



## Seeger Sessions 'Boss' came to town and rocked the Nissan Pavilion

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By *DIANE LEIGH DAVISON*,  
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Bruce Springsteen performed Sunday, May 28 at Nissan Pavilion in Bristow, Va., or Washington, D.C. to his tour scheduler.

In his typical fashion, Springsteen ambled out behind his Seeger Sessions bandmates on to a richly decorated stage. Nothing else beyond that, however, was typical for his solo tours.

The red plush curtains and lighted chandeliers set the tone for the show as the band broke into its first song, a 10 minute electrifying rendition of "O Mary Don't You Weep." The accordion and horn section, including trombone and tuba, sounded like a true old time Sousa marching band, offering a different kind of wonderful exhilaration than that usually found at a Springsteen concert.

The audience cheers of "Bruce" however, remained, lauding the master "The Boss."

That began a night of nonstop jubilant fun — a Dixieland-ragtime-jump jive-swing-bluegrass-folk meets rock-n-roll down-home hootenanny.

Bringing what his Web site calls "gospel, folk and blues" to a new audience via an album and world tour largely based on songs recorded by legendary folkster Pete Seeger ("We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions") is obviously thrilling to Springsteen, since he has never seemed more palpably joyful on stage than when he performed these tunes. His raspy voice is a perfect fit for these songs — even more so than on some of his own trademark material.

The audience could not have been more receptive. Alas, the concert was not sold out — but it contained more families with young children (and by young I mean five, six, seven years old) than ever before. All were, incidentally, extraordinarily well-versed in all of the album's songs and lyrics, thereby perpetuating folk and Pete Seeger's legacy for a whole new generation.

Following "O Mary," Springsteen gave us "20 seconds to rise from these seats!" proceeding into the rousing "John Henry," which gave way to a funky and soulful "Johnny 99."

"Old Dan Tucker" led into Springsteen's rewritten version of the '56 gospel hymn "Eyes On The Prize," a slower song that provided everyone with a short respite to sit

***Setlist:***

back and take in the gaggle of musicians adorning the stage. There were 20 in all at one point, including horns, banjo, accordion, fiddles, spoon-and-washboard, and a drummer with a ring of keys as an added set of cymbals. Probably the last time so many artists shared the stage with Springsteen was the Vote for Change tour in the fall of 2004.

The familiar faces in the horn section included none other than Richie "La Bamba" Rosenberg and Mark Pender, who some may recognize from the Max Weinberg 7 on Late Night with Conan O'Brien, but also long part of the The Miami Horns playing and recording with the likes of Southside Johnny and Little Steven, among others.

Several times during the night, we were treated to the velvety vocals of the "Chocolate Genius," Mark Anthony Thompson, who was lauded by the New York Times and spectacularly featured, particularly during "Jesse James" and "When the Saints Go Marching In."

Other than "Johnny 99" and "Open All Night," Springsteen's only pre-Seeger Session songs performed were the songs brought out from the dust that was The River: "You Can Look (But You Better Not Touch)," "Ramrod" – a true rarity – and the seminal "Cadillac Ranch," which changes with every tour and this time was morphed into Elvis' "Mystery Train."

Although many bemoan this more introspective solo Bruce that is sans his E Street Band, do not be mistaken into thinking this is a Devils and Dust Bruce. No, no, no. This is the Seeger Session Bruce who is awoken from his tortuous lament to bring us all a revival-style slice of our musical past, complete with history lessons parlayed through his choice of songs and his song introductions.

For example, Springsteen said "this song was written around the 1930's about the dustbowl, [which was a] natural disaster that changed the face of the country you read about in books but it happened in our lifetime in New Orleans," to introduce "My Oklahoma Home," and "some songs you hear so much you can't hear it any more, it becomes invisible ... [this is] one of the most important political protest songs of all time" to introduce "We Shall Overcome."

The tour opened in Europe where it sold out most venues in a record 10 minutes, and

O Mary Don't You Weep

John Henry

Johnny 99

Old Dan Tucker

Eyes on the Prize

Jesse James

Cadillac Ranch/Mystery Train

If I Should Fall Behind

Erie Canal

My Oklahoma Home

Mrs. McGrath

How Can a Poor Man Stand Such Times and Live?

Jacob's Ladder

We Shall Overcome

Open All Night

Pay Me My Money Down

**Encore:**

Bring Them Home (If You Love Your Uncle Sam)

Ramrod

You Can Look (But You Better Not Touch)

When the Saints Go Marching In

Buffalo Gals

continues here in the U.S. into July. Let's hold out hope that he plans a second round of shows in the fall since he ended the concert with a hopeful shout of "See you in September." Teach us more history Bruce — with a teacher like you, there is hope for our youth.

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