

## Cochrane and Mitchell rock Spectra Place



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BY DAVID WILLBERG

Tom Cochrane believes that Spectra Place "is going to see some good times."

Cochrane and Red Rider was the headlining act for the grand opening concert at the Spectra Place events centre on April 15. Kim Mitchell was the opening act.

A crowd estimated to be around 2,000 spectators – many of them were standing on the Spectra Place floor to be up-close to the Canadian rock icons – cheered loudly for much of the event, and joined in the singing with many of the songs. Reverberations from the sounds generated by the guitars, drums and the cheers of the audience could be felt throughout the building.

Cochrane and Red Rider started off their half of the concert with three well-known hits – "Victory Day," "Sinking Like a Sunset" and "Big League."

"It's about hockey and how it pulls us together," Cochrane said of "Big League," which, 23 years after its release, is still played during hockey games at arenas across North America.

He believes it's a great song for the Prairies, and for Canada.

Cochrane dedicated his fourth song, "The Untouchable One," to the Estevan teenage girl who recently committed suicide. Teen suicides that are connected to bullying remain an issue in many communities across Canada, Cochrane said.

People need to speak out against bullying in schools, he said, and parents need to communicate the importance of empathy to children.

Cochrane noted that he has two daughters.

He performed several more hits, including "White Hot" and "No Regrets," and built towards the concert's climax, and his final scheduled song: the 1991 chart topper "Life is a Highway."

Fans continued to cheer for several minutes after the final song, which brought Cochrane and Red Rider back to the stage out for an encore. He performed "Lunatic Fringe" and "Boy Inside the Man," and then waved good bye to the adoring fans.

This wasn't the first time that Cochrane and Red Rider has been in Estevan. Back in 1980, when band members were in the infancy of their musical careers, they were the opening act for April Wine for a show in the Energy City.

Mitchell energized the audience with a 12-song, 80-minute performance. He saved his two best-known songs – "Patio Lanterns" and "Go for Soda" – until he was nearly finished.

Spectators inside one of the private boxes of Spectra Place illuminated several patio lanterns in a tribute to Mitchell.



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Tom Cochrane and Red Rider was the headlining act during the grand opening concert at Spectra Place on April 15. The band performed many of their most popular hits for an enthusiastic audience.

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Mitchell used crowd interaction for such songs as "I am a Wild Party" and "Ain't Life Amazing." The latter song was the title track from his latest album, which was released in 2007.

"You sound awesome," Mitchell told the audience after "I am a Wild Party."

Cochrane and Mitchell have worked together previously. Mitchell supplied guitar for one of the songs on Cochrane's 1991 album "Mad, Mad World" – the album that contained such hits as "Life is a Highway," "Setting like the Sunset" and "No Regrets."

A long-time member of Mitchell's band, back-up vocalist and guitar player Peter Fredette, was part of Cochrane's band when Cochrane enjoyed some of his greatest commercial success in the 1990s.

Both Cochrane and Mitchell raved about Spectra Place.

"This is a pretty nice, brand new facility you have here," Mitchell said to applause.

Cochrane predicted that a lot of hockey championships would be won inside of the venue.

City manager Jim Puffalt applauded Cochrane and Mitchell for their professionalism and their music. He noted that the performers were not only impressed with the venue, but with the hospitality from the community.

"The bands were really good," said Puffalt. "People enjoyed the acts. They enjoyed the building. They enjoyed the private boxes."

The concert was a good learning experience, Puffalt said. There were a few hurdles, most notably the lengthy line-ups for liquor sales, but he believes those were mostly rectified by the end of Mitchell's performance.

Still, there are some measures that can be taken to ensure shorter line-ups for alcohol during the next concert.

Acoustics were great, he said.

"Other people came and told me during, and after the show, that the sound was really good in there," said Puffalt. "We're thrilled with that, to be honest, because sometimes facilities that big can have poor acoustics, so we're glad that the acoustics were high-quality."

About half of Spectra Place's sound baffles have been installed, he said, which means that the sound should be even better for future concerts.

The success of the Cochrane concert is proof that Spectra Place is more than just a hockey arena, Puffalt said. It truly is an events centre that is capable of hosting concerts with great bands and quality music.



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