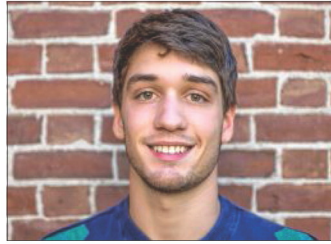


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A night with the Boss

At the last Bruce Springsteen concert I went to, in 2012, I was on the floor, dancing on one leg (my right foot was in a cast) to “Thunder Road” when a woman asked me, with a pinch of condescension, “How old are you?”



BRANDON LATHAM
Reporter

My response: “I’m 19 years younger than this song.”

I went to my third Springsteen show on Wednesday, my first at an outdoor venue like Gillette, and watched a man more than three times my age perform his trademark rollicking heartland rock for 4 hours and 2 minutes.

He barely broke a sweat.

I’ve been known to say, with false objectivity in my voice, that there may be better novelists and filmmakers and so on, but Bruce Springsteen is the greatest storyteller ever to make pop music his primary medium. For all of the dance music, fun covers and hard rock of the concert, he was in storytelling mode for most of the night.

He recounted why he wrote his iconic songs – namely “Blinded by the Light” — talked about buying his first guitar at age 14, explained why he considers “Growin’ Up” his first autobiography. He considered the state of our union, saying it depresses him right after singing “American Skin.” He delivered a heart-breakingly bare rendition of “4th of July, Asbury Park” that sounded more introspective and mournful than I’d heard before.

The show crescendoed from the thoughtful storytelling of its first hour to the bouncy explosion of its fourth. It started with why I love Bruce’s music and built to why I love his shows.

This week, The Boss will turn 68. He still has house-rocking, pants-dropping, earth-shocking, booty-shaking, heart-breaking, soul-crying, death-defying, legendary E Street Band rocking harder than ever.