

ARCADE FIRE CONCERT REVIEW

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HNotes Ezine

Arcade Fire won the 2011 Grammy for Album of the Year. The band may have remain unknown for many until then. Still, this indie group has a lot of history on its back. Win Butler and his wife Régine Chassagne officially formed the group in 2003, even though Butler recorded a demo album back in 2001 when he still lived in Boston. The band released their first major studio album, *Funeral*, in 2004. Within a year, they were traveling the world.

Arcade Fire is a Canadian group from Montreal. The first time I heard about their music was back in 2006. Since then, I've been strongly amazed by the fusion of music they make and, of course, the peculiar talents of each member. Together, the seven members of the group make high quality albums, both in the composing and lyrics areas. Plus, they are quite a revolution: they play rock music while incorporating unusual instrumentation like accordions, violins, xylophone, French horn, harp, mandolin, and a considerable quantity of native instruments. *Arcade Fire* can be described, then, as an indie rock/folk band.

Last year, the band was one of the many guests that played in *Québec's Summer Festival*. In July 12th, 2010 they put up a majestic concert in Abraham Plains, a place in the city where many historical happenings took place that is now the stage arena where worldwide famous bands play for 10 days every summer. A few hundred years ago, Abraham Plains was the setting for a civil war between the French and the English. Last year, the Plains were packed full with people from all over the globe that wore flashing pins to form an ocean of blinking red lights as they all waited for *Arcade Fire* to make their Quebec City debut.

The concert was a blend of songs from their previous albums and from *The Suburbs*, their third studio album, and the one that won them the Grammy. The band started out playing one of my favorites, Ready to Start. The crowd cheered with passion, clapped and sang along the lyrics to the top of their lungs. Since this first song, the band captivated everyone. People that have heard the band before as well as people that were new to the *Arcade Fire* mania were fast enchanted by the energy of the performance and the musical richness. It is important to mention, also, the musical abilities of all the members. Win Butler, Régine Chassagne, Richard Reed Parry, William Butler, Jeremy Gara, Sarah Neufeld, Tim Kingsbury and the touring invited musician, Marika Anthony-Shaw, delighted and surprised everyone as they changed instrumentation in almost every song. At least once, most of them (except

Anthony-Shaw who played the second violin and the viola only) played the drums, the accordion, the keyboards, minor percussion, the guitars or the bass.

After *Ready to Start*, in which Régina played duo drums as usual, the punkish track *Month of May* came up next, followed by *Neon Bible's* album favorite and one of the most anticipated songs for the night, *Keep the Car Coming*. Almost everyone got up their feet and screamed out the lyrics. No Cars Go got the crowd a bit crazy, as it is sort of an anthem where everyone yelled *Hey!* at opportune moments. All the songs from their new album, which was released on August 3rd, got a very positive response. Most of the people learned the choruses real fast, so they were either humming or singing them. Neighborhood #3 (Power Cut) included a long outro that fused with the beginning of the meaningful Rebellion (Lies). When they returned to stage, Wil Butler said that for every dollar that fans donated to new Haitian relief organization Kanpke, the band would match up to a million dollars. The encores included, of course, a spectacular and emotional rendition of Haïti, song that they played along with the Haitian band RAM.

Setlist:

1. Ready to Start
2. Month of May
3. Keep the Car Running
4. Neighborhood #2 (Laika)
5. No Cars Go
6. Modern Man
7. Rococo
8. Empty Room
9. The Suburbs
10. Intervention
11. Crown of Love
12. Neighborhood #1 (Tunnels)
13. We Used to Wait
14. Neighborhood #3 (Power Out)
15. Rebellion (Lies)
16. Haïti (with Haitian band, RAM) (Encore*)
17. Wake Up (Encore*)