



BY JOEL MUEHNSTER

Yellow balls, confetti and Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" acoustic add the thrill at Coldplay's "Viva La Vida" live performance in Bern on Sept. 2.

COLDPLAY ROCKS RAINY BERN

Kathy Petite

CONTRIBUTOR/BERN
What does a band do to conquer their crowd? Ask Coldplay. Knowing that it took more than just Chris Martin shouting the typical Swiss greeting "Grazi" to a sea of euphoric 20,000 fans in Stade De Suisse, Bern, on Sept. 2, the British foursome went the extra mile to keep the nearly two-hour show joyful. And it certainly was.

The concert, part of Coldplay's "Viva La Vida" world tour, kicked off with the instrumental "Life in Technicolor", just a moment after two opening bands Pegasus and Howling Bells ended their gigs. A blast of cheers filled the air. "Violet Hill" came, followed by a couple of older hits "Clocks" and the melancholic head-bobbing "In My Place". The two catchy tunes unsurprisingly led the crowd (girls especially, you're right) to fall into a harmonious "ohhh-ahhh" sing-a-long moment with heads swaying around under a fancy laser lighting of red and yellow. Of course, it wasn't the only sing-together moment. And darkness hit the stage. It felt like forever. The waiting was accompanied by impatient howls for the quartet to come back. Suddenly the lighting switched to yellow, the giant spheres dangling from the ceiling of the stage turned yellow.



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Enough yellow? Certainly not, as a bunch of giant yellow beach balls also dropped as the band launched into the song (sure, what else) "Yellow". Closing it with his solo acoustic, Martin tempted the (female-dominated) crowd to sing the ending with him after cracking a joke about the lyrics. With cutting-edge visual elements, Coldplay's Live in Bern gave a feel of arena-rock-epic grandeur. Standing on the sides of the stage are two giant video screens showing close ups of the vocalist Chris Martin, in his patchwork military-ish jackets and three other band chums Jonny Buckland (lead guitar), Guy Berryman (bass guitar), and Will Champion (drums, backing vocals, other instruments). Looking up to the ceiling of the stage, hung five large reflective, rotating spheres displaying live feeds of the band or paint splashes, simply silhouettes or just cool colors or fancy images and funky footages. The most eye-catching color on the globes must have been red-purple, when the four blokes sang "Straw-

berry Swing". The spheres also descended at certain times. When "Cemeteries in London" kicked in, they were slowly pulled down and beamed close-ups of Martin. Now, speaking of Chris Martin, the Hollywood husband was an absolute energizer bunny who burnt countless calories running back and forth on the stage. The multi-talented Martin (is there any instrument that he doesn't play?) released a voice that translated perfectly into a live setting. At the right times, he knew how to squeeze all the juice of his prowess and charm in cajoling the crowd to immerse in a union of coming-sing-with-me joy such as old-time favorite "Scientist" or "Fix You" - that caused swooning girls to feel like they were going to melt in any second. Even when the sky started to leak in the middle of the concert, the showered, soaked crowd in the open air space of the stadium didn't seem to move. Halfway through the show, Martin unexpectedly built an

intimacy with the fans by appearing solo in a smaller stage closer to the crowd alone.

"This is a quiet slow song, and this is a good little rest before we have a great Swiss-Brit sing-along..." said Martin while sitting, playing a piano.

Revealing his sentimental side, he was softly singing "The Hardest Part" to the audience, and beautifully followed by an instrumental piano piece "Postcards From Far Away".

The chap deserved those whistles, cheers and claps, right.

A moment after "Green Eyes" and "Death Will Never Conquer", the crowd went wild. Strumming his guitar, Martin gave a tribute to Michael Jackson with acoustic "Billie Jean" - well, without any choreographed style of movement, of course.

Another highlight of that night was a bursting shoot of countless colorful butterfly confetti pouring down during the galloping "Lovers in Japan". But as many expected, the peak of exuberance exploded when "Viva La Vida" started to play.

Throughout the song, there was a non-stop "oooh-ahhh" all-together singing and clapping of the heated, pumped-up crowd. Soaring with timpani bells and heavy powerful drums of Will Champion, Martin jumped, jogged and jiggled around the stage to become one with his wet but warmed fans in Bern.

The 25-year-old Pierre Petite was one of them, as he admitted to *The Jakarta Post*. "It was a great concert with a great end too, I was just truly amazed when the crowd all singing 'Viva La Vida'."

It was indeed a magic moment that seemed to stick in the mind for quite a while.

Otherwise, the crowd wouldn't have walked out of the stadium still singing the "oooh-ahhh" part of "Viva La Vida" song. In their soaked, sweat-trapped raincoats.

at a GLIMPSE

Free as a bird

Music is free, at least it is according to Bottlesmoker. The power of internet has really changed the world, including how the word about good music gets out. And these smart lads really took advantage of this phenomenon. Bottlesmoker are Angkuy and Nobie. The duo started the band back in 2005 on their own personal computer located on each member's bedroom.

Starting music in their own bedroom is the typical first phase of many electronic acts around the world. It's a cliché story that always leads to a wonderful fairy tale.

Bottlesmoker admitted that they're heavily influenced by popular acts in the electronic scene such as I am Robot and Proud and Tungg.

Plus, there's one significant addition to their attitude as an artist: giving away their all their songs to people free of charge.

"We took part in the Friday I'm in Loops compilation back in 2005. After that we gave away our songs from one to another computer in digital format or we invited people to send a SASE [self-addressed stamped envelope] to us. We whacked the songs and then send it back to them," Angkuy says.

They also put their records on several netlabels all around the world. A netlabel practically is a recording label based on the internet that gives away releases for free.

Digitally, their albums have been released in Russia, Spain, and of course Indonesia. In addition to that, they also have contributed to several compilations released by labels from Germany and the People's Republic of China.

"Our music has to be free. We never expect to earn a lot from our music. We just wanted to write songs we like. We also never wanted Bottlesmoker to be our way of making a living. Probably we're fools. But we enjoy each part of it," Angkuy adds.

Then there's another irony. When people start to heat up the tension between Indonesia and Malaysia in the political field, these lads do the opposite.

"We just finished our Malaysian tour, played six times in Kuala Lumpur, Petaling Jaya, and Ipoh. Those gigs were so fun," Angkuy closed the talks.

You can get to know Bottlesmoker better by downloading their albums at www.shiningrecords.com, while the band can be reached at www.twitter.com/bottlesmoker.

— FELIX DASS

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Bottlesmoker

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