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Green Day concert review - PNC Bank Arts Center

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Billie Joe Armstrong of Green Day. PNC Bank Arts Center, August 14, 2010.

Photo by Lorraine Schwartz

Green Day's singer, Billie Joe Armstrong, kneeled down at the front of Holmdel, NJ's PNC Bank Arts Center stage and looked up in amazement at over 20,000 adoring fans singing "Boulevard of Broken Dreams" into the night sky. Bowing forward, he buried his face in his arms as if to isolate himself so he could take in the moment privately. As the crowd finished the verse, Billie Joe lifted his head back up and flashed a huge smile. It was clear that unlike the song's lyrics, this man does not walk alone (***rimshot***).

In fact, judging from the masses that jammed up a few miles worth of the Garden State Parkway on Saturday night on their way in to see the band's only NY/NJ appearance this summer, Billie Joe and bandmates Mike Dirnt (bass), and Tre Cool (drums) will not have to worry about fan abandonment anytime soon. The California-based foursome's first major hit album "Dookie" came out in 1994 and their success has shown no signs of slowing down since then. The band has grown musically, and with that, so has their fanbase. Churning out back to back epic albums with 2005's "American Idiot" and 2009's "21st Century Breakdown" the band gained even more fans with their new Broadway musical "American Idiot" based on the CD of the same name, helping them earn a spot amongst rock royalty such as Metallica, U2 and the other stadium-fillers of this generation.

Saturday night it was clear the guys are all about their loyal subjects, which ranged from a sparkly dressed Grandma in the crowd to families of parents with small kids and teenagers in tow. Green Day's fans span all ages because they've been around 22 years, which means high schoolers who rebelled to "Welcome to Paradise" are now in their mid-30's. Expressing his gratitude to the multi-generational crowd, Billie Joe said that over time, people are lost along the way and bands break up, but "You guys are gonna put me in the coffin."

As if vocal thanks was not enough, the guys routinely brought up lucky members of the crowd to join in on the show and enjoy the vantage point along with them. During their second song, "Know Your Enemy", Billie Joe yanked up a teenage boy and girl from the chaotic barricade to sing and dance with him. At the song's end he commanded them to stage dive, which they did (right over this reporter's head). For their third song, "East Jesus Nowhere", a young boy with a bright yellow shirt that said "Save Me" was brought up and "saved" by Billie Joe, Bible Belt tent style. Later in the show, the band fit as many kids on stage as they could for a song, and for "Longview" brought up two boys to take over vocal duties. While the second boy nervously tried to belt his way through the song, Billie Joe brought out a sign language interpreter to sign the rest of the song which he got a kick out of. "That JUST HAPPENED!" he laughed.

Adding to the interactive theme of the show, Green Day even went against the normal attitude of ignoring crowd requests by actually soliciting one. As per fans wishes, they played "Who Wrote Holden Caulfield?" off of 1992's Kerplunk. Joining Billie Joe on vocals, and in some parts totally holding down vocal duties, was Davey Havok of AFI, who opened the show for Green Day earlier in the evening. This was one of two super vintage songs on the [setlist](#), the other being "Paper Lanterns" off of an EP released in 1990 called "Slappy."

The band played 35 songs total, clocking in at just under 3 hours of pure unadulterated rock and roll showtime.



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