

Shakira lights up American Airlines Center with Sale El Sol tour

Written by Terry Mathews

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Shakira lit up the American Airlines Center Oct. 1 in Dallas like a beacon with her Sale El Sol (The Sun Comes Out) Tour. The Colombian international pop star and musician put on a show that was equally enormous and bombastic as it was intimate.

Pienso en Ti



Shakira opened her concert unlike many pop stars. While many would be dropped on or rise out of the stage in incredible fashion, Shakira chose something special for her fans. As the lights went dim, the spotlight focused in the crowd. Through the gates came Shakira dressed in a pink high fashion hood singing a track off her debut album, "Pies Descalzos" (Bare Feet), called "Pienso En Ti" (I Think of You). She sings the song as she shakes hands and hugs fans in the crowd, making her way to the stage. The songstress turns the song from a romantic ballad into a piece about the relationship she has with her fans, especially those who had followed her since the beginning of her 14-year career.

Shakira Rocks

But when she hit the stage, the show was really on. Off came the high fashion clothing and a wave of Shakira's favorite, rock-heavy, deep cuts. Shakira makes sure that hers is a show that can be enjoyed by fans of every type of music; but also makes certain that it is for more than just the casual fan.

She performed tracks from albums like "No Creo" (I Don't Believe), "Donde Estan Los Ladrones" (Where Are the Thieves), from her sophomore effort, and even a track from her penultimate album called "Why Wait."

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The stadium rock didn't let up throughout most of the show. It is apparent that heavy rock is some of Shakira's favorite music. She is, however, a versatile artist with many genres of music under her belt. She performed her mariachi infused song "Ciega, Sordomuda" (Blind, Deaf-mute) and her big hits from her first English language album, "Laundry Service"; including "Whenever, Wherever" – a world music dance hit that included instruments like the reed pipe – and "Te Dejo Madrid," a Spanish flavored offering.

Gypsy

What would surprise many unfamiliar concert goers would be the musicianship of Shakira, taking up the guitar for her anthemic rock tracks and playing several instruments – including her staple harmonica - during the acoustic cycle of songs.

Shakira's band left the stage and walked down a runway into an island in the middle of the crowd to play slower offerings like "Gypsy" and a little-known song called "La Despedida" (Farewell) that she created in traditional Colombian style for the "100 Years of Solitude" film in 2008.

It was apparent that the band and Shakira were a tight-knit group. Each of the members seemed to be having genuine fun, particularly during the acoustic cycle. Most of the band's members have been with Shakira's tour for over five years. Many of them, like Shakira, play more than three instruments.

Dance or Die

What Shakira may be best known for outside of her voice is dancing. After a swift costume change, a giant face appeared between the enormous screen behind the stage, its eyes glowing a fierce dark blue as Shakira let out the howl of the "She Wolf" as she burst on to the stage with a group of dancers to sing her 2009 electro-pop hit. The dancing continued as she played her new single "Loca" and another offering from her "Sale El Sol" album, "Gordita" featuring Residente from Calle 13 who sang with his face projected on the enormous face set piece with pre-recorded vocals. Finishing the dance heavy portion of the show was the reggaeton infused track, "La Tortura."

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The set design and the lighting made the concert hall seem like a club, darker than usual and with flashing lights. Though she dances her heart out throughout the dance songs, Shakira never misses a note. Her singing is clear and in form – and not ever mimed. A great triumph in the pop world.

Sale El Sol

At the end of the dance numbers Shakira performed the title track from her album, "Sale El Sol" (The Sun Comes Out). The song is about overcoming a dark period in a relationship or some form of separation. It is also the first alternative rock track penned by the artist since 2009's electro-pop record, "She Wolf". "Y el dia despues de la tormenta, (The day after the storm)" she sang "cuando menos piensas, sale el sol (When you least expect it, the sun comes out." The crowd cheered for a great while after the debut of the show stopper.

Ojos Asi

The final track of her 1998 album was a song for her Lebanese heritage called "Ojos Asi (Eyes Like Yours)." The arabic flavor of the song mixed with European electronica makes for the best finale number (until the encore of course). Shakira showcased her belly dancing abilities as the song progressed to violin solos and intricate drum beats to a grand finale.

Waka Waka

Members of the crowd screamed "Waka Waka!" as the lights dimmed, asking for the international hit and 2010 World Cup theme song. Instead, a sole spotlight shone on Shakira in a blue gown fit for a princess. She sang a short Asian-infused ballad called "Antes De Las Seis (Before Six O'clock)" as pieces of fake snow fell in front of her, creating a beautiful effect.

When the lights came back on, she treated the crowd to "Hips Don't Lie," 2006's biggest hit in the United States. And, to close, Shakira brought members of the crowd on stage to dance with

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her to "Waka Waka." The song is a reworking of a famous track from Cameroon, where the hook is "Waka Waka," which means "shine" in Swahili. The song's euphoric instrumentation, paired with its positive and encouraging lyrics, had everyone out of their seats dancing as confetti filled the entire arena.

Shakira asked everyone to "shine" with "Waka Waka" and the joyful atmosphere after the show proved she had done her job.

Shakira's new album, "Sale El Sol," is available by Epic Records in stores or on iTunes now.