

McGraw treats fans to new songs, favorite hits

BY JEFFREY LUTZ
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Tim McGraw became the first performance veteran of Intrust Bank Arena on Thursday night, as the country music star visited Wichita for the second time in less than a year.

McGraw, who brought his "Emotional Traffic" tour to Intrust, is the first musical act to perform twice at the downtown arena. He was in Wichita last June near the end of his "Southern Voice" tour, and Thursday's stop was relatively early in the latest tour, which began in March.

The 20-plus-year veteran has enough material from an

award-winning career to sustain two shows in 11 months. Thursday's show was supplemented by songs from McGraw's forthcoming album, which shares its name with the tour.

After a brief musical interlude, McGraw was led by security through the back of the arena, and he stopped to perform the haunting "Halo," a song from the upcoming album that hasn't yet debuted on radio.

The multiple Grammy winner rewarded the fans' willingness to sit through a new song by immediately beginning a string of his hits. It started with "Something Like That," from McGraw's 1999 album "A Place in the Sun."

Next was "Where the Green Grass Grows," followed by "When the Stars Go Blue" and "Last Dollar (Fly Away)."

Songs from the new album were mixed in, including "Right Back At Ya," along with tracks from his 10 previous studio albums, but not everything about Thursday's show was different from the concert last June. He didn't perform every hit, but many of his earlier songs have become standards.

McGraw hasn't changed his preference to seamlessly move from song to song, eliminating chatter as he goes from the last note of one tune to the first note of the next. He ad-libbed, "Turn it loose, Wichita," before the second song but didn't stop to talk until after the fourth

song, when he gave a brief introduction. He told a story about trying to meet girls in high school before playing Lionel Richie's "Sail On."

The opening acts were The Band Perry, a three-sibling group who recently arrived on the country music scene, and Luke Bryan, who has received frequent airplay on country radio with songs such as "Country Man," "Rain Is a Good Thing" and "Someone Else Calling You Baby."

McGraw, about to release his 11th album, almost constantly produces new music. That means near-constant touring, so it wouldn't surprise if McGraw becomes the first three-time performer at Intrust in the near future.

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