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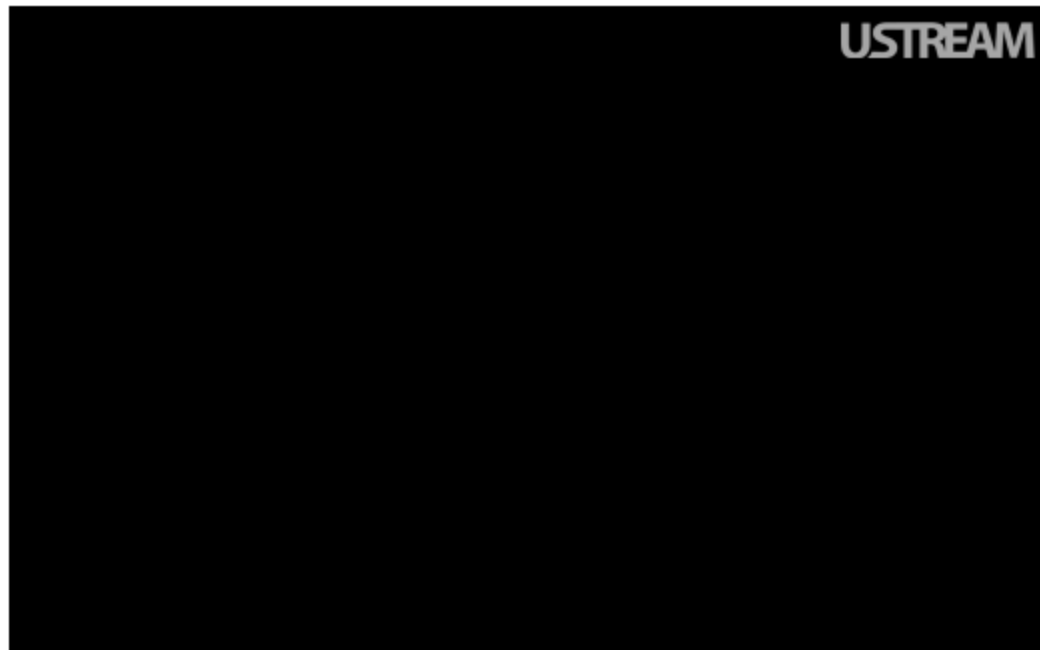
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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

Aerosmith draws sea of fans to Allston streets

Posted by Matt Rocheleau November 5, 2012 04:10 PM

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Tens of thousands of fans packed an Allston thoroughfare for a free Aerosmith concert in front of 1325 Commonwealth Ave., the apartment building where the band lived when they got their start 40 years ago.

The show drew a mix of spectators: middle-aged adults and seniors, college students, teenagers, and young parents and their children. Many watched five musicians they've come to idolize.

Joan Pasquale watched her former neighbors.

The 62-year-old longtime Allston resident and community leader said she lived in the building from 1970 to 1972, the same years that Aerosmith was there. She would bump into them frequently.

"I don't want to ruin their bad-boy reputation here, but they were very nice, polite guys – really nice neighbors," she said.

She said one of the more memorable interactions with her neighbors, including members of Aerosmith, was having to rescue one another when the building's elevator would get stuck.

"I think most people met getting trapped in that elevator," said Pasquale. "You would have to yell out to someone who would have to come and push the buttons in the hallways outside the elevator."

If the buttons on one floor didn't do the trick, the rescuer would have to try pushing buttons on another floor.

Pasquale said the young band members were "very busy, always in and out."

"We kind of knew they were going to go somewhere because they were very business focused," she said. "We heard them [playing music] in the apartment and in the basement. It wasn't a problem, though. I don't think anyone every complained."

She was a 20-year-old new mother at the time. A mix of young working professionals, students, Vietnam veterans and a few senior citizens lived there then, she said.



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“It was a very friendly building. We all got along and knew each other,” she added. “It was very much an open-door policy. If someone needed something it was just a matter of knocking on a door. We took care of each other. It was a different time.”

Pasquale has lived in Allston for the past four decades and is the executive director of two all-volunteer neighborhood organizations, the Parents and Community Build Group and the Ringer Park Partnership Group.

“As soon as they said they were going to play a secret show in Boston, I thought it would be there,” she said.

On Monday, Pasquale was among those who stood along Commonwealth Avenue to watch the special concert. Some in the crowd wore band T-shirts, many waved free signs that were handed out and snapped photos and video on cell phones.

People grasped fire escapes, peered over roofs and climbed out of windows, including those who had a “backstage view” from inside the band’s former building, to catch a glimpse of the stars.

“There were a lot of generations there because their music traveled through so many generations,” she said.

The band performed for about 45 minutes out of the back of a wall-less tractor trailer that was flanked by two flatbed trucks loaded with speakers. The show featured hits, including: “Walk this Way,” “Mama Kin” and “Moving Out.”

Steven Tyler, Joe Perry, Brad Whitford, Tom Hamilton and Joey Kramer rolled in shortly after noon on one of several Duck Boats.

“When we lived here, we were never up this early,” Tyler told the crowd at the start of the show. “What are you doing here?”

As streams of confetti blasted over the massive crowd, Tyler ended the show saying: “This is where it started. This is where it will never finish from. There is no finish line for this band. Goodnight, baby!”

The event began with the unveiling of a plaque from the city to mark the

building as a cultural point of interest due to the band's history there. Band members were given street signs that said "1325 Commonwealth Ave."

The rockers were introduced by New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, linebacker Jerod Mayo, owner Robert Kraft, his son and team president Jonathan Kraft and team cheerleaders.

After their performance, the band members imprinted their hands in blocks of freshly-poured cement. The blocks will be installed in front of their old apartment at a yet-to-be-determined date, officials said.

Police officers and other officials began setting up barriers and other equipment around the area about five hours before the show.

Twenty-four cars were towed; 33 were ticketed, said Dorothy Joyce, a spokeswoman for Mayor Thomas M. Menino. Traffic and MBTA service remained running along Commonwealth Avenue longer than expected, but was shut down as crowds grew larger.

She said no arrests were reported.

"It seemed to be a great day for the band and the city," Joyce said, thanking residents, commuters and business owners for their patience. "I'm sure there were some frustrated drivers, but for the most part everyone got where they needed to go and there was plenty of notice about parking and traffic impacts."

Publicists estimated that tens of thousands of fans attended. Spokespeople for the Mayor, Boston Police and Boston Fire declined to estimate the crowd's size and would not comment on how many public safety officials were deployed.

The city provided public safety officials and resources for the event and does not plan to seek reimbursement from Aerosmith. Joyce said the costs the city incurred will not be calculated for a few weeks and declined to provide a cost estimate.

Pasquale said she arrived to stake out a spot at around 10 a.m. Others had been there as early as 7 a.m.

She said her view wasn't spectacular, "But the sound system more than made up for it. They always put on a good show."

“I hope they know that this was appreciated,” she added. “Things like this are rare. I hope it starts a trend with other musicians who have ties here.”

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