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12/6/2018

I've Waited a Long Time for This: A Review of a Marilyn Manson Concert (October 23, 2018 at the Knoxville Civic Auditorium)

It's a beautiful autumn day on October 23rd and instead of spending it kicking leaves or drinking hot cocoa, myself, my boyfriend Brandon, and my friend Amber are packed into my car and have been driving for about two hours. I am filled to the brim with nervous excitement, but my friends are as cool as cucumbers. Maybe that's because they've both been to several concerts and this is going to be my first. They are both older than me, I'm 21, he is 33, and she is 23, so maybe their ages play into it, but I just hadn't had the opportunity to go to one. I was stuck from the lack of a car and money, but now here was walking up to the Knoxville Civic Auditorium to finally have that experience.

As we crossed the road from the parking garage and came to the line, a slight wind chill increased my nervousness. I took Brandon's heavy leather jacket, not just to stay warm, but to act as a weight to keep me calm as we waited to walk through the glass doors of the auditorium. A slight smell of smoke was in the air and the setting sun glistened on the glass front as I had ot

Set List

1. Cruci-Fiction in Space
2. Angel with the Scabbed Wings
3. Deep Six
4. Disposable Teens
5. This is the New Shit
6. Tainted Love
7. The Love Song
8. mOBSCENE
9. Say10
10. The Dope Show
11. Great Big White World
12. Dried Up, Tied and Dead to the World
13. The Beautiful People
14. Antichrist Superstar
15. Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)

take everything out of my pockets; a funny scene considering Brandon had so much in the pockets of his jacket that I physically couldn't hold all of it and it kept spilling onto the ground. Once we stepped inside, I thought my heart was going to leap out of my chest because the reality had finally struck me. Not only was I about to see my first concert, but my first concert was with my favorite artist of all time – Marilyn Manson.

I began listening to Marilyn Manson in the womb. That is no exaggeration; my dad listened to Marilyn Manson back in the day, even though my mom hated it, and would play a cassette tape of his songs while she was pregnant. The evolution of Manson's music has been the soundtrack to my life. Needless to say, I had been wanting to see him in concert for as long as I could remember. That chance came one muggy day in July just a few months before my friends and I crammed ourselves into my Chevy Cobalt, when my mom, son, and I were picking up Bojangles from Colonial Heights because the power was out, and I heard over the radio that Marilyn Manson was coming to Knoxville in October. I lost my mind. I knew I had to get tickets for myself, Brandon and Amber. Which I finally did at the beginning of October because I was considering not going, but I decided that I had to live out my dreams and go. The tickets cost \$55.70 from Ticketmaster, but there were additional fees which took each ticket to around \$74. In total it cost \$222.16 for all three of us to go. It was a pricey decision, but it was worth it to have my first concert experience.

The Venue

We were driving from Kingsport, Tennessee which is approximately two hours from Knoxville and I had only ever driven into Knoxville to get to the zoo, but the Knoxville Civic Coliseum is well past the zoo because it is deep into downtown. I thought it was easy to get to

even for someone who doesn't know the area well, the only thing that posed a problem was a misread sign and a wrong turn, but there was no hassle turning around to go back the right way.

We arrived early and got in line to wait outside. The venue had people come and inform everyone in line that they needed to empty their pockets before they went inside so the metal detectors don't go off and I thought it was nice to have the heads up. There was a scantily clad man going around the line passing out pages of the Bible to everyone. He had on tall combat boots, a corset, black bikini-like underwear, and some weird mesh fabric on his legs and chest. Oh and of course, crazy face make-up and contact lenses. I certainly expected some super goths to be there, but not anything of this guy's caliber. If he moved to fast there could have been a whole different show going on. He had no relation to venue, but he was a unique experience, nonetheless. Overall, most people I saw were dressed similar to myself in a T-shirt and jeans. I did see several super goths as I expected, so trench coats, crazy dresses, wild make-up, and black on black on black. But I also saw a lot of people dressed like they were models for Abercrombie and Finch.

They have several people on staff, so once they started letting people into the venue, we were in line for no more than 20 minutes. Once we finally got inside, the venue was quite foggy, and I thought people were allowed to smoke inside that's how bad the fog was. They were using fog effects for the show and must have been testing it because there was so much it bled into the hall. These types of effects bother my asthma, but it was only enough to mildly aggravate me before the show started. The venue is quite small, with a capacity under 3,000 people which was smaller than I anticipated in fact, which was a positive because we were closer to the stage than I thought we would be. When I bought the tickets online, they had a mock-up of the floor plan that made it look as if there was a large open area between the stage and the first row of seats. In

actuality, the front of seats was practically sitting on the stage, so row G was not as far back as I had originally anticipated. I had always imagined a big concert venue with thousands of people, but the auditorium was more like a high school theater. Another benefit of this venue was that it typically hosts plays, so it has theater seats. This was a positive for me because I have chronic back pain, so being able to sit down throughout the show when my back hurt more helped me enjoy the show more. We had gotten inside almost an hour early, but that was plenty of time to get drinks before the opening act came on.

The Opening Act

The lights went dark and a remixed version of the John Carpenter *Halloween* theme started playing. A man in a large hat came on stage and started DJing and a few moments later the drummer and another man, who was the main singer, followed him on stage. After a few minutes of the trippy sounds, the audience was punched into the face with a hardcore punk sound. I was not expecting this sound from this group, but they kicked ass. I expected a trippy, grungy sound, but instead I got a mix of rap and hardcore punk. Their energy was electric, and it felt like my ears were being pelted with sound.

It wasn't until halfway through their 30-minute set, which seems short to me, did they announce their name, but I couldn't hear them, so I didn't learn it until after the show. The band is Ho99o9 (pronounced Horror) which consists of two members, theOGM and Eaddy, and was founded in Newark, New Jersey. When they announced their name, they playfully taunted the audience and thanked Marilyn Manson for having them as his opening act during his October shows. No where on the venue's page or the site where I bought the tickets, did they mention the opening act, which I find as a disservice because this band deserves recognition.

The Main Attraction

After Ho99o9 finished their set, we waited another 30-minutes before Manson himself came on stage. This was because the stage hands had to break down Ho99o9's gear and test the lighting. I appreciated the break in between sets because it provided people time to use the restroom or get more drinks (alcohol was served at the show), and because it gave my ears a rest.

Marilyn Manson's Discography

- *Portrait of an American Family* (1994)
- *Antichrist Superstar* (1996)
- *Mechanical Animals* (1998)
- *Holy Wood (In the Shadow of the Valley of Death)* (2000)
- *The Golden Age of Grotesque* (2003)
- *Eat Me, Drink Me* (2007)
- *The High End of Low* (2009)
- *Born Villain* (2012)
- *The Pale Emperor* (2015)
- *Heaven Upside Down* (2017)

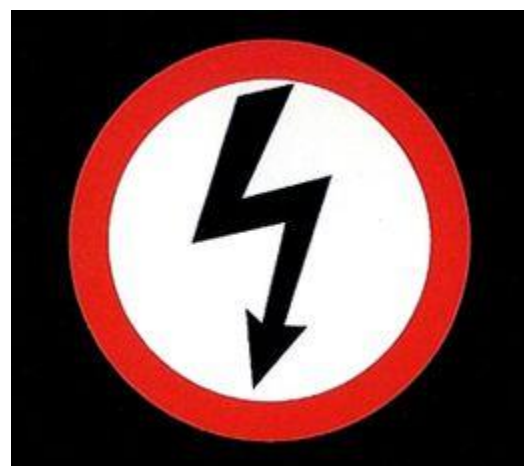
After what felt like forever, the lights dimmed, and everyone stood as the bass for "Cruci-fiction In Space" began. The show had started, and I had no idea what would happen next as I didn't expect a song from his 2000 release *Holy Wood (In the Shadow of the Valley of Death)* to start the show. But I was hype because I love that song and it is one of his lesser known works from his discography. I enjoyed the mix of songs from his body of work, but I was a bit disappointed by the lack of songs from his latest release, *Heaven Upside Down* (2017). It would have elevated the concert to the next level to hear some of his newer stuff, especially some of my favorites from the album, like "Saturnalia".

Even though I would have liked to hear more from *Heaven Upside Down*, I enjoyed the set list. I was so excited to hear the opening cords of "Tainted Love" because I have always loved his version of the song and especially the music video. I got very excited when he started played "Dried Up, Tied and Dead to the World" from arguably his most famous album, *Antichrist Superstar* as it is easily one of my favorite songs, but I was disappointed because he did not play the entire song. I was not surprised by the fact that he did not play any songs from

albums released between 2007 to 2012 because these three albums are not as popular among fans. I was surprised that no songs from 2015's *The Pale Emperor* were played because that album received overwhelmingly positive reviews from fans.

I found his stage performance was exciting even though he had a serious injury on stage on September 30th, 2018 that caused him to cancel nine shows. A prop tipped over on top of him and crushed bones in his legs, so he did not dance around the stage as much as he is known for doing because of the injury. He did still move around and put on a good show for everyone, even moving to a side of the stage that wasn't barricaded so fans who were not VIPs could get up close to him.

My biggest complaint with the show was the lighting effects and the use of fog. It seemed that for each song being played, there was a different strobe light style or similar lighting effect being used. I know that many shows use strobe effects, but they were starting to make me physically sick from how much they were being used. Luckily, I realized early that the strobe effects were going off in tune to the song and because I knew all the songs, I could look down and avoid most of the lights. If there was anyone in the audience who was also sensitive to the strobe effect, but didn't know the songs as well, then they would have a harder time avoiding them. There



Shock symbol

were no warnings anywhere that stated how much strobe effects would be used, and I feel that there should have been. My other complaint was with the overuse of the fog machine because it bothers my asthma and there were a couple of times I was hacking up a lung. Again, this was not mentioned anywhere prior to the show and I feel it should have been. I understand that these are

both common effects used in rock shows, but this was my first concert and I was not prepared for the over usage of both of them.

There were a couple of minutes in between each song playing so the stage hands could prepare the new props or clean up any water Manson may have tossed on stage. The interludes were nice because it gave me a good opportunity to sit down and rest my back before the next song came on. I thought the props for each performance were a good touch. The most interesting being when he performed “Antichrist Superstar” he had the podium with the blinking shock symbol and during the performance he burned a Bible and threw it in the air. I expected nothing less from Manson.

Overall, I had a great time at the show. For my first concert, I think this was a great experience and not one I would take back. I did learn that the next time I go to a concert, I should bring a pair of ear plugs because my ears are sensitive, and the very loud rock was more than I expected. I may also want to bring a pair of sunglasses, so if there is going to be a lot of strobe lights, I can watch more of the show than the ground. It was a great feeling to have finally see my favorite artist in concert and if the opportunity arose to see him again, I would book my tickets immediately.