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- [2009 Setlists Part 1](#)

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- [2007 Setlists](#)

- [2006 Setlists](#)

- [2005 Setlists](#)

- [2004 Setlists](#)

- [2003 Setlists Part 2](#)

- [2003 Setlists Part 1](#)

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July 31 / Olympic Stadium / Helsinki, FINLAND

Notes: *An Olympic feat tonight at Helsinki's Olympic Stadium, as Bruce and the E Street Band make the myth real, finally doing what the legends say they've done for years: play a four-hour show. Four hours and five minutes, actually, Springsteen's longest show to date by a fair margin — and that's not even counting a special acoustic set before the main event. Desiree Koh reports.*



When Bruce launched into "Light of Day," a sign request, and "100 miles... 200 miles... 300 miles...", I knew exactly what he meant — I had traveled 5,000 of them from Singapore to Scandinavia to follow him and the band across the region and close Europe out. I knew I was on the right train with that heartfelt show in Oslo, and I could feel



concert ads, etc.)

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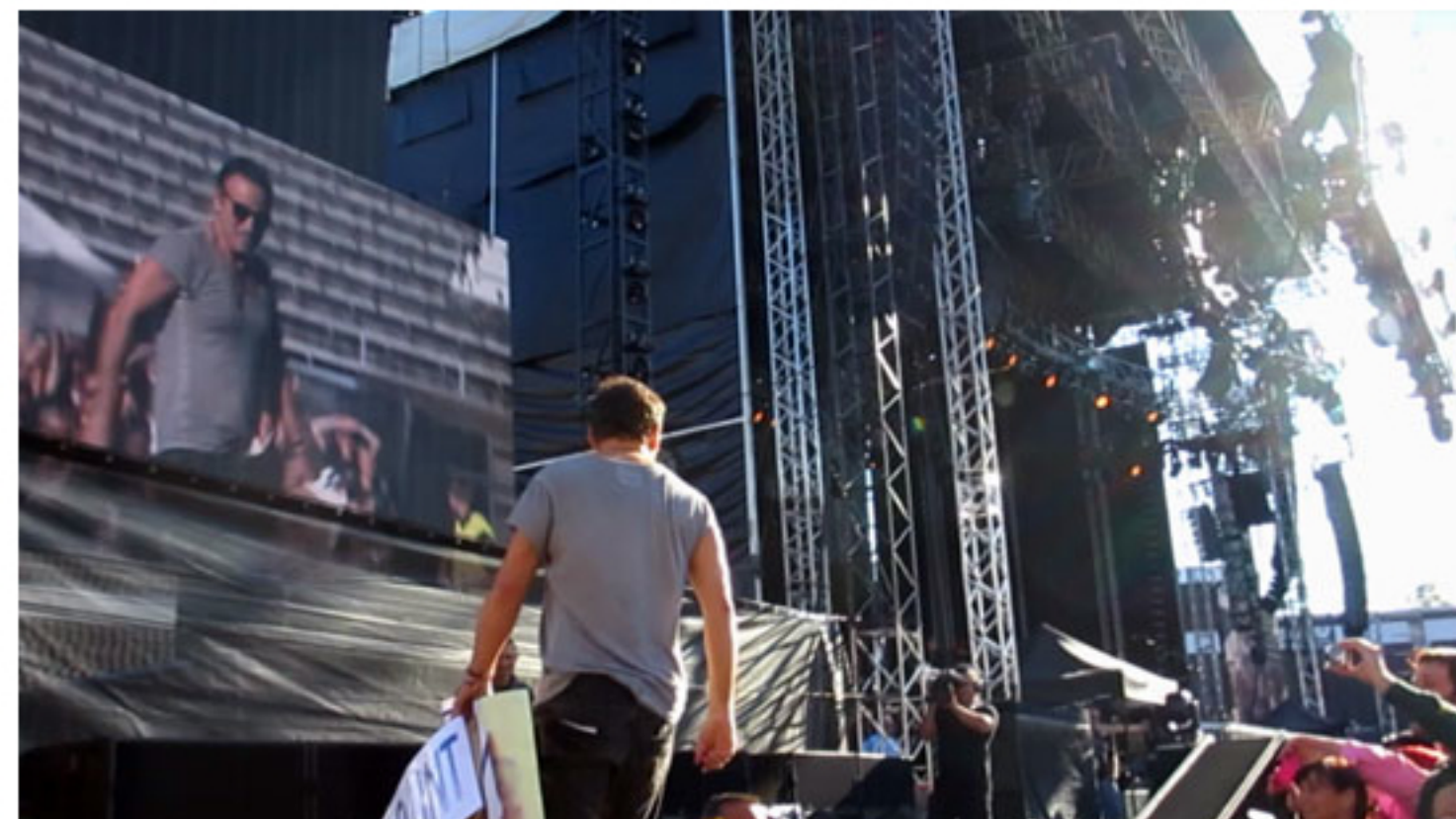


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the expectations build as we traveled east, particularly after Gothenburg's groundbreaking (if not stadium-breaking) second show. Sure, there was no media blitz, page ones, and special sections as in Norway and Sweden, but as 50,000 of us made our way into Helsinki's Olympic Stadium, the same questions roamed through everyone's minds: will they break four hours? Can what many now considered the best show of the tour so far — or of the decade — be topped?



The answer is yes, and no, which is the beauty of these legendary tours: you never get what you anticipate, and I mean that in a good way. But first, an opening act — a solo troubadour named Bruce Springsteen took the stage at 6:15pm with a guitar (and a harmonica that never worked out and was discarded quickly). The stadium was about one-third full at this point, and Bruce showed why patience (and faith) would be rewarded, playing an acoustic five-song set for "the regulars," which included three tour premieres: "I'll Work For Your Love," "Leap of Faith," and "Blinded By the Light." Throughout, he acknowledged the faces he recognized and the love of his more hard-core fans — "You're all broke and homeless, and it's my fault!" After the 30-minute warm-up — during which he sounded like he was fighting a cold (for the rest of the evening, he

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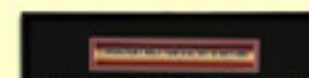


NEW ISSUE #90

The Winter 2011/12 issue of Backstreets Magazine has arrived, covering the Boss from A to Z: that's Appel to Zimny!

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SPRINGSTEEN TICKET FRAMES



coughed, blew his nose and had tissue paper on hand several times) — he spent another ten shaking hands, chatting, and making some ladies very happy with kisses on the cheek. It was tough to doubt that that night's show would be anything but less than phenomenal and stratospherically special when he left the stage.



The full band came out at 7:54pm and powered right into "Rockin' All Over the World," the first of five — count them all! — tour premieres for this last show on the continent. Without skipping a beat for the next eight songs, the band surged from song to song, including an epic "Prove It All Night" with the 1978 intro during which Bruce



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solloed ferociously with the usual classy support from the Professor's keys.

While songs such as "Because the Night" soared with that Lofgren slashing guitar aria you never tire of, and "Darlington County" was that firecracker of a hootenanny you can't get enough of, "Loose Ends" and "Be True" were refreshing change-ups, and the "My City of Ruins" roll call got a few more touching ruminations than usual: "I'm going to stand right here where time can't get to me."



Springsteen had more fun with sign requests than at the other Nordic shows, joking that Americans knew nothing about public transportation before calling for "Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street?" and vaguely toying with the idea of "Secret Garden" before going with "**Back in Your Arms**" instead. The soulful rendition drove straight to that part of the heart where the sun doesn't usually reach, verses interspersed with monologues about hopes, dreams, and that special someone, but ending on that high note that you often get to when Bruce is in the driver's seat.



When the tour premiere of "**Detroit Medley**" made its grand appearance like a knee slide across the stage after "Born to Run," followed by "Glory Days," you started looking at your watch like soccer fans at a match and, sure as the ticking of the clock on the wall, you did the math and knew the end wasn't near. After "Tenth Avenue Freeze-out," Bruce pointed out emphatically that "The Finns aren't finished!" and happily obliged a sign request for the tour premiere of the Steve-penned "**I Don't Want to Go Home,**" nudging his friend repeatedly to take the lead and mic on a stripped-down, duet rendition. Although there were snags in the audience participation portion of "**Higher and Higher,**" the final tour premiere (Bruce ended up calling for "singers, help me out!" to straighten the parts out), there was no denying that everyone knew what to do during "Twist and Shout." At the three-hour-and-fifty-eight-minute mark, a crew member ran out to tell Bruce what was happening, and he seemed surprised — of course, that only motivated him to take this favorite closer where it's never been before. For one, Jon Landau was helping out on guitar — for nearly 10 minutes, he was living in the future of rock 'n' roll.



I am a marathon runner and half-Ironman finisher, but Bruce's feat of endurance Tuesday night never once flagged in passion, dedication, and undying commitment to send everyone home delirious with rock 'n' roll salvation in their spirits. It was all that Helsinki — no, Heavensinki — would allow.

- Desiree Koh reporting - photographs by Riku Olkkonen (1, 5, 6), Rene van Diemen (2, 7), Reinle Grüter (3, 8), and Raul Nieto Casado (4)

Pre-show acoustic set:

I'll Work For Your Love
Leap of Faith
No Surrender
For You
Blinded By the Light

Setlist:

Rockin' All Over the World
Night
Out in the Street
Loose Ends
We Take Care of Our Own
Prove It All Night ('78 intro)

Wrecking Ball
Death to My Hometown
My City of Ruins
Does This Bus Stop at 82nd Street?
Be True
Jack of All Trades
Downbound Train
Because the Night
Lonesome Day
Darlington County
Light of Day
Shackled and Drawn
Waitin' on a Sunny Day
Back in Your Arms
The Rising
Badlands
Land of Hope and Dreams
* * *
We Are Alive
Born in the U.S.A.
Born to Run
Detroit Medley
Glory Days
Dancing in the Dark
Tenth Avenue Freeze-out
I Don't Want to Go Home
Higher and Higher
Twist and Shout