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Working Title: **Hits and Memories Straight From the Heart, Bryan Adams Looks Back with Bluesfest Crowd**

**Image List:**

* **Image 1 – Bryan Adams – Photo Credit Andre Gagne**
* **Image 2 – Bryan Adams – Photo Credit Andre Gagne**
* **Image 3 – Bryan Adams – Photo Credit Andre Gagne**
* **Image 4 – Bryan Adams – Photo Credit Andre Gagne**

Hey HOTtawa, any weather buffs out there? On July 5, back in the summer, the summer of ’69, a ten year old Bryan Adams would have been basking in a balmy 26°c as opposed to today’s shirt soakin’ ten flaming points higher 36°c. I mean, balmy compared to the wave of mug washing over the Capital.

For a couple hours, it seemed like the opening night of RBC Bluesfest 2018 would suffer the same drop in crowds as Canada Day did as Canucks chose to stay closer to anything air conditioned then a sizzle in the sun. A 2-hour bust out all the hits kinda’ concert from Bryan Adams, however, showed that if you rock it they will come! And, oh yeah, he rocked it!

21,000 plus sweated all over LeBreton Flats for what the rock icon would call the biggest dance party in town. Kicking off the show with exactly what he got, “Ultimate Love”, the concert was the second return to his old stompin’ grounds in under a year with his last stop in Ottawa being December’s NHL 100 Classic.

Though Kingston and Vancouver try to claim him, Adams was raised right here in O-town. He frequently paused between power ballads, rockers and butt wiggles to share some memories such as how, inevitably, someone comes up to him each time he’s here to say that they went to school together. He thought he was in the clear this time but would bump into one of his Colonel By Secondary School classmates as he was walking onto the festival grounds.

“I got through the whole day …and then we got here and there was a cop holding people back in the line. I said, I’m singing tonight, can we get through?’ And he looks at me and says, I know you’re singing, we went to school together,” he said with a half-joking sigh.

After “Heaven”, the first slow one of the night (and one where the audience took decided they’d sing to Adams for a change as they took the entire first verse), he was still thinkin’ about his younger years. After settling back down from the early set appearance of “Summer of ‘69”, the rocker had some revelations. Turns out that his first real electric guitar wasn’t bought at the five and dime at all. It wasn’t even bought in the summer of ’69! It was actually snagged in 1972 at a Bank Street pawn shop.

“And if you can believe it, I still have the sucker!”

That first real six string didn’t make a stage appearance nor, alas, did Tina Turner during another hit from *Reckless*, “It’s Only Love”, though Adams had fun teasing that the Queen of Rock ‘n’ Roll was really waiting in the wings. Without having her to dance with, he called upon any of the women in the audience to head to a mini-stage and groove out to one of his bluesier tunes, “If Ya Wanna Be Bad Ya Gotta Be Good”. He didn’t get one woman…he didn’t get two…or even three.

“Well, that’s Ottawa for you,” Adams said with a smile as he watched the smaller stage fill up. “You ask for one hot girl and you get six!”

Actually, by this journalist’s count, there were at least ten including one rapidly firing off a bubble gun!

Where to pick out more highlights in a show of highlights? Well, let’s start with “Here I Am” being sung partially in French, an beautifully acoustic “Baby When Your Gone” which jostled for festival sound wave supremacy with the Nick Lowe and the Los Straitjackets show on the newly tented Claridge Stage, and a mid-set visit from the song that launched a thousand romances, “(Everything I Do) I Do It for You”. From the 1991 flick *Robin Hood: Prince of thieves,* it’s still Adams’ most successful single.

*(We interrupt this review for a fun Bluesfest fact! Kevin Costner --who played the titular character in the above mentioned film-- also played a gig at the fest! He and his band Modern West were on the 2010 line-up annnnnd this all links to Kevin Bacon who played that same year!)*

Moving on…

**26 Years  
2 Cities  
7 Concerts**

**1 Bryan**

**18 ‘til I Die**

…read one audience sign but it was the **“SELFIE PLEASE”** request that caught Adams’ eye when he slowed from a couple of stage sprints.

“Like I’m just going to jump on down there,” he said, point to the girl’s sign before giving her the thrill of a lifetime in saying “you really want a selfie then jump over.” The elated fan was on stage within minutes posing with Adams and probably wondering when she was going to wake up.

A cell phone snap wouldn’t be needed to please Kale Doyle. The long-time Adams fan from Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia made the 13 ½ hour trek to hear something, anything from *Cuts Like a Knife*.

“I have about 90 vinyls back at my place and that’s the one I play the most. It just fits any atmosphere. I know he’s got a lot of new stuff but the older stuff is always going to dominate,” said Doyle who’d go home happy as Adams worked the title track, “I’m Ready” and “Straight from the Heart” into the 25 song set.

In a year where many artists are launching into swan song retirement tour, Adams showed that he’s still got a lot of gas left in the tank. He could just coast on the fumes of his hits alone, though it was nice to have a few pit stops along the way for some new cuts and old time rock and roll covers in the encore.

There, at show’s end, Adams would return with one last story from his Ottawa youth. Talking about where his musical trip began, he told of how his parents gave him $1,000 that had been meant for school to put towards a piano instead. He would spend the summer working out the chords to what would become “Straight from the Heart”, his breakthrough song.

“Thanks to my parents…thanks for the chance!”

By the sound of the applause, 21,000 plus at Bluesfest thanked them too!

SETLIST:  
Ultimate Love  
Can’t Stop This Thing We Started  
Run to You  
Go Down Rockin’  
Heaven  
It’s Only Love  
Cloud #9  
You Belong to Me

Summer of ‘69  
Here I Am  
When You’re Gone  
(Everything I Do) I Do It for You  
If Ya Wanna Be Bad Ya Gotta Be Good  
Back to You  
Somebody  
The Only Thing That Looks Good on Me Is You  
Cuts Like a Knife  
18 til I Die  
I’m Ready  
Brand New Day  
  
Encore:

I Fought The Law (Crickets cover)  
C’mon Everybody (Eddie Cochran cover)  
Whiskey in the Jar (traditional)  
Straight From the Heart  
All for Love