

Corey's Top 10 2019 Concerts

As 2019 ends and we step forward into 2020, I share my top ten concerts for the past year. This represents the ninth installment in this “series.”

This year either my wife or daughter, or in one case both, attended each of the shows I that made this year’s top ten; in the case of one band, my wife joined me at a show this past summer and my daughter joined me at a fall performance. Several shows included multiple artists who do headline their own shows; that gave a sense of multiple concerts where I “credit” just one show. 2019 presented tough choices in terms of ranking shows; just so many superb performances that made ranking/ rating them in order just so close.

1) For the second straight year (just like a certain Cy Young winner), John Fogerty’s August 15 concert at Radio City tops this list. Many know how I grew up listening to Creedence Clearwater Revival; that means primarily songs written, produced and sung by John C. Fogerty (as per the listings on the 45s and LPs). As a solo artist John continued to excel. Many great CCR and solo Fogerty tunes serve a great openers but I find a certain exhilaration when I hear the opening guitar notes and percussion of “Born on the Bayou.” It set a tone for this commentator. Following that driving classic, I enjoyed in succession “Green River,” “Lookin' Out My Back Door,” “Susie Q,” “Who'll Stop the Rain,” “Hey Tonight” and my all time Fogerty/ CCR fave “Up Around the Bend” (which shares top billing for me with a certain song by Poco and another by Free. In a nod to Creedence playing 50 years ago that August at Woodstock (and most (claiming to be) there telling Creedence outplayed all others), John played his cover of the Jimi Hendrix cover of the Star-Spangled Banner and his cover of The Beatles Sgt. Pepper classic “With A Little Help From My Friends” which Joe Cocker covered there. It did not stop with those: John and his band covered Sly Stone’s “Dance to the Music” and “Everyday People.” He closed with “Fortunate Son” and served up “Bad Moon Rising” and “Proud Mary” as encores. Wow! Find entire full setlist in this [blog](#).

2) Several years ago, following a performance at Nassau Coliseum, Shelly vowed we would never attend a concert by one of her all-time faves, who between tunes exhibited a moodiness and foul mouth aimed mostly at his record company. Somehow 14 months before this show she agreed to give Sir Elton John a second shot. He made the decision look rather fortuitous for this long farewell tour (which continues on and features 2020 shows in our area); if you did not catch a show in 2019 do try to in 2020. Elton sang in good form, his band led by Davey Johnstone played tight. Personal highlights were “Burn Down the Mission” from Tumbleweed Connection, long my fave Elton John LP, “Tiny Dancer” and “Your Song,” which was our wedding song and the night’s first encore. I [blogged](#) about this show earlier in 2019. Date: November 16

3) My daughter, as I [blogged](#) last September, called this show, the “best ever” concert. I wrote then, “It pleased me and yes I concurred with how she characterized Peter’s singing and his playing (and that of his band); she said most bands do not sound as good live as on record.” *The Peter Frampton Finale – The Farewell Tour* at Madison Square Concert was not to be missed. The songs spanned his career. He pulled out a deep cut, “The Lodger,” from his first solo LP, *Wind of Change*. Peter channeled his Humble Pie days with his encores, “Four Day Creep” and “I Don't Need No Doctor,” closing with George Harrison’s Beatles tune, “While My Guitar Gently Weeps” as a nod to performing on Harrison’s *All Thing Must Pass* triple LP. Date: September 13.

4) A twofer, for sure, two members of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, for the price of one concert. That describes The Brian Wilson Band that features fellow original Beach Boy Al Jardine and opening act, The Zombies, reprising their classic *Odessey and Oracle* LP at The Beacon Theatre, September 26 (*Brian Wilson with Al Jardine & Blondie Chaplin and The Zombies’ Something Great From ’68*). The highlight was Blondie Chaplin delivering a soulful lead vocal on my favorite Beach Boys tune, “[Long Promised Road](#),” from the *Surfs Up* LP (my fave Beach Boy, Carl Wilson, [sang](#) the lead on the LP. As I [blogged](#), “Al Jardine’s son, Matt, an outstanding vocalist, sang a wonderful lead on my second fave Boys tune, “Wouldn’t It Be Nice”.” The Zombies opened with “Tell Her No” and performed “She’s Not There” before performing their iconic 1968 LP in its entirety, closing with “Time of the Season.” Date: September 26. Venue: Beacon Theatre.

5 & 6) Summer on [Pier 17](#) overlooking the East River in New York. Autumn in London at [Royal Albert Hall](#) (Link includes setlist). [August 24](#) with Shelly; October 29 with Marisa. The common denominator Squeeze. They billed the tour at “The Difford and Tilbrook Songbook 2019.” Indeed it was, including “Love’s Crashing Waves,” from the non-Squeeze 1984 (Chris) Difford & (Glenn) Tilbrook LP. I used to describe The Beacon Theatre as the most ornate theatre; if it were a “ten,” then Royal Albert Hall scores something like 100, perhaps more, inside and out. My fave Squeeze tune, “Black Coffee in Bed,” served as the finale for each show. I really like “Footprints” to open each show. Other highlights, included “Please Be Upstanding,” “In Quintessence” and “Cradle to the Grave.”

7) Jim Messina played in the iconic Buffalo Springfield. He played a representative mix of tunes from Poco, my fave band he co-founded with Richie Furay, Loggins and Messina where Jim found his biggest success and from his solo career. The set last summer at My Father’s Place, my recent fave venue, opened and closed with two L&M songs, “Watching the River Run” and “Your Mama Don't Dance.” It included my fave L&M tune, “Be Free” and Poco classic, “You Better Think Twice” and “Follow Your Dreams” from the 1989 original Poco lineup’s *Legacy* LP. View a full setlist in this [blog](#). Date: August 5.

8) We traveled to New Jersey last Spring to see Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Richie Furay play a spirited set at what billed as his 75th Birthday Party. It included a mix of solo, Buffalo Springfield, Poco and Souther Hillman Furay Band tunes. He opened with my fave tunes for Richie to start a set, his SHF hit, “Fallin’ in Love” and the Springfield tune they opened each set during their 2010 reunion, “On The Way Home.” Richie’s daughter, Jesse Furay Lynch, shined on her several leads especially her cover of current Poco bassist Jack Sundrud’s “Hard Country.” View some pics and setlist [here](#). Date: May 18. Venue: SOPAC (South Orange Performing Arts Center).

9) There seemed to be many celebratory shows in my 2019 itinerary. King Crimson’s 2019 Celebration 50th Anniversary performance exemplified musicianship and sound. What else can you expect from a lineup that includes Robert Fripp. Set 1 concluded with “Islands” and Set 2 opened with “Drumzilla” and included the classic, “In The Court of the Crimson King.” Encore: “21st Century Schizoid Man.” Date: September 21. Venue: Radio City Music Hall.

10) “‘It Was 50 Years Ago Today’ - Todd Rundgren, Micky Dolenz, Christopher Cross, Badfinger’s Joey Molland & Chicago’s Jason Scheff – A Tribute to The Beatles White Album” says it all about this delightful show that included every song on the entire classic LP. The star performers open with a set that also included their own tunes. Sort of a multi-concert show since Rundgren (I Saw the Light, Hello It's Me), Dolenz (I'm a Believer, Pleasant Valley Sunday), Cross (Sailing, Ride Like the Wind), Molland (No Matter What, Baby Blue) and Scheff (Hard to Say I'm Sorry, 25 or 6 to 4), sang their hits. I really enjoyed everyone’s exuberance. Rundgren was just infectious (really the all were) and I really enjoyed his cover of Harrison’s While My Guitar Gently Weeps. Date: October 12. Venue: The Theatre at Westbury.

Honorable Mention: John Lennon Tribute [Concert](#) (including Natalie Merchant, Joan Osborne and Willie Nile), [Robert Gordon](#) with guitarist extraordinaire Chris Spedding, [Savoy Brown](#) featuring Kim Simmonds, [Peter Asher & Jeremy Clyde](#), and The Happy Together Tour 2019 (Turtles, Chuck Negron, Gary Puckett, The Buckingham, Classics IV, The Cowsills).