

John Maddison reviews Huge at the Grand Opera House, York

9:34am Tuesday 26th January 2010

January has been even more miserable with horrific weather and even less money, but there is an upside and that is in the form Huge doing what they do best and that is just entertain and entertain very well.

January has been even more miserable with horrific weather and even less money, but there is an upside and that is in the form Huge doing what they do best and that is just entertain and entertain very well.



The house lights went down and on came the recorded voice of the Lottery balls and Strictly Come Dancing, Alan Dedicoat, to introduce the band. The audience were shocked to say the least.

Once again the York nine-piece delivered a high octane two-and-a-half-hour show last Saturday crammed with songs to please all ages, and they needed to as families turned up with three generations, children dancing alongside teenagers and adults who should really know better. From the first song, I'm Still Standing, the crowd were out of their seats.

Highlights included a medley of Rolling Stones classics – Honky Tonk Woman, Jumping Jack Flash and Brown Sugar – which Big Ian described as “lovingly crow-barred together”, and arrangements of Oliver's Army, Stuck In The Middle With You and Gnarls Barkley's Crazy.

The audience were also treated to some sublime piano solos from the ever-present butt for jokes George Hall, whose fans were vocal throughout the show, and a super-tight performance from the Huge engine room of Hooter, the Bear and Phil.

Each song was interjected with disarming one-liners and light-hearted audience “victimisation”. Nobody is safe at a Huge show.

The production was worthy of a stadium-sized show, with graphics and animation and a stunning lighting rig, and the sound was mixed so that each instrument could be heard precisely – often an oversight at large concerts.

Huge don't claim to be anything other than a great night's entertainment but it is clear that not only are they a fantastic set of musicians but also that they have put in the rehearsals as all the brass-section work was impeccable with stunning solos from all on Watermelon Man.

They played a song that I really don't like – well you can't win'em all – but I realised when Careless Whisper was over that I was so mesmerized by the Shark's sax solo, I had enjoyed it and so had the 900-strong crowd, giving it a standing ovation.

There are few gigs where King Of The Swingers can sit alongside Pinball Wizard and that is why Huge works. They do exactly what it says on the tin.

I wish I had a picture of frontman Big Ian's face right at the end. Huge had just rocked the crowd with an encore of I Predict A Riot, Video Killed The Radio Star and I'm Gonna Be 500 Miles and then job done, he stood and looked back at us and said "Do you know, that was mint" – and it was.