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Review of Blur concert in Rome

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Victoria Wyatt tells Wanted in Rome of her experience at the Blur concert at Rock in Roma on 29 July.

Preparing to see a Blur concert is like preparing for war... or at least camping. One needs food, water, sturdy shoes and knowledge that you will be forced into extremely close physical contact with a very large amount of people that you have never previously met.

With memories of the 2012 Hyde Park show and standing on one leg for three hours (due to lack of foot space) still burnt into my physical being, I turned up to Capannelle just before the doors opened and was well prepared for the battle and evening ahead.

Three things surprised me about last night's Blur show: the average age of audience members, the size of the stage on which they played, and the crowd's knowledge of every single lyric.

Given that band members Damon Albarn, Alex James, Dave Rowntree and Graham Coxon are all hovering around their mid-40s and that they have not released an album since 2003's *Think Tank*, there was a surprisingly large number of 20-somethings, and a surprisingly small number of 35s-and-over in attendance.

The Rock in Rome complex has three stages to accommodate different sized bands and audiences, and it was a huge shock to see that Blur was playing on the 'Black Stage', the smallest of three. The audience however were all Blur aficionados and sang along to the difficult cockney lyrics like they were in their native language.

Blur delivered what was essentially a 'Best of' mix, opening with the ever popular *Girls and Boys*, and delivering a set-list that included *Beetlebum*, *Coffe & TV*, *Popscene*, *Parklife*, *The Universal*, *To the End*, *Tender*, *Country House*, *For Tomorrow* and of course ended with a rousing version of *Song 2*.

With four back-up singers and a brass section being used on most of the tracks, there was never a down moment, with the audience either jumping frenetically, or slow-waving arms and lighters throughout. At only an hour and a half (apparently cut short due to technical difficulties with the PA at the start) it was a quick show, but my goodness it was a good one.

Victoria Wyatt

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