

## Sting captures souls in arousing concert

By JOHN GLANCY  
Staff Writer

Carolina Coliseum became a sensory feast of sights and sounds Saturday night as Sting took the stage in support of his Soul Cages tour. "I think it's (my) job as an artist to make every basketball arena as intimate an occasion . . . as I can," Sting said recently in *Rolling Stone*. He kept his promise.

The audience was an even mixture of the "thirty-something" and "twenty-something" crowds, with an obvious lack of hairspray in the atmosphere. The stage was interesting — spartan by rock standards: a hand-painted backdrop and abstract geometric stage props, highlighted by an intricate light show. The absence of flashy distractions allowed the audience to focus on the music.

Concrete Blonde opened the show with a dynamic and powerful performance. Their sound was clear (which is rare for an opening act), and Johnette Napolitano's voice was inspiring.

Vinx took the stage next and almost stole the show. As a solo performer who Sting discovered in L.A., he knows how to entertain with only a commanding voice, an African hand drum and a wry sense of humor. Vinx insulted Clemson people and won the audience. He was funny, but his music was his real talent.

Sting took the stage around 9 p.m., and the crowd went predictably crazy. Accompanied by an impressive lineup of musicians consisting of Dominic Miller on lead guitar, David Sanchez on keyboards and L.A.'s studio drum god Vinnie Colaiuta, Sting strapped on his fretless bass. The band then launched into the new hit single "All This Time" from *The Soul Cages*.

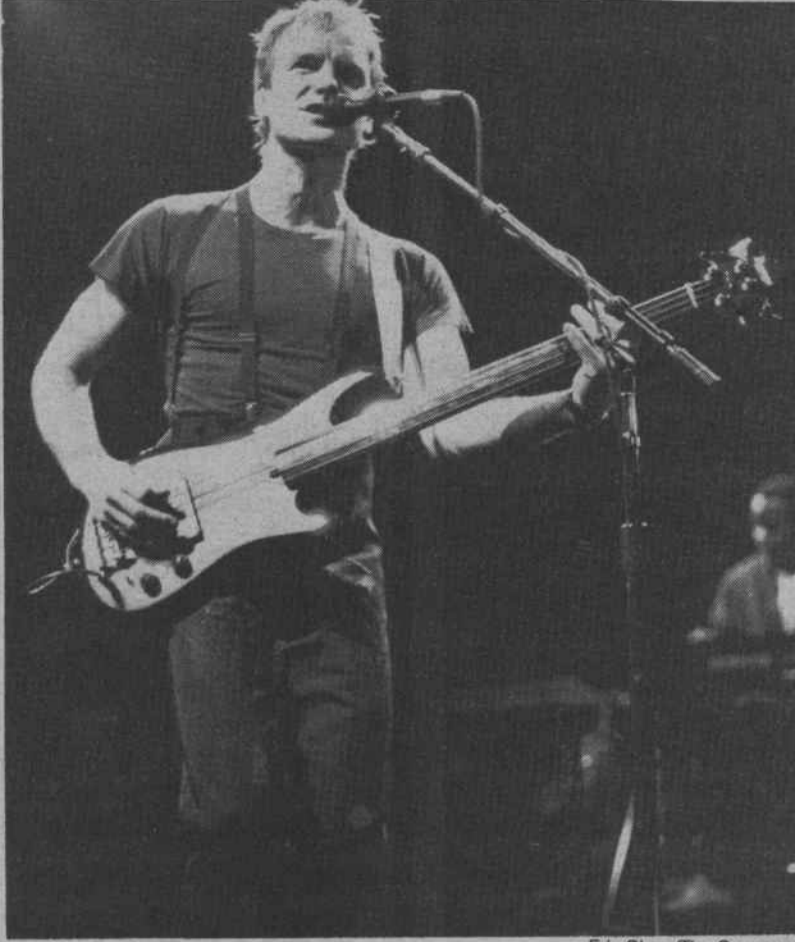
The band covered three more songs from the new album, including a rocking hip-hop version of "Jeremiah Blues" and then Billy Wilder's "Ain't No Sunshine When She's Gone."

Finally, the moment that everyone was waiting for arrived. Knowing what the audience's response would be, he announced with British cheekiness that he was taking requests. Eight thousand-plus voices howled "Roxanne" in unison and shook the building. The band got a chance to stretch and show their chops, even slipping into a tangential reggae version of the song for a chorus.

It's good that beer wasn't sold, in light of the amount of sips required to get through "Roxanne," though I did see some people pretending with their sodas.

The rest of the show was a mixture of Police tunes and songs from Sting's three solo albums. The band was tight and covered all of the tunes with creativity, but they should have been in the spotlight more. "Purple Haze" was jammin' (though I'm partial to Voodoo Chili's version).

The encore was a moving rendition of "Fragile," but something a little less docile and more energetic, "Demolition Man" for example, would have been nice. Sting has done well to return to his rock'n'roll roots by going back to a smaller band. His bass chops were together, his voice never sounded better, and there was a level of energy that made me feel like my money was well spent.



Eric Glenn/The Gamecock

Sting mesmerizes the coliseum audience at his *The Soul Cages* tour, which hit Columbia Saturday.



TRICIA TITUS

RockNotes

By TRICIA TITUS  
Staff Writer

People seem to enjoy taking potshots at Sinéad O'Connor. And who can blame them? After all, she's an easy target, and she gives you the ammunition herself by being one of the few celebrities who has had enough courage to express herself.

Many people hate Sinéad because of her musical style and voice. Everybody has their own tastes, especially in music. Of course, some people do love her music and the way she sings, myself included.

On the other hand, there are some people who hate her because of her unique look. So she shaved her head! Not a day goes by that at least one woman is not tempted to cut her hair off. It was that kind of day, coupled with the image her managers told her she should have (mini-skirts, high-heeled boots and long hair), that made her shave her head.

However, much of the controversy is over what she does and says. Let's start with the "Star Spangled Banner" issue. This one's hard to defend. The issue is one of freedom: in this case, her freedom not to have the national anthem played before her concerts. She has stated that her refusal to allow it to be played was not intended to be disrespectful, but was a result of the musical incongruity of the song with her concert and modern music.

She does not allow any anthems to be played at her shows, not even the Irish anthem. The flag-wavers, and Frank Sinatra in particular, took the move to be anti-American and responded with boycotts, insults and threats, even threats on her life.

Sinéad wanted to deliver what he considered a much needed spanking to a rock'n'roll brat. I mean, God forbid she actually express her opinion, let alone in a nation that prides itself on democratic freedom! Sinéad responded with the widely accepted knowledge of Sinéad's tendency toward violence with women. So they snipe at each other every so often.

Then there's the Prince controversy. Sinéad accused him of threatening her with violence after they argued over her cover of his "Nothing Compares 2 U." While no one can know what really happened, the fact that she has told this story publicly, that Prince has basically refused to comment and that the press has all but buried the story makes me wonder if maybe there isn't some truth to it.

We also have the Grammy controversy. She boycotted the ceremony and refused to accept an award because they were decided on the commercial success of the music, rather than the artist's talent. It's hardly a new charge.

And she's not the first to boycott. You may remember the boycott a few years ago by most of the rappers who were invited. They said that it was racially discriminatory because the rap awards were not shown on television.

Now, despite the fact that one of the biggest reasons Sinéad has for boycotting was the fact that commercialism supports racism in the music industry, everybody jumps on her.

And the controversy will continue, especially if people read the March 7 issue of *Rolling Stone*. Sinéad talks about the albums she hates and will no doubt offend a wide range of people with her picks (M.C. Hammer, Vanilla Ice, Whitney Houston and AC/DC).

To end the lecture, take it easy on Sinéad. Whatever you think of her, she has the legal right to say what she wants. And, there is some truth in what she says. She's a courageous human with endurance and will make mistakes, and she has feelings. Grant her that at least.

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