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Duran Duran are Broadway's

Their fans are still hungry like the wolf

BY MICHAEL GILTZ

In the 1980s, Duran Duran broke into worldwide fame — and the hearts of the “Wedding Singer” generation — with globetrotting videos like “Rio” and “Hungry Like the Wolf.” But now they’re bringing a world of fans to New York.

On Thursday, they begin an unprecedented nine-night stand at the Barrymore Theatre (243 W. 47th St.), and fans will flock in from all over to hear their new album, “Red Carpet

Massacre,” out Nov. 13, performed live in its entirety.

“That’s the idea,” says lead singer and lyricist Simon Le Bon, who just turned 49. “And I hope it works out like that. We’ve never done anything like this before and probably never will again.”

Audiences will face a “battle of the lenses,” as one song puts it, thanks to photographers who will prowl the red-carpet the-

wild boys

ater entrance, flashing fans’ images, among other things, on giant monitors inside the Barrymore. But the show itself will focus on the new album’s first cut-to-last presentation, as well as a Duran Duran dance set and, of course, a greatest-hits section.

“We need to deliver the music, so we’re not relying on our ability to dance,” says Le Bon drolly, well aware that it was the visuals in the early days of music video that hooked the first wave of MTV teens on “Union of the Snake,” “Girls on Film,” “Save a Prayer” and “Is There Something I Should Know?”

The band’s classic lineup — Le Bon, Roger Taylor, John Taylor, Andy Taylor (the Taylors are unrelated) and Nick Rhodes — has morphed over time from five to four to three to just two, and back again. A tour several years ago with the full lineup was a huge success, spawning a decent-selling CD. But after the politically angry album “Réportage,” the band started from scratch without Andy Taylor, and it’s the remaining four who’ll play Broadway.

Yet unlike the Police (who’ll play Madison Square Garden this week), these survivors of perestroika-era pop aren’t coasting on the past. In fact, “Red Carpet Massacre” is generating great buzz and boasts collaborations with Justin Timberlake and hip-hop producer Timbaland, without ever betraying the Bowie-ish white funk that defined the band from the start. (When Timbaland mentioned he was going into the studio to work with Duran Duran, Timberlake — who was born in 1980, the same year the five band members formed — reportedly said, “Not without me, you’re not”).

It’s the latest sign of respect from fans and peers,



Duran Duran (from l., John Taylor, Roger Taylor, Simon Le Bon and Nick Rhodes) will bring “Red Carpet Massacre” to the Great White Way.

who’ve always been way ahead of critics: Princess Diana called the group her favorite, Andy Warhol and Keith Haring joined them on MTV, fashion icons like Vivienne Westwood and Giorgio Armani collaborated with them, and rap trailblazer Grandmaster Flash sang with the band on a cover of his hit “White Lines (Don’t Do It).”

But the no-nonsense attitude of Timberlake and Timbaland did give the band, which once labored for years over their records, a good swift kick in the pants.

“They like to get a song pretty much finished in a couple days, really,” says Le Bon. “It’s all about keeping the energy going while you’re still excited about it.”

And how did the band that defined pretty-Brit seductiveness get along with the man who brought sexy back?

“Sex and seduction and glamour,” says Le Bon, “are the things we’ve always stood for.” ♦