

Diamond is forever

Perth concert at 70

Nui te Koha

SUPERSTAR Neil Diamond will be 70 by the time he plays in Perth in March to wind up his Australian tour.

Diamond says he always enjoys playing in Australia and has a sincere connection with audiences Down Under.

His iconic album, *Hot August Night*, spent 29 weeks at No.1 on the Australian charts.

"Australia is an important psychological market for me," the veteran singer-songwriter said. "The people have been loyal beyond my wildest dreams. It's a high watermark for me."

"I want to put together a show that people will absolutely love. Once I do that for Australia, I can play anywhere else in the world."

After 50 years in the business, Diamond is still at the top of his game.

He has sold more than 120 million albums with hits including *Sweet Caroline*, *Holly Holy*, *Cracklin' Rose*, *I Am I Said* and *Song Sung Blue*.

Next month he will release a covers album called *Dreams*, featuring his take on classic hits such as The Eagles' *Desperado*, *Yesterday* by The Beatles and Bill Withers' *Ain't No Sunshine*.

Diamond says he has never forgotten his humble roots and bucks the trend for extravagant backstage demands.

Instead he asks for a clean dressing room, takeaway



Chinese food on a china plate, water, soft drinks, tea, coffee and paper cups. "I like to keep things basic. I'm not really a flashy person," he said.

His requests are a far cry from the lavish demands detailed in *The Little Red Riders Book*, about excessive backstage requests. It reveals Jennifer Lopez wants white couches, white flowers, white drapes and her coffee to be stirred counter-clockwise.

It further claims P. Diddy expects 204 clean towels and Barbra Streisand wants rose petals in the toilet.

Metallica, who played in Perth on Friday and last night, has baked beans on its list, while U2, Bon Jovi and The Eagles, who all head to WA this year, appear to have more gourmet tastes.

One thing Diamond does like to have backstage, however, is a sword. A former swordfighter in college, he often does sabre drills as a pre-show warm-up.

Tickets for his nib Stadium concert on March 29 go on sale on November 9.



Neil Diamond

STAR REQUESTS

Neil Diamond: A clean dressing room and takeaway Chinese food on a china plate.

Metallica: Love seats, washing machine and clothes dryer, cube-shaped boxes of tissues, Corona, Heineken, Red Bull, blueberries and Heinz baked beans.

U2: Jacobs Creek white wine, three "very good" bottles of French chardonnay, three "very good" bottles of French bordeaux Jack Daniels, tequila and Guinness in cans.

The Eagles: Hot tea, lemon and honey, a blender and fresh vegetables for juice, ham sandwiches, a vegetarian plate, a quiet room to meditate.

Guns N Roses: Bear-shaped tubs of honey, mixed tubes of Pringles, a deli tray, Dom Perignon, gourmet cheese, pepperoni pizza, a black room with 18 white roses and 18 red roses.

Bon Jovi: Freshly brewed ice tea with lemon, sushi, hummus with whole wheat crackers, brooms, mops and squeegees.

Justin Bieber: Nuts, potato chips, vitamin water, seven white T-shirts, a pack of socks.

Mariah Carey: Champagne, one box of bendy straws, one special attendant to dispose of used chewing gum, tea service for eight, a Honey Bear pack of honey, two air purifiers.

Robbie Williams: no alcohol, four ashtrays, two packs of cigarettes, toothpicks, soap, a melon platter, soft toilet paper.

