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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE  
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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## Springsteen At The Garden

Before the show, I was a little ashamed of New Yorkers. I don't care what album he's promoting, if Bruce Springsteen is performing at Madison Square Garden, the show should be a sell-out. Instead, people outside looking to buy were trying to bargain down fans with extra tickets. Inside, there were scattered empty seats throughout the arena. It was certainly very full, but seeing ANY empty seats at Springsteen's one and only show in NYC on this tour is a bit of a shock. I couldn't help thinking Bruce might be feeling a bit bummed. He's delivered a rollicking, fun album and it's barely made a ripple on the charts and casual fans are taking a pass on a stage show with 20+ musicians in tow. On the other hand, this meant the only people there were the faithful. And none of it mattered once the show began.

Most rock shows, including Springsteen's, are raucous, pounding affairs. I've seen Springsteen in concert and been so exhausted at the end I can barely stand. (Seriously.) The same is true for everyone from U2 to Billy Joel (who sold out the Garden for 12 straight nights recently.) But this 2 hour and 40 minute show to promote "We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions," an album of classic folk tunes and protest songs associated with or written by Pete Seeger, was different. It was a joyous, uplifting affair -- at the end, I was ready to go on for another 2 and a half hours or at least go home and get politically active. Rousing, moving, and tremendous fun, it was the equal of any Springsteen show I've ever seen, which means it's the equal of ANY concert I've ever seen. The only way I could have enjoyed it more is if my seat was even closer. (I was on the floor, which contained three sections. The front section was standing room. The middle section and back section had seats. I was in the fifth row of the middle section pretty much dead center.)

I didn't recognize the fine opening number, which might have been an old folk tune or a Springsteen original called "American Land," but

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