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## Michael Giltz

Freelance writer and raconteur

Posted: March 9, 2011 05:17 PM



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# OMD at Terminal 5, First U.S. Show in 23 Years

Inspiring Funny Hot Scary Outrageous Amazing Weird Crazy

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## OMD

Terminal 5 in NYC

I think the bandmembers of **Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark** were almost as surprised as I was by the mob of people who showed up for their first U.S. concert in 23 years. Their new album *History Of Modern* -- which sounds very OMD-ish indeed and should delight fans -- hasn't made much of a ripple commercially here.

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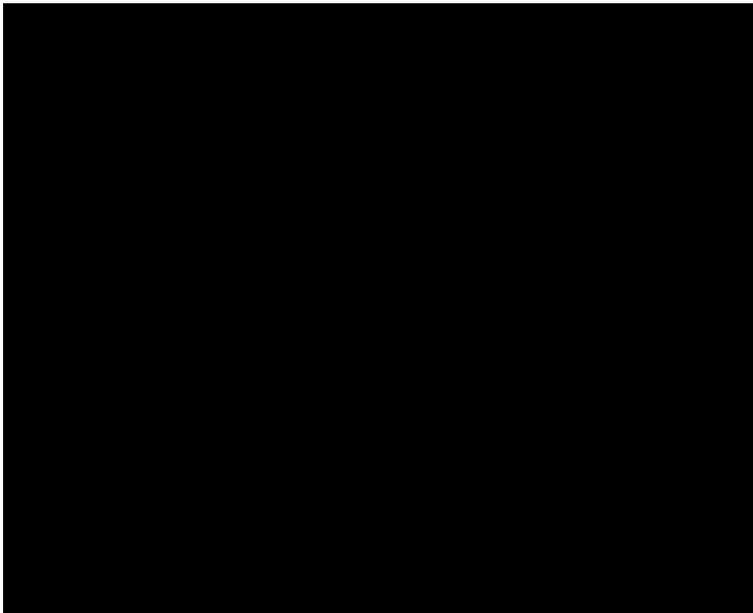
PlayStation Network Could Be Down For Days



But there the audience was, faithful fans who weren't just there to hear "If You Leave," which was placed seven songs in on the 21 song set list -- not so early that they wanted to get it out of the way, but early enough to show they were confident in their songbook to keep the energy going.

That they did, with leaders Andy McCluskey and Paul Humphreys repeatedly saying how much they appreciated the turnout and promising to come back again very, very soon. If anything, OMD proves that credibility is elastic. They came into prominence riding a wave of UK synth-pop acts, with OMD leaning towards the darker, Kraftwerk and Brian Eno side rather than the more Motown-ish feel of, say, Human League. With songs name-checking the plane that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima and Tesla, they backed up their hooks with smarts. They were... cool.

Then along came John Hughes. He was applauded for having excellent taste and actually breaking new acts with the soundtracks to his hit films about teenagers. And yet, when Hughes helped give acts a hit song, their coolness plummeted immediately: Simple Minds went from a critic's darling to a stolid pop machine with pretensions of U2, Psychedelic Furs seemed defanged and OMD was seen as just another pop act from the UK. A few Top 20 hits followed in the US, but everyone soon went their own ways.



A pop hit is a wonderful thing. I told one friend about the concert and he revealed that "If You Leave" was the song for he and his girlfriend in high school... until they got into a fight with another couple who was friends with them but insisted that the OMD tune was *their* song. My friend Jamie, who cajoled me into going to the show, said one of his first concerts was seeing OMD open for Thompson Twins at Madison Square Garden at the peak of fame for both of them. And another friend from Minnesota who saw my tweet about attending immediately texted the lyrics and wondered if James Spader was wandering around wearing a polo shirt with an up-turned collar. He too was amazed when I sent a photo showing the several thousand people filling the venue.

And the best acts can survive a hit. McCluskey danced with all the dorky abandon of David Byrne at his art-rockiest and then made fun of it. But he also knew how to strike a pose at the end of a tune and draw out more applause. After a patch of slow tunes, he said everyone needed to start moving. "It is compulsory; you will be ejected if you don't dance." Like old pros, they took pleasure in starting off the set with a new song, "New Babies, New Toys." The title track received some of the warmest applause of the night and they introduced another new tune -- "Sister Mary Says" -- by saying, don't worry, it's actually quite good.



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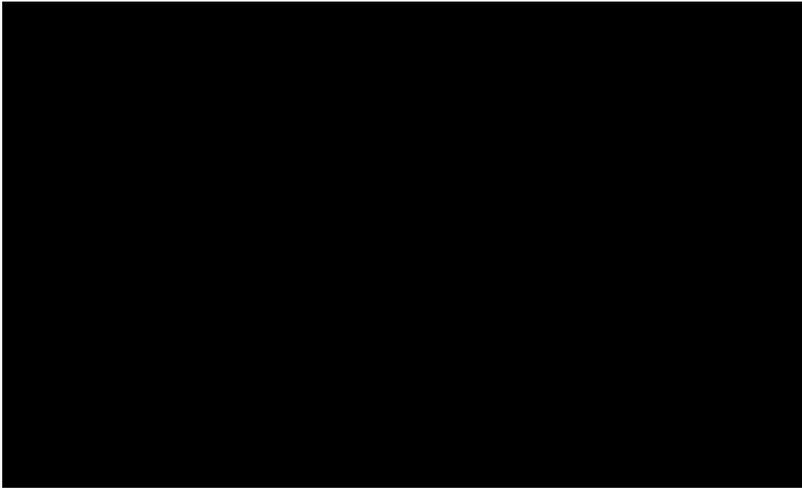
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My favorite moment was the moody, quiet tune "New Holy Ground," with McClusky half in shadows and the music sounding like it was rising up from the bottom of the ocean. But the entire set was more fun than expected by this casual fan who had nothing more than the new album and a greatest hits set on his shelf. In a way, **OMD** is more fun live. Their sound on earlier albums might be a bit dry and poppy, but in a show with a live drummer (in this case original bandmember Malcolm Holmes, not to mention Martin Cooper on keyboards) and the warmth of imperfections to give their tunes a humanness, songs like "Souvenir," "Sailing On The Seven Seas" and "Joan Of Arc" (all Top 5 hits in the UK) sounded better than ever. It helps when a few thousand fans are cheering you along. Here's a link to [their upcoming shows in the US and Europe](#).



Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of Showbiz Sandbox, a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available free on iTunes](#). Visit [Michael Giltz at his website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called [Popsurfing](#) and also [available for free on iTunes](#). Link to him on [Netflix](#) and gain access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

NOTE: Michael Giltz is provided with free copies of CDs or digital downloads by numerous labels to consider for review and feature coverage. He typically does not guarantee any coverage in exchange for these CDs and indeed receives far more albums than he ever comes close to covering in his various outlets. He was provided with free tickets to this concert with the understanding that he would be writing a review.

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Joe Machos 11:10 AM on 3/13/2011

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Great article. We are attending the Atlanta show this Monday night. Have enjoyed OMD since 1980.

Link below is a portion of our wedding video, dancing to the band as they kill "Souvenir" - our song. (I had lobbied for a DJ, but sadly lost that battle.)

http://www.vimeo.com/20493948

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LLNYRN 05:55 PM on 3/10/2011

16 Fans

God.

I didn't even know about this show.

A few of my co-workers keep telling me to stay away from Terminal 5 because it's one of the WORST places in this city to see a show. So I didn't bother paying attention to the schedule.

OMD was one of my favorite bands out of that whole Synth-Pop era.

Loved "GENETIC ENGINEERING", ENOLA GAY", and "ELECTRICITY".

Gonna have to break out the compilation CD later.

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**Michael Giltz** 04:49 PM on 3/12/2011

78 Fans



Well, the older I get the more I appreciate seating :)

It's just a huge space with balconies going up two levels. If you arrive early enough, you can get close to the stage and avoid being trapped in the back. Or get upstairs and if you are early enough and can get on the rail, you'll have a great sight line the whole show. As with any show, the rowdier the crowd, the less fun you are likely to have in the middle of the floor. It just depends on the mood of the audience, just as it would anywhere else like Bowery Ballroom. it's definitely big, though, so if the show is sold out, you don't want to walk in five minutes before showtime and expect a happy time.

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**RhiannonRings** 11:54 AM on 3/10/2011

57 Fans



Second great OMD song, "Electricity"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y43XLVqjytQ&feature=relmfu>

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**RhiannonRings** 11:50 AM on 3/10/2011

57 Fans



Enola Gay. Enough said.

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**strike1905** 09:12 AM on 3/10/2011

24 Fans

A good article.

It is nice to see others noting that "pop" wonders can be deeper than the sum of their hits. O.M.D. and 88 Seconds in Greensboro is another example, (of many), of O.M.D.'s non-pop work. I would like to add that the Human League also had their "darker" moments too, (Seconds).

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**strike1905** 08:44 AM on 3/10/2011

24 Fans

Enola Gay.  
Wow.  
O.M.D. at their best.

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**SmotPoker** 08:08 AM on 3/10/2011



254 Fans

Never heard of them but then again I wasn't into the Euro pop scene or the pop music scene either so it's not that surprising. I imagine their fans enjoyed the show, I know when I saw Deep Purple on their reunion tour years ago it was a very unique experience to see a group that I adored that hadn't been around in decades.

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**dinoue** 10:06 PM on 3/09/2011

6 Fans

23 years since they toured the US with the full lineup when they opened up for Depeche Mode on the Music for the Masses tour which eventually became the 101 video and album. Andy toured in 92 in support of Sugartax and Paul toured in 2001 as "the guy who was not from OMD" due to licensing issues. Both tours were fantastic, though paled in comparison to their A&M reunion tour a couple years ago when I saw them in London. Seeing them in DC tomorrow night so looking forward to topping that show.

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**HUFFPOST BLOGGER**

**Michael Giltz** 05:30 PM on 3/10/2011

78 Fans



Enjoy the show!

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**stevehamlin** 08:27 PM on 3/09/2011

28 Fans

Sign Siouxsie Now!

(OMD? Good harmonies, tight musicianship . . . what's not to like?)

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**Donald Kaufman** 06:57 PM on 3/09/2011

19 Fans

I was there last night, and I must say it was a fantastic show! They sounded great, and had just incredible energy. Andy's moves were amazing/hilarious. Who knew OMD are such a good live act? Well, seeing as they haven't played here in 23 years, probably not too many Americans. I, for one, hope they do come around again soon. I'd definitely catch them again.

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**DustinTime** 10:46 PM on 3/09/2011

604 Fans



Indeed!

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