

it has never been to the U.S. before), has never gotten huge press here. And unless you have been following it through the European press, you wouldn't know what it was about. But few people, on the other hand, don't know who Peter Gabriel is. He has a very large and loyal fan base that would go see him wherever he played. There are two types of Gabriel fans. Those that have followed him from the days of "Where Sour Turns To Sweet" and those from "Sledgehammer" on. Most of the older fans know at least a little about WOMAD because it has been a very big part of what Peter Gabriel has been doing for the last 11 years. It is a part of his own venture into the realm of record companies. His label, with WOMAD is called Real World. (But that is a whole other story.) The newer fans never heard of WOMAD but want to see any Gabriel concert they can. So to a newer fan, Sunday's concert was short and to the long time fans, the concert was perfect in respect to the whole action packed day.

WOMAD was never meant to be a festival with a "headline" act. No one is really in the spot light. It is an event where every performer, be they musician, dancer, or an artisan, is there to share a part of their culture and heritage with the people who came to see them. But, given that this was the first time the festival

was in the United States, and that the general public was not overly familiar with WOMAD, they knew that they would need a little boost. Peter Gabriel (who hasn't really been a performer at a WOMAD festival in quite a while) decided to lend that boost. But that put WOMAD in the precarious position of having a really big headliner for a no headliner event. It sold tickets all right, but just as those Peter Gabriel fans were scrambling to fill up the non-reserved seats in the amphitheater, it was easy to see that they had already missed the whole point of the day. Certainly few people ventured away from the amphitheater once they got there. Now that is not to say that they did not get to see anything but Peter Gabriel, because by God, they got to see the Drummers of Burundi close up!

As ironic as it sounds, there was a whole world outside of the amphitheater that everyone bought tickets for but didn't explore because no one wanted to loose their seats for the "headline act". In my opinion, it was stage two that had some of the best performers of the day. Not to mention the six different workshops, the non-traditional food vendors and the global village with art and crafts to buy. If people complained about the ticket prices or the length of the Peter Gabriel concert then they just didn't understand the entire

event. Again, the idea is simply to introduce people to music from around the world. A rare opportunity to be sure. We experienced music from Tanzania, India, England, Burundi, Russia, Uganda, China, Japan, Ireland, and the U.S. All the performances were about 25 minutes long. This was in part because the normal three day festival was condensed into a one day event. I suppose you could say it was more or less a sampling of WOMAD.

The beauty of the day (although hectic as it was) was to be able to run back and forth from the different stages to see the diverse array of musicians performing. On your way from one stage to the other, you could stop and pick up a few new dance steps from a workshop being given. And then when you were hungry you could grab some plantains from the African food vendor, and a smart drink for extra energy because you know you have not been able to stop dancing since you got there!

WOMAD was a spectacular, if misunderstood, event. The entire days productions were high caliber and extremely well organized. The collection of musicians was fabulous and it was indeed a special treat to experience their music performed live. I can only hope that WOMAD had as much fun in Milwaukee as we had having them here. If we're lucky, maybe we will have the privilege of hosting them again next year.

- "I was grateful that I got there early enough to see Sheila Chandra. Here I was listening to her beautiful voice, sitting there by the lake on a beautiful day - it was more than just the music, it was a sensory experience." - Tim Noble
- "There's magic to a day like this-- a traveling cultural Woodstock of sorts and I'll go to great lengths to experience it again." - Mickey
- "The performers seemed to enjoy themselves as much as the audience. I thought it was very exciting to be part of this unique cultural experience." - Bob Midnight
- "I was impressed with the gracious and friendly attitudes of the artists we interviewed. The thrill of being involved with WOMAD was the highlight of my 6 years at WMSE." - Magic Marker
- "It was a great opportunity to experience what goes on outside of the continent. People here weren't all that knowledgeable about what WOMAD was all about and as word gets around as to what an experience it was, I think it'll be a lot better attended. Hopefully WOMAD will come back." - Buzz

of WOMAD