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Concert review: At UB, Feist is a delight

Singer/songwriter shows strong groove, delicate artistry

BY JOE SWEENEY News Contributing Reviewer

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Around dusk on Thursday night, it started to rain. Big, splashy drops hurtled from the sky, the kind that make their presence felt as they connect with the back of your shirt. It was the perfect night for a Feist concert.

When the Canadian singer/ songwriter and member of indie-rock supergroup Broken Social Scene last played Buffalo, opening for Elvis Costello at the 2007 Rockin' at the Knox event, she had a similar effect on the weather — her set was cut short by a thunderstorm. So Thursday night's precipitation was an understandable coincidence — during a show in support of her third record, "The Reminder," one of the most profound rainy day albums of this decade.

REVIEW

WHO: Feist with Hayden

WHEN: Thursday night

WHERE: University at Buffalo Center for the Arts

Given the themes that give "The Reminder" its hypnotic effect, it is no small feat that Feist was able to channel them all onstage in the University at Buffalo's Center for the Arts, with the help of her versatile four-piece band.

Perhaps the main reason for the show's success is the singer's organic, visually engrossing approach to stage design.

After kicking off the show with an interesting vocal/performance art experiment, singing the refrain, "Help is on its way," while having her profile silhouetted against a white screen at the front of the stage, Feist broke into



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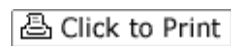
“When I Was a Young Girl,” a haunting blues tune that’s a bit of a rainstorm in and of itself. Beginning as an a cappella statement, the song slowly boiled over, driven by a pulsating, tympani-sticks-on-tom-toms beat and jittery, Dick Dale-esque guitar licks.

Once this song, one of the darkest in Feist’s oeuvre, had reached its crescendo-climax, the singer broke into one of the sunniest tunes in recent memory, “Mushaboom,” off her 2004 album “Let It Die.” This lovely, infectious acoustic pop song captures the inherent beauty of a loving family working hard to make ends meet, growing lilacs and buttercups in the garden of their rented house.

The rest of the evening continued to reveal that this artist’s gifts as a songwriter are equaled by her instincts as a performer. Constantly flanked by her ambidextrous quartet, which seemed to exchange instruments before every song, Feist presented each song as a unique sonic and lyrical statement. Ballads like “The Park” and “Brandy Alexander” shone with delicate light, while driving rock songs like “My Moon My Man” and “Sea Lion Woman” featured raw, slithering grooves that did justice to their titles.

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