

Aimee Allen tries to bring 'A Little Happiness'

Fresh after greeting her fans at her merch booth post-show at Irving Plaza, singer Aimee Allen and I are searching for a quiet spot to have a chat. Fastball is upstairs playing their set before headliner Sugar Ray goes on and every room in the club is either too noisy or unavailable for our use. Finally, we settle on a secret alley hidden in the depths of Irving Plaza. What begins as a somewhat shady-feeling clandestine interview, turns into a celebration of the so-bad-it's-good movie classic "Grease 2."

You see, Aimee and I have just discovered that we share a common childhood influence- Michelle Pfeiffer's legendary bad girl of Rydell High, class of 1961, Stephanie Zinone. Apparently I wasn't the only one impressed with Stephanie's stunning good looks, rebellious attitude, and fabulous all-black wardrobe. Aimee is the first person I have ever met outside of my social circle circa 1982 that really gets what Stephanie was all about. Aimee may also be the only other person I've come across who took the time to memorize the choreography to Zinone's "Cool Rider" backstage hallway dancing outburst. Or at least the only other person to freely admit this in public. Immediately, Aimee has scored geek points with me.

But loving a random Pink Lady isn't what makes Aimee a cool chick. What makes her cool is that Aimee has made one of her artistic priorities to get people in a good mood and show them life is to be enjoyed. The goal of her current CD "A Little Happiness" is hoping to accomplish just that. In times like these, people need to be reminded that life can be good and there is a way out of the darkness. Fans looking to be shown the way can start with her CD.

The current direction of her lyrics and music may come as a bit of a surprise to those who remember Aimee's earlier work (check out the lyrics to "Miss America" or "Too F***ed Up For Love"). Gone are the angry words of a woman who has had it with society or the latest sadistic ex-boyfriend. In its place, the writing of a woman who has learned to inject some California-inspired sunshine into her work. One recent review referred to Allen's music as "Summer on a CD." I think that was a fairly good summary of what you can expect from Aimee on this latest effort.

In concert, Aimee delivers her tunes with a smile. She roams the stage with authority, like that of a hip hop MC with a feminine flair to her strut. She's got movie star good looks and a skater-girl edge to her style. I wouldn't be surprised if the entire front row didn't go home from the show with a new crush to add to their Celebrity Top Five.

Her set is filled with, what else? Happy music. Besides delivering her own songs, such as "A Little Happiness", "Calling the Maker", "SoCal Kind of Love" and the current single "On Vacation" with a grin, she performs a cover that makes her smile- Sublime's "Santeria", which is featured on her album. When asked why she chose that particular song out of all the songs in the world she could choose from, she replies that it's a song that never fails to put her in a good mood. It's as simple as that.

It was a conscious decision to keep the mood positive on this CD. After suffering a random attack of violence recently and all the PTSD to go with it, she specifically stated she doesn't want any aggression in her music. She figured, she could wallow around in misery with her fans, or she could take the opportunity to use her talents to write an album that helps fans move on from the darkness and into the light.

Being that we were chatting at a show, I asked Aimee what keeps her happy on tour. Since having recently lost her iPod, her iPod Touch, and constantly forgetting her books are packed away in a separate vehicle en route to the next venue just when she is looking for them, she says she takes her downtime to appreciate the temporary peace and just thinks. If she's having a bad day, she takes a run to clear her head and when she's done, she is ready to hit the stage. But not before she makes sure her shoelaces are tied (to ensure a trip-less evening), a quick prayer and a shot of Jameson Whiskey! After that, she's ready to bring the good vibes to the crowds that show up early to catch her set, and perhaps bring home a little of her happiness with them.

Aimee is currently on tour with Sugar Ray. For tour dates and to listen to tracks from her CD, check out Aimee's myspace.