

Young, seniors rock at 'Queen' concert

11 April 2010 — By George Ford

CEDAR RAPIDS —Teens and many audience members who remembered when they were teens enjoyed Orchestra Iowa's "Queen" concert Saturday at the U.S. Cellular Center.

The latest performance by the Canada-based Jeans 'n Classics, backed by Orchestra Iowa, was packed with music made popular by the popular British rock band in the 1970s and 1980s.



Visions Photography - Orchestra Iowa

photo by Carl Blomberg / Visions Photography

Lead by the soaring vocals of Michael Stratton, the ensemble moved through memorable songs like "One Vision," "A Kind of Magic," "The Show Must Go On," and "Radio Ga Ga." Stratton, channeling Queen's lead vocalist Freddy Mercury, worked the audience to encourage the finger snapping and clapping that made "Radio Ga Ga" a trip back to the early days of music videos.

The audience hardly needed any encouragement to join in vocally on Queen's signature "Another One Bites the Dust." Vocalists Lis Soderberg and Andrea Kozial of Jeans 'n Classic joined Stratton for "Under Pressure" to bring the first half of the concert to a steamy close.

Joined by members of several area high school show choirs, Stratton opened the second and perhaps best half of the concert with "We Will Rock You." The audience again jumped into the act with gusto, singing, stomping and clapping in time with the familiar music.

The audience waved cell phones instead of lighters during the singing of "We Are the Champions," something that wasn't possible when Queen performed it originally in 1977.

The show choirs were top notch as they joined Stratton, Jeans 'n Classics and Orchestra Iowa on "Flash," "You Take My Breath Away" and "Bohemian Rhapsody." The four-part harmony on the latter Queen classic was performed flawlessly by the young singers.

After a rousing version of "Fat Bottom Girls," Stratton, Soderberg and Kozial returned to the stage for an encore performance of "Too Much Love Will Kill You."

Kudos are in order for Orchestra Iowa, under the direction of Maestro Timothy Hankewich. The evening offered proof that classical musicians can enjoy performing music that appeals to audience members of all ages.

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JEANS' n
Classics

Jeans 'n Classics Inc.

265 Ridout Street South
London, ON N6C 3Y7 Canada
(519) 439-1370
jeansnclassics@mac.com