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SUN ENTERTAINMENT Showbiz

Tue, March 13, 2007

Cochrane a great Canadian

By Jenny Feniak, Edmonton sun

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From community hockey rinks to campfires against a kaleidoscope of colour, Tom Cochrane gave a patriotic performance last night. On stage with Red Rider at the Winspear Centre, Cochrane pulled out all the stops for the packed house.

Even with a brand new album released just a few months ago, songs from No Stranger didn't materialize immediately. Instead, Cochrane kicked things off with Victory Day from his 1987 album with Red Rider. Unfailingly polite, Cochrane played only a single song before announcing the band, then jumping into Sinking Like A Sunset.

Passing off his electric guitar for an acoustic, Cochrane praised Edmonton, threw in his love of the Oilers and mentioned he performed here for Mark Messier's retirement before launching into Big League. "This one's not about them. They made it to the big league," Cochrane said. "This song's about us." With a gracious serving of classics, Cochrane finally got to his new work.

"I'll tell ya, I'm really proud of this new record," Cochrane said of No Stranger. "There's a lot of good and bad records out there and you've got to make music from your heart." It may sound like a cliché, but the grain of truth was evident in the new songs he offered, starting with Didn't Mean.

Not only did the songs cover every corner of his career, but the performance explored different combinations of players and instruments, offering a spectrum of emotions and experiences. "We're going to go back, way back into the catalog," he said while dedicating Untouchable One to, "All the strong Alberta women out there."

Later, incredible lights mimicking the Aurora Borealis shone behind him, melding from blues and greens to pink hues for Out of My Head from the new album. Playing with his old partner, "the incomparable" Ken Greer, was one of many touching moments from this true Canadian icon.

Cochrane is a musician of the people and of our land and, with his heart exposed on his sleeve, he's one terrific entertainer.



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