

The Unity Tour: Offspring and 311

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311 returned to the Verizon Wireless Amphitheater with their Unity Tour, this time featuring fellow radio kings Offspring. The multi-platinum bands proved why they have ruled the rock scene, pumping out a plethora of pop-driven hits and satisfying fans' urge for some summer music fun.

Although the live touring industry has taken a nosedive in summer 2010, no signs of an adverse economy showed this Sunday, as droves of dedicated fans flocked to the huge open-air venue and filled every space. The audience included a varied mix of people: fans since the bands' inception jonesing for some nineties nostalgia, to their kids carrying on the tradition. Diehard devotees and casual fans of rock radio alike could likely sing the lyrics to almost every song played.

Offspring continued to tour behind their 2008 smash record *Rise and Fall, Rage and Grace*, opening the show with second single "You're Gonna Go Far, Kid." Singer Dexter Holland, with his signature bleached hair and opaque sunglasses, pumped up the crowd.

The first few bass notes indicating road-rage anthem "Bad Habit" wafted out, and the crowd burst into excitement as the oldie launched into its familiar punk fastness. "I still do not believe this sh!t!" Dexter genuinely exclaimed in reaction to their fans' enthusiasm. As the song picked back up, everyone sang along a capella to the expletive-laden bridge, "You stupid dumbshit goddamn motherfucker!" Los Angeles traffic will do that to you.

Offspring debuted a new song (thus far publicly deemed, "The New Song") from their forthcoming record, which they plan to release at the end of 2010. The new song began with a few minor notes and seemed slower than the upbeat singles from their last album, but it was catchy nonetheless.

A string of hits followed, including "Come Out and Play," "All I Want," and "Hammerhead." While the band members' seniority is beginning to show physically, they still infused their show with contagious energy. Guitarist Noodles's hair color betrayed his age, but he continued to jump around and traverse the stage like he was a couple decades younger.

As darkness fully descended, Dexter broke it down with a solo rendition of "Gone Away." Devoting it to loved ones lost, he removed his shielding sunglasses and accompanied himself on piano for the emotional song. Keeping on the touching note, the band joined for "Kristy, Are You Doing Okay?"

Dexter also dedicated a cover of "Guns of Brixton" to The Clash cofounder Joe Strummer.

The hit parade continued with ska-laced "Why Don't You Get A Job?," fan fave "Staring at the Sun," the still-hilarious "Pretty Fly (For a White Guy)," and radio staples "The Kids Aren't Alright" and "Self Esteem."

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Dexter Holland,
Vocals



Greg K.
Bass



Noodles,
Guitar



Pete Parada,
Drums

LIVE & LOUD

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A sample announcing 311 blasted over the speakers as the audience chanted along, "Three-eleven! Three, three-eleven!" A spotlight hit frontman Nick Hexum playing the opening riff to "Down," and the crowd went crazy. Vocalist SA Martinez skipped happily around the stage, bobbing his head and enthusiastically spitting lyrics.

311 have been able to rise above the unforgiving rap-rock stigma that dragged down similar bands of their era. Blending their sound with a funk, reggae-fusion vibe insulated them from being pegged with similar criticisms and kept fans interested.

The band was bathed in smoky aqua lights for favorite "Come Original," and the crowd threw up their arms in compliance with the lyrics. While SA and Hexum danced around stage for the majority of the show, they remained at their mic stands for "India Ink."

"Applied Science" featured an extended drum solo that nicely split the 25-song set. The normally non-drumming members also pounded skins, with four colorful drums flanking Chad Sexton's kit. Their fun rhythmic treat and mid-air sticks switch pumped up concertgoers before they launched into "Brodeur."

Dressed in his beloved yellow Lakers jumpsuit, P-Nut later performed a solo on his bass, with its fancy light-up fret board glowing. The band's highlighting of individual members' talents, especially including instruments like bass that are often overlooked when the time comes for solos, was refreshing comparative to other acts. But fans who have attended multiple tours could potentially become bored with the band's repeated use of drumlines and bass solos.

In addition to hits like "Beautiful Disaster," "Amber," and "Creatures (For a While)," 311 also delivered lesser recognized songs like "Talyed," "Purpose," "Flowing," and "What Was I Thinking?" The Nebraska band ended with an encore that included a fun mash-up and old song "Omaha Stylee."

Both bands' ability to continue pulling in an abundance of fans, churn out modern rock hits, and remain relevant after existing for over twenty years is impressive, especially while treading a fickle industry. Summer 2010's The Unity Tour was a testament not only to their current staying power, but to their promise for the future.

Bands: The Unity Tour: Offspring and 311

Venue: Verizon Wireless Amphitheater

Date: July 24, 2010

City: Irvine, CA

Nick Hexum,
Vocals, Guitar



P-Nut,
Bass

Tim Mahoney,
Guitar



Chad Sexton,
Drums



SA Martinez,
Vocals

