

It's cheers to buried hato

CONCERT

Spandau Ballet; Tears for Fears
Sandalford Wines, Swan Valley
Saturday, April 17
Review: Simon Collins

They bought a ticket to the world via hits three decades ago, to paraphrase 80s classic True, and now Spandau Ballet and Tears for Fears have come back again.

Since their heyday, both British pop outfits spent more time in court battling each other than on stage, yet the lure of the lucrative nostalgia circuit proved that time (and money) heals all wounds.

Any cynicism about the headline set from renewed romantics Spandau Ballet disappeared the minute the curtain dropped and the dashing quintet tore into the 1980 debut new wave single, To Cut a Long Story Short.

Frontman Tony Hadley, who completed a low-key tour of Australia under his own steam a few years back, was in superb voice, flanked by the evergreen Kemp brothers.

The equally ageless Steve Norman added trademark flourishes with his saxophone, an instrument that has



Blast from past: Tony Hadley, with saxophonist Steve Norman on the big screen, perform at Sandalford winery and, right, Curt Smith from Tears for Fears.

Pictures: Jacinta Mathews

somehow slipped from favour since the 80s. "I'm sure that we're not the only ones to have our troubles over the last 25 years," guitarist and songwriter Gary Kemp announced, "but it's great that we

made up and we're back together."

The acoustic segment featuring just Hadley and Kemp proved that the sparring partners had settled their differences well enough to head out on tour together late last year, and even write some new material.

Symbolism aside, this was also the flaccid midpoint of an otherwise

thrilling set. Predictably, the hits were the highlights — in particular, Highly Strung, I'll Fly for You, Only When You Leave, Round and Round and the perennial smoochy swoon of True. The frenetically funky Chant No. 1 reminded fans that Spandau delivered more than just smooth new romantic balladry. "Ladies, cast your mind back to how you screamed 25 years ago," Hadley teased during a disappointing encore of Fight for Ourselves and Gold, the latter delivered without a smidgen of passion.

Again, a few slumps couldn't ruin what was a vibrant performance bursting with great pop songs and a welcome step back into the 80s complemented by post-Beatles,



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pre-Oasis Britpop outfit Tears for Fears.

After feuding throughout the 90s, Roland Orzabal and Curt Smith have been ripe for a reformation ever since some of their new wave-meets-pop songs landed on the soundtrack to hit indie flick *Donnie Darko* in 2001. Most notably, that film gave *Mad World* a new lease of life, so it was an orchestral pre-recorded version of that 1982 ditty that welcomed the six-piece Tears for Fears on to the big Sandalford stage.

The 10-song set was long enough to boast all their big hits but not so long that they had to rely on weaker material, such as a laughably bad disco pop number apparently called

Devil's Jacuzzi (What else have you got? Satan's Sauna?).

Like Spandau Ballet, such daggy dalliances were forgiven once Orzabal and Smith swung into the soaring *Head Over Heels* or grand *Everybody Wants to Rule the World*, both released in 1985.

With their twin vocals augmented by singer Michael Wainwright, Tears for Fears reminded us of the debt they owe to the Fab Four on 1989's *Sowing the Seeds of Love*, while

the finale of *Shout* was a tribute to the power of direct, stripped-back pop.

Tears for Fears couldn't match the stage presence of the headlining gents, with Spandau Ballet stylishly dominating the first evening of their Australia tour.

While the music industry might bemoan the demise of the compact disc, the digital revolution has forced so many bands out on the road. It means old fans of the new romantics don't need a DeLorean fitted with a flux capacitor to go back to the 80s, and that is, indeed, gold.

