

Tonight I witnessed something historical. The end of an era. Or as Pete Wentz referred to it: the death of the Emo haircut.

As a promise to Blink-182's bassist Mark Hoppus for bringing Fall Out Boy on tour with them, FOB bassist Pete Wentz let Hoppus shave his head during their last song of tonight's set at Madison Square Garden. A crew member took over bass duties on "Saturday" while Wentz sat in a chair, chugging liquid courage from a red plastic cup as tufts of his glorious black bangs and feathered layers of hair fell to the floor.

This was the end to a pleasantly surprising set from the Illinois-based band. I wasn't a fan of theirs when I first heard of them in 2005, and had dismissed them as wannabes/annoying kiddie pop punk. But then they got to me with 2007's "Thanks For the Memories" (or "Thnks fr the Mmrs" as it's actually spelled on the CD). The hate stopped, and the reluctant tolerance began. So when I saw that they were on Sunday night's bill at MSG, I didn't cringe as much as I would have a short while ago. I was intrigued more than anything to see what the fuss was about.

Headliners Blink-182 definitely shared this crowd equally with Fall Out Boy. When FOB began their first song of the night, "Sugar, We're Going Down", I don't think lead vocalist Patrick Stump actually sang until a few lyrics into the song, because the sold out crowd completely took over right from the get go, screaming "Am I more than you bargained for yet?" at deafening levels.

The band puts on an entertaining show. They don't sit still for a minute. Wentz and guitarist Joe Trohman spin in crazy circles in the background, regularly visiting each other's sides of the stage, while drummer Andy Hurley bashes away in the back. Whenever Stump took a break from wailing on the mic, he'd stomp dance around the stage.

During "I Don't Care", the band played guitars that lit up a la Lite Brite that would flash in time with the chorus of "I don't care what you think as long as it's about me", adding a bit of showmanship I didn't expect from them. Other than that, and the Emo haircut funeral, another surprise was when Pete mysteriously directed the crowd to "Stand up for your national anthem." I did, expecting to hear the opening notes to "Star Spangled Banner" to be played. Instead, they began playing the biggest comeback song of the 80's since it was played on the final episode of the Sopranos, "Don't Stop Believing" by Journey. The crowd, most of whom were probably born well after the song's 1981 release date, shouted along as Fall Out Boy played the song in its entirety. The set ended with the head-shave fest "Saturday. After Wentz, who finished the song out perched in the front section of the general admission pit, exclaimed "New York City! Are you watching closely? Abra Cadabra!" the band was gone.

Next up was Blink-182. The last time I saw them was in Hartford, CT, the day after their good friend DJ AM's death. Although I didn't fully express it in my review the last time, in hindsight it was an awkward evening. As fans, we all knew the band had considered Adam Goldstein (DJ AM) a near brother. It was amazing to me the show had even gone on as scheduled. It was hard to completely enjoy the evening knowing that they were in the middle of a depressing experience. I remember during "First Date" watching the punk bunny cartoons flash on the backdrop and thinking it was hard to appreciate the cute humor of it when the guys were on the verge of tears all night. Or in Mark Hoppus's case, actually crying. After Hartford and the next night's show, the band had to reschedule their next few appearances to take time off to grieve.

But tonight, the mood was a different one, and so this crowd seemed a bit more lively and enthusiastic than the Hartford show was. The guys were psyched to play the legendary Madison Square Garden, as evidenced by Travis's tweets last night, and the Tri-State Area was clearly glad to have them. The setlist was pretty similar, covering the MTV hits and some random old school songs. Though they didn't play "Violence", they did play "Obvious", which I wanted to hear at the last show, so I was happy when it made the list for MSG. Also missing from the Hartford show, most likely due to the lower roof height, was Barker's impressive drum solo. Fans who left before the encore (why do people do that?!) missed a great show.

After waiting in the dark after the last song, there were a few chant outbursts of "We want Blink!" until Travis emerged from the darkness. When the

stage lights went back up, the crowd screamed even louder upon seeing it was time for Travis's moment in the spotlight. In the past, he's done a similar stunt to Tommy Lee's solo from the "Girls Girls Girls" tour in the late 80's, playing in a rotating drum cage above the crowd's heads. This time, his whole riser literally rose. The entire disc shaped platform became a flying saucer, rising above the stage and swinging back and forth like a pendulum. Then, the entire structure, with Travis harnessed in pounding away at the drums, spun around like a record on a turntable. It was awesome.

The show finished with "Josie", and finally "Anthem Part Two", which ended with a snowfall of confetti. The confetti storm not only blasted the crowd in the front of the arena, but also in the back by the sound booth, where movie star Will Ferrell was rumored to be sitting. Just before leaving the stage, singer/guitarist Tom DeLonge stuck around to thank the crowd and show his gratitude by performing a small set of push-ups in the mounds of paper left on the stage. If there's any place random exercise belongs, it's at the end of an already exhausting rock show...? And with that, Mark Hoppus said goodbye, saying that the city of New York would see them soon.