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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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Lloyd Cole In Concert

I can't really enjoy a rock concert in a club with a velvet rope (how ridiculous), but inside the Canal Room was fine, albeit with drinks way overpriced. Still, Lloyd Cole packed 'em in and was his usual literate self. Two amusing moments. First, onstage was a Mac laptop and a tiny keyboard. I joked to my guest TJ that Cole was gonna simply play the Mac all night and then darned if that didn't seem to be the case. Ultimately, it was Cole and one other guitarist with all other backing programmed into the computer or played by Cole on keyboard. But first he came out and just started a Brian Eno-like musical soundscape and then doodled on the keyboard for a few minutes. People politely applauded when it was over. Cole jokingly toweled off as if it had been exhausting, mumbled "thanks" rather drily and then played another. And then another. And then another. My God, was this going to be a night of instrumentals? Then Cole said we were the only audience to applaud the first tune of the night. "One man in Sweden said he thought I was doing a sound check," said Cole. I'll bet he makes that joke/compliment every night.

But another comment later was truly unique. I'm sure I've never heard this before. Cole looked out into the audience and said he saw a lot of couples. I'm paraphrasing, but Cole said, "The level of desire to be here isn't always equal. For all of you who've come here tonight with your partners and endured far too much of my music over the years and yet still came here tonight, I thank you.' Thanking the dates of the hardcore fans who've been dragged to his shows and heard his albums again and again -- that was truly charming, I thought. Few artists would have the self-confidence to recognize that not everyone is a fan of his music -- much less recognize that some of the people at that very concert were probably dragged there by their dates. No wonder he's been able to survive for 22 years in the industry with his dignity intact.

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 2:17 PM



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