

# Awesome Who band numbs 18,000 fans

By PETER GODDARD  
Star staff writer

"Don't be afraid to make fools of yourselves," shouted The Who's Peter Townshend into the crowd at smoky Maple Leaf Gardens last night.

"Look at us."

But the 18,000 fans were

really too numb to do anything more than stand and yell. The Who were too intimidating, too awesome.

This was power rock at its most potent, with Townshend's wall-like guitar chords humming around the ball, singer Roger Daltrey's keening voice whipping above the music, John Entwistle's solo-like bass lines rumbling, and Keith Moon's magnificent drumming pounding out waves of rhythms.

It was a concert that started at the highest level and stayed there. For The Who don't write songs. They write anthems, each a constant high and each in the perfect rock format; short, neat and loud. This is rock stripped bare, rock with style more than substance.

And no band plays with more style. Last night revealed The Who as usual, with Daltrey, the star of Ken Russell's *Tommy* and *Lisztomania* movies, strutting like a puppet trying to gain control of his strings, while twirling the microphone in high flying arcs above his head.

And it remained Peter Townshend's creation, as it was almost since the band's beginning in 1963 when it was called the Highnum-

bers. He's essentially a rhythm guitarist, perhaps the greatest in rock. And he structures each piece so that massive but rhythmically simple chording is counterpointed by the more complex rhythmic patterns created by Moon, who just may be rock's finest drummer.

This format was followed note-perfectly from old material like Magic Bus and Eddie Cochran's *Summertime Blues* to Entwistle's gloomy *Boris the Spider* to things from the band's most recent album, *By the Numbers*.

Equally familiar were Townshend's sudden leaps and bends at climactic points in each song and the great flourishes with his right arm as he played. In fact, the whole evening was in many respects a re-play of the band's concert years ago at the CNE Coliseum.

Toots and the Maytal's opened last night's show, but their Reggae was lost on the crowd waiting for The Who. For anticipation is what The Who is all about. You are brought to such a peak so early that you wait and wonder if they can keep you there.

And they did. Near the end of the show, during a medley from *Tommy*, the Gardens' dark interior was pierced by tiny threads of red, green and blue lights, and the band was at the top of its form.



Concert Productions International  
presents

# The Who

**at Maple Leaf Gardens**  
**Thursday, December 11, at 8:00 p.m.**

Tickets: \$8, \$9, \$10

Limit of 4 per customer

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