



# **THIS DIAMOND IS A REAL GEM!**

**By Peter Feldman**

If you were a Neil Diamond fan the place to be last Saturday night was at FNB Stadium. The place rocked. The opening song “Soolaimon” with blinding lights and the thunderous sound shaking the entire stadium blew the crowd away. Truly an African storm.

Hours before the sold-out event his latest album, a slow-paced amalgam of other people’s hits called “Dreams,” was playing over the speaker system. The album’s cover stood illuminated on the two giant screens on either side of the stage, another reminder of whom you’d come to see.

This was no solitary man. This was a dignified musical legend, with a distinctive voice, who for almost two hours had his 52,000 audience bewitched and beguiled with a songbook of memory makers that say volumes for this superstar’s longevity in a fickle business.

His selection of material, which could not have been easy in the light of his impressive body of work, highlighted Neil Diamond’s unique song writing craft, a gift that has brought joy to millions around the globe. Diamond is a wordsmith, no less.

Diamond’s music has been celebrated over generations and it was interesting to hear comments from the younger brigade who came to appreciate the simple structured songs, the deep-felt lyrics and the clever hook lines. It was a joyous celebration to an artist who loves to entertain and he overwhelmed the audience with his generosity of spirit. Rarely have I seen a performer so engaged with his audience. He even performed two numbers, “I’m A Believer” and his classic, “Sweet Caroline,” several times over, making sure his fans got the message.