

## Pat Benatar: Civic Auditorium, Omaha, NB (1981)

-Casey McCabe

*Ampersand, December 1981*

The critical question that arises for rock performers who parade on stage in skin tight outfits: are they listening to my music or staring at my crotch?

The emphasis on this point has tended to overshadow the fact that Benatar would be just as capable a rocker if she appeared in a gunny sack. But for the male concert goers who are usually resigned to scream for Ted Nugent's guitar pick, Pat's "pixie-with-a-switchblade" attractiveness is an added incentive to the bursts of mainstream rock. For female audiences subjected to rock's tendency toward male chauvinism, Benatar's combination of sensitivity and aggression is an irresistible role model.

Benatar's on stage presence has matured from mike-humping and gyrating to a more tasteful level of air-guitar choreography and overall showmanship. Her music also gives her three octave voice a chance to coo as well as scream.

Curiously, Benatar's choice of encores was two cover tunes, the first being an excellent version of the old Paul Revere and the Raiders nugget "Just Like Me" and a grand finale of "Helter Skelter" dedicated on this night to John Lennon on his birthday. Done live as a wrap-up encore however, the song loses much of the necessary angst.

There were some other lapses of credibility, such as the irony of putting "Hit Me With Your Best Shot" back to back with "Hell Is For Children". But it is hard to doubt Benatar's performing sincerity. The crowd has dubbed her Queen of Rock and at this point it appears she has no intention of letting them down. Her penchant for tight fitting jumpsuits is just one part of the bargain.

