoped to take Karachiites dancing but his Pakistani fans were gearing up for a night to remember on December 29 at the Arabian Sea Country Club. Organised by Shehzad Roy and his Zindagi Trust team, the much-hyped concert proved to be an unforgettable event in addition to raising money for the "I Am Paid to Learn Project". All the rock lovers who want to be 18 till they die and are only happy when they're dancing, moved to Adams' tunes, incapable of stopping this thing they had started. Thanks to the impressive stage, lights that flashed in sync with the music and Adams' enthusiastic band, the 10,000-strong crowd thought they'd died and gone to heaven.

Roy kicked off the show with four songs, thus saving himself the embarrassment of being booed off stage by an impatient-to-see-Bryan audience. After a short wait, Adams charged on stage, driving the crowd wild. But the best was yet to come. Not only did Adams sing all his big hits from the 1980s and 1990s but he also sang some more intimate numbers to make for a solid two hours of sheer energy. Unlike other concerts, there was no pushin' and shovin', food stalls relieved hunger pangs and neatly lined up chairs provided respite to the tired. Even more wonderful was the fact that the concert began on time. At the end of it all, when Bryan thanked the crowd, everyone moaned collectively. "Don't you have somewhere to go?" asked the Canadian rocker, who was obviously taken aback by the Paki crowds rock stamina. "No!" screamed everyone in response. After all, it ain't a party if you can't come around, Bryan.

But the audience wasn't completely beguiled into thinking that they were at a concert abroad. The acoustics could have been much better, the floor was littered with trash in the absence of dustbins and instead of free water - which had been promised by the organisers - there were 10,000 thirsty fans. Finally, Roy was a real *saala* for not singing his latest hit "Saali" live and choosing to lip-sync in front of a foreign artist instead.

These caveats aside, the show was a real success and ample proof of the fact that Karachi can host rocking shows, with fireworks exploding in the sky rather than between members of the audience. Even though pessimists suspect that there will never be another such night, it is hoped that the concert will pave the way for more foreign acts in Pakistan. ■

— Sabine Gazi

