Yes, Her Hair Is Blond, and Oh, Yes, She Sang

By KELEFA SANNEH

Some fans will stop at nothing to get close to the stars they love. And last week, Kelly Osbourne found herself the victim of a particularly depraved form of celebrity stalking.

These extremists weren't content merely to watch Ms. Osbourne on "The Osbournes," where she appears weekly as herself, Ozzy Osbourne's 19-year-old daughter, charming viewers with her salty pronouncements and fluorescent plumage. They saw her squabble with her parents, her brother, her friends and her pets, and still they wanted more. She made a couple of music videos, and a debut album, "Shut Up" (Epic), but even that wasn't enough.

And so Friday night a few hundred devotees barged in on Ms. Osbourne at Irving Plaza, where she was doing the one thing she should be able to do without anyone watching: she was singing. Luckily, she had brought along a four-piece band, and with their help, she spent
about an hour trying in vain to disperse the crowd.

You'd think people would have left as soon as it became clear that the young woman onstage sounded almost nothing like the young woman on the album — the recorded Kelly Osbourne sings tart pop songs, whereas the live Kelly Osbourne tends toward tuneless, punk-inflected rants.

But no one seemed to care. Kelly-watchers had shown up to find out what color Ms. Osbourne's hair would be (blond), how she would accessorize (by scrawling an unprintable phrase on her chest) and what she would say about her ex-boyfriend, Bert McCracken, lead singer for the Used. On this last point, at least, she didn't disappoint: before a derisive new song about Mr. McCracken, she said, "He thinks he's Kurt Cobain, and he's not." (One can only imagine what his retort will be.)

There were a few moments of sheer torture, like "More Than Life Itself," which Ms. Osbourne says she wrote after her mother, Sharon, was found to have cancer. Sharon Osbourne's struggle with the disease seems to have ended in victory, but the same can't be said about her daughter's struggle with power balladry.

There were a few good songs, too, including Ms. Osbourne's loud, bright cover of Madonna's "Papa Don't Preach," and her sneering single, "Shut Up."

The fans who filled (or more accurately, didn't quite fill) Irving Plaza seemed satisfied, and at the end, some of then lined up to buy a copy of the album for $15, which is more than twice what it goes for at the used-CD shops downtown.

Still this didn't seem like a night that Ms. Osbourne herself would have enjoyed. If that charming, short-tempered young woman from the television series had wandered into Friday's concert, she probably would have curled her lip, muttered a few pithy phrases and walked right out.

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