

---

---

# Concert in Review

## Springsteen: 'The Boss'

---

---

By MICHAEL ULLMANN

**Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band at the Palladium, September 16.**

Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band took control of the Palladium Saturday night, proving themselves remarkably fresh and spontaneous after four months on the road.

"The Boss," as Bruce is often called, does not simply play in a hall, he totally overwhelms the audience; without question he is the most energetic and emotional performer in rock today.

Springsteen gave everything he had for close to three and a half hours. He rarely performs for so long a time because he feels responsible to the audience.

The crowd is an integral part of Springsteen's show because of the rapport he has with it, which made Saturday's show special. After playing arenas for four months, he obviously enjoyed an audience of only 3,000.

When Bruce dances with saxophonist Clarence Clemons you can tell they are having a great time. The band's spirit infects the fans as well who are having an even better time.

\* \* \*

The first set comprised mostly songs from Springsteen's latest album, "Darkness on the Edge of Town." The most notable was a musical improvisation between Springsteen on guitar and pianist Roy Bittan which led into a smooth rendition of "Prove it All Night."

Highlights from the set included the classic "Thunder Road" and "Spirits in the Night." "The Boss" and Clemons performed from the audience amidst fans clamoring to touch them.

The emotional and musical climax of the set was the epic "Jungleland."

Clemons reigned over "Jungleland" with an incredible solo that was even more emotional than Springsteen's vocals. Although this was Clarence's highpoint, the 6'4" musician dominated much of the show with a massive stage presence that obscures any technical deficiencies in his playing.

Bruce referred to Clemons as "The Master of the Universe" and this is no exaggeration. Clarence is the only person I know of who can wear a three-piece suit with red shoes, and dance with a girl or kiss another guy (Bruce) yet remain the ultimate in coolness.

\* \* \*

It is impossible to single out highpoints in the second set. Everything was overwhelming, including songs Springsteen rarely performs, such as "Kitty's Back," "Candy's Room," and "Incident on 57th Street." The band had not played the latter song in two years, but you never would have known.

Springsteen also sang two songs he wrote which have been recorded by other artists; "Fire" done by Robert Gordon and a version of "Because of the Night" which dwarfed Patti Smith's recording.

A unique fusion of "She's the One" with the Buddy Holly classic "Not Fade Away" featured Steve Weinberg on drums.

"The Boss" finished with his standard set-closer "Rosalita" which allowed each band member a chance to solo in a joyous celebration.

Bruce returned for three encores, "Born to Run," "Tenth Avenue Freezeout," and a medley of songs.

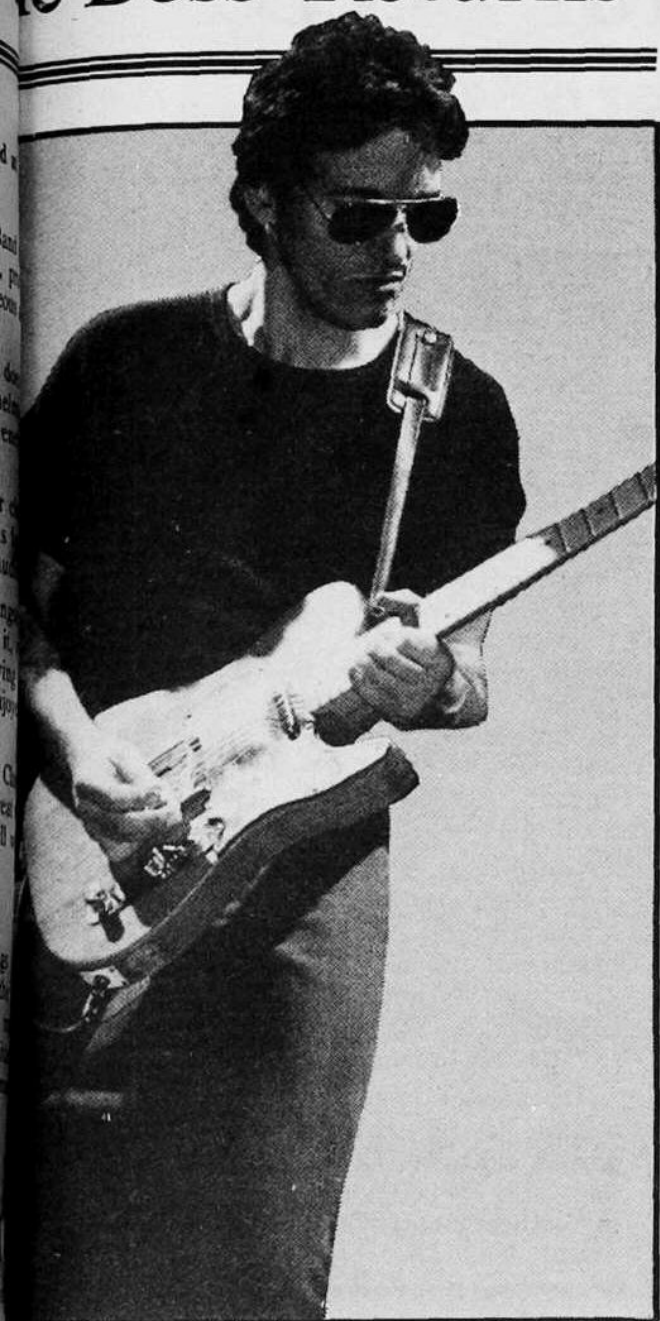
---

---

# The Boss' Returns

---

---



rock 'n' roll tunes which had the entire audience singing and dancing together.

When the show ended at midnight I was exhausted from watching Springsteen, who had not stopped moving all night.

Yet far from detracting from the music, the action on stage is an integral part of the songs, all of which have energy and impact.

Although they are out of the limelight for much of the show, the members of the E Street Band are each very talented. In addition to Weinberg and Bittan, there is Danny Federici on the organ and bassist Garry W. Tallent.

Not to be overlooked is Springsteen's polished guitar work, which maintained a raw sting, crucial to rock.

My only disappointment was the absence of two Springsteen standards, "Growin' Up" and "Backstreets." The former is an early favorite during which Bruce tells stories of his adolescent years while "Backstreets," which he interrupts with an improvisational ballad, has been a show-stopper this tour.

However, I can not criticize him for changing his show. Rock can never be static and Springsteen realizes this.

After a month off, Springsteen is going back on the road in November and may stop in Barton Hall. He has not yet accepted the concert commission's bid, but if "The Boss" does make it to Cornell, you are in for a night of rock'n'roll that will not fade away.