

Outkast

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kinky halo of hair, Melky floored the house with her rich vocal talent. Her sound, a mix of Lauryn Hill, jazz and gospel influences, particularly shone through in "I got a love jones for you," originally released on the "love jones" movie soundtrack.

The outstanding performance from the Black Eyed Peas was an exceptional highlight. The seven-piece band from Los Angeles provided a tight set complete with the "four elements of hip-hop: graffiti, break-dancing, freestyling and instrumentation." Their effective blend of jazz instruments and DJ turntables, combined with earnest lyrics and skillful breakdancing, elevated crowd energy to a new level.

A technical "misunderstanding" translated into a one-hour gap between the Peas and Outkast, which definitely stalled crowd morale. Luckily, freestyling audience members entertained each other until Outkast appeared and reanimated the concert.

Touring on the heels of their new album, Outkast electrified the audience with onstage charisma and musical integrity. Atlanta natives Andre and Big Boi deftly combined the best elements from all three albums, including "Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik," "ATLiens," and their latest release, "Aquemini." Songs such as "ATLiens," "Two Dope Boys (In a Cadillac)," "Mamacita" and "Rosa Parks" produced exhilarating audience feedback in the form of raised hands and bobbing heads.

The bass shook the floor as the boys went to work with "Elevators (Me & You)" and "SpottieOttieDopaliscious." "Wheelz of Steel" featured complex turntable maneuvers, while "Y'all Scared" revealed the tongue-twisting talents of guest stars T-Mo, Big Gipp and Khujo. Poignant lyrics addressed topics of racism and classism in American society, hip-hop commercialism and various feminist issues.



The recent Portland concert with Outkast featured tracks from the group's new album, 'Aquemini.'

Overall sound quality proved to be the lone downfall of the concert. Unstable treble tones and squeaking microphones detracted from listener ease and unintentional distortion of the Outkast portion lacked technical polish.

But talent, tight tunes and the celebration of heavy bass certainly overshadowed minor mechanical problems.

Ringling ears or not, the audience tolerated technical difficulties in exchange for a priceless hip-hop performance.



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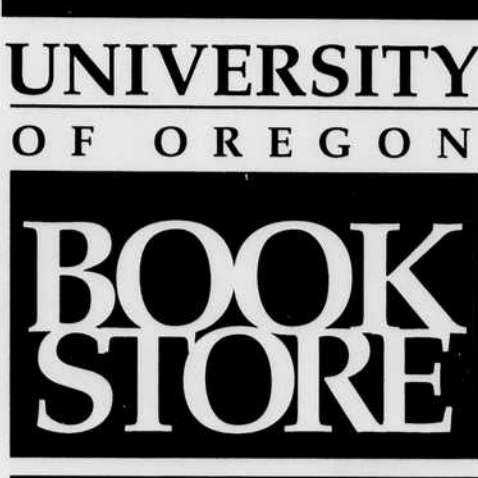
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