

Corey's Top Ten 2023 Concerts

In 2023 My wife and daughter attended the same number of concerts but in only three cases did we all attend a show together. This year my wife attended seven shows and my daughter five shows that made this year's list. I found it tough to rank the shows; the performance in each case, even those making honorable mention, were all stellar.

1) [Jackson Browne](#). His show last year was the first time my daughter saw his live; this year her mom attended a show even better than the one 13 months previously; as I noted last year, I saw him first over 50 years ago at Wollman Rink at the great ever summer concert series the former president killed off. As I started my [Gotham blog](#) about this wonderful show, "Often, I get asked why I still attend shows. A good example why is the adrenalin rush, the high I get that lasts for days and propels me and energizes this soul; it carries over into my life and, perhaps for me, my professional side. And last Monday's Jackson Browne concert at the Beacon Theatre delivered on all the preceding." Jackson played many faves including [For a Dancer](#), [Runnin' on Empty](#), [These Days](#), [For Everyman](#), [Doctor My Eyes](#), and the Eagles arrangement on Take It Easy.

Date: August 28. Venue: Beacon Theatre.

2) Jim Messina. The co-founder of my fave band, Poco, played an energetic and fine-sounding set in my current fave intimate setting just across the city-line. While many in the audience took videos, they apparently are not the social media savvy kind so nothing to share beyond memories and the pic I took. Unlike the last two times I saw Jim where he performed songs that span his career back to his time in that other iconic band, Buffalo Springfield, he focused mostly on Loggins and Messina ("L&M") tunes; that was fine as those songs best fit his tight and band. My fave Messina tune, "Be Free" from his L&M days sounded right off the *Motherlode* LP and wowed this attendee. "Changes" and "Angry Eyes" followed. Much of the set featured extended solo and jamming that featured the playing of his talented backing band.



Date: November 12. Venue: My Father's Place.

3) [Justin Hayward](#). The Moody Blues are a fave band, primarily because I so enjoy the songs of Justin Hayward. And though lacking his Moody colleagues, I got to hear almost all of my fave Moody Blues tunes live without enduring the selections (well-liked by many others) that I never look forward to hearing (despite many considering those songs concert highlights). In my [Gotham blog](#), I wrote, “I remarked to Shelly on our ride home how much more I enjoyed just hearing Justin Hayward tunes and that made the concert so much better than a full Moody Blues band concert.” He opened with “[Tuesday Afternoon](#)” and closed with “I Know You’re Out There Somewhere.” Other highlights included “[The Voice](#)” and my personal fave, “[Question](#)” which erupted into a sing-along for the the bridge. Of course, he played “[Nights In White Satin](#).”

Date: June 11. Venue: Wellmont Theatre.

4) [Peter Frampton](#). Marisa and I attended his “Finale” tour at Madison Square Garden four years ago. Following his diagnosis with Inclusion Body Myositis (IBM), Peter expected be able to play not much longer; as he concluded the show he said, “Never Say Never.” Covid19 occurred and Peter continued to play and record, including a splendid cover of Eric Clapton’s “[Let It Rain](#)” with The Doobie Brothers. As that clip evidences, Peter maintains his ability to play guitar (and sing) at his superior level. Thus father and daughter got to take in his “Never Say Never” tour last summer. While Peter walked on stage assisted by a cane and sat in a swivel chair (that looked ergonomic), the playing differed not one iota when this superb guitarist stood on stage. I remarked to my daughter how the show’s intimacy reminded of sitting front row at Queens College just ahead of the release of Frampton Comes Alive. Having enjoyed a number of live Frampton shows ahead of that release, I never liked the choice of songs for that album – another discussion. This concert featured two songs I never recalled hearing live: “[The Crying Clown](#)” from “Frampton,” the studio release (which includes versions of “[Baby I Love Your Way](#),” “[Show Me the Way](#)”) before the iconic live LP, and “[I Got My Eyes on You](#).” a really great tune that started off his 2nd studio LP, “Frampton’s Camel.” While Marisa shared that she preferred the MSG show, I so much more enjoyed this Never Say Never show and certainly look forward to what Peter [said](#) he hopes to play again, a “Never Say Never – The Sequel” tour.

Date: July 25. Venue: Capitol Theater.

5) [Eagles](#). I’ve attended two shows at UBS, the new arena five minutes from my home (of getting to the actual arena takes longer...). Both excelled. The Who was last year’s number one show. Albeit a shorter playlist with opening act Steely Dan on the bill, than two years ago when we took in their Hotel California show, this band without the horn section and orchestra played a feverish set. Nonetheless, the Poco fan that I am, puts me partial to bassist Timothy B. Schmit’s material; I’d much prefer some of his strong Poco tunes to the Don Henley solo and Joe Walsh offerings that the crowd loved. When [Take It Easy](#) is the second song the set you know you are in for great show. They closed with [Hotel California](#).

Date: September 20. Venue: UBS.

6) [Bruce Springsteen and the E-Street Band](#). This was a family affair. Both Marisa and Shelly joined me. It included an old-fashioned tailgate with our friends Lee and Shari and Eric and Jarmin. Bruce and band performed a high energy and uplifting concert. My wife remarked about the ability of the performers, most of not a youthful age, to carry on as they did. Highlights included “[Lonesome Day](#)” (which opened the set), “[The Promised Land](#),” “[Two Hearts](#),” “[Thunder Road](#)” which preceded the encores, “[The Rising](#),” “[Jungleland](#)” (the first encore) and “[Rosalita](#)” (my fave Bruce tune). My [Gotham blog](#) includes a setlist with video links for each song.

Date: September 3. Venue: MetLife.

7) [Squeeze](#). Last year, I labeled [Glenn Tilbrook](#)'s solo show the best solo performance show (and I been present at some great ones over the years). Glen's band with Chris Difford, Squeeze, co-headlined this show but they induced the ticket purchase; I heard of The Psychedelic Furs, but was not even sure I knew its music. Squeeze added members a few tours ago; it really made a more complete sound live. In addition to Glenn and Chris and Stephen Large on Keys and Simon Hanson (who both played in Glenn's solo band, The Fluffers), the band added Steve Smith on vocals and percussion in 2017 and Melvin Duffy on pedal steel and other guitars in 2019; Owen Biddle joined the band to play bass in 2020. I cannot recall a Squeeze concert that fails to become a sing-along crowd-familiarity with Squeeze music being what it is. As usual, they close with a rousing "[Black Coffee in Bed](#)" wrapped around "[Is That Love](#)".

Date: September 22. Venue: Radio City Music Hall.

8) [Allman-Betts Family Reunion](#). Just as the Covid 19 shutdown approached in March 2020, I attended a show at the Garden billed as "The Brothers" and celebrated the Allman Brothers Band 50th Anniversary. It featured surviving members of the band's last iteration. This show featured the next generation, with guitarists Devon Allman and Duane Betts leading an amazing cast of musicians including extraordinary bassist Tal Wilkenfeld who played with Jeff Beck; Tal played an amazing solo to introduce "Whipping Post" and lead on a moving version of "Ain't Wastin' Time No More. I especially enjoyed their cover of "Blue Sky" with Duane covering his dad's vocals.

Date: December 3. Venue: The Paramount.

9) [Dead and Co.](#) Pains me to think the highlight of my 2023 visits to Citi Field might've been this concert rather than an exhilarating performance by my Mets. About 20 years ago my youngest brother, Rob, took Marisa to see an earlier alt version of the Dead, The Other Ones, at Madison Square Garden. I loved the cover of Steve Winwood's Traffic classic, "Dear Mr. Fantasy;" they followed the arrangement found on "The Live Adventures of Mike Bloomfield and Al Kooper" which included the same Beatles "Hey Jude" Coda. I shared this [snippet](#) of "Truckin'" one of my early fave Dead tunes with my aforementioned brother Robby, a true Deadhead.

Date: June 22. Venue: Citi Field

10) [John Lennon Tribute honoring Graham Nash](#). Shelly and I seem to make this tribute and fundraiser an annual outing of late. With a two-time Rock and Roll Hall and Fame inductee as honoree, a larger venue than Theatre Within's base got the call for this 43rd Annual Tribute. As usual we enjoyed another fine even of solo John Lennon and Beatles songs; their was one exception: the first encore featured Nash's CSNY hit, "Teach Your Children." Judy Collins and Art Garfunkel joined Graham to perform Lennon's "Imagine." Willie Nile closed the show with energetic covers of "I Feel Fine" and "From me to You."

Date: December 2. Venue: Town Hall.

Honorable mention: [Chicago](#) June 24 at Bald Hill, [Richie Furay](#) at SOPAC, [Belinda Carlisle](#) July 18 at Westbury, [MJ The Musical](#) October 21 at the Neil Simon Theatre and [Some Like It Hot](#) July 15 at the Shubert Theatre.