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Concert review: Katy Perry dazzles Atlanta with flawless pop show

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By Melissa Ruggieri

"Thank you for trusting me with your Saturday night. I hope I don't mess it up," Katy Perry remarked halfway through her exhaust-a-thon at Philips Arena.

Not to worry, honey.

The mammoth "Prismatic" world tour, which launched in the U.K. in May and landed for its fourth U.S. date in Atlanta last night, is the definition of pop perfection and solidifies Perry's perch as the reigning queen of the genre.

Already showered in kudos from the recording industry (the RIAA last week named her the all-time Top Digital Artist with 72 million downloads) and beloved on social media (she's the most-followed person on Twitter, with 54 million and counting), Perry doesn't need to work that hard to gain more adoration from her KatyCats.

But for two hours, Perry jogged, danced, floated, hung upside down, changed costumes eight or nine or a dozen times, bestowed an audience member with a pizza, provided pep talks and yes, sang.

Though she only has four studio albums on her resume – and her career didn't ignite until her sophomore release, "One of the Boys" in 2008 – Perry owns 17 Top 40 hits. She's already at the point that, even with a meaty 20-song set list, "Waking Up in Vegas" missed the cut and "Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)" was relegated to a chorus or two in the middle of "This is How We Do" from her current "Prism" album.

When you can both start ("Roar") and end ("Firework") your show with a No. 1 hit, life as a recording artist is pretty robust.

Perry made full use of the two catwalks curving into a heart shape and equipped with treadmill-like surfaces from the moment she arrived amid a troupe of solidier-dancers sporting glow-in-the-dark uniforms for the empowerment anthem, "Roar." She even paused to skip rope (in heels) before trotting down the ramp to engage with fans snuggled inside the heart during the perky "Part of Me."

Throughout the sold-out show, Perry opted to massage some of her well-worn hits.

"Wide Awake" was given a dubstep remix that sucked some of the pensiveness from the song, but since she was performing it on a spinning hydraulic riser, no one seemed to care. However, the slightly buffed versions of "E.T." (serrated electric guitar), "Hot N Cold" (finger-snapping sultriness) and "I Kissed a Girl" (hair metal-style guitar solos complete with pyro) impressed visually and sonically.

With the show segregated into seven themes – Egyptian for "Dark Horse," which Perry sang atop a golden pony that moved around the stage "War Horse"-style, giddy neon for the pop confections "Teenage Dream" and "California Gurls" – Perry had ample opportunity to display an array of looks to complement each motif. Among them, an inflated black and white skirt showcasing the yin and yang concept for "It Takes Two"; a yellow sports bra with smiley faces during "Walking on Air"; a Skittles bag worth of colors on "Firework."

She donned a pink bodysuit for "Hot N Cold" and "International Smile" and surrounded herself with a cadre of dancers clad in identical fur-wear from the felines of Broadway's "Cats." In the show's most inventive segment, Perry and her stealthy friends gave a nod to Madonna as they strode and posed on the, uh, catwalk to "Vogue" before engaging in a little cat and mouse play.

Despite these detours into CutesyVille, it's still sometimes surprising to see so many youngsters in the 10 and under range at a Perry show (it's not as if she came from a Disney movie, even though she's as bright-eyed and adorable as any animated princess). Perry walks the very, very fine line between sassy and saucy admirably well.

The light groping that accompanied "Legendary Lovers" likely went over the heads of the littlest attendees as well as the ample-bottomed female mummies who playfully spanked Perry during "I Kissed a Girl."

The tween contingent likely felt a kinship with Perry when she set up at the end of the runway for an acoustic segment – surrounded by many sunflowers, some of her five-piece band and her two backup singers – for a gorgeous rendition of "By the Grace of God."

She prefaced the song with stories of her own struggles – "Sometimes Katy Perry has bad days," she said (and sometimes Katy Perry refers to herself in the third person, apparently).

But her banter always seemed genuine.

"I never go hungry. I'm always very well fed," she said, jokingly, in reference to performing in the South.

Equally lovely stripped-down performances of "The One That Got Away" and "Unconditionally" displayed Perry's often-underrated range.

But this bedazzling production is simultaneously a blast of nonstop entertainment and a testament to her hits parade. It's a visual marvel, yet the music is never lost.

With "Prismatic," Perry has designed undoubtedly the show of the summer, and possibly of the year.

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