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Guns N' Roses in Spain

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Guns N' Roses in Spain

By Ailey Butler

This concert was held on July 1st, 2018 in Barcelona at the Estadi Olímpic Lluís Companys. The venue is massive, and was even used for the 1992 Summer Olympics! It can hold roughly 60,000 people seated, but there were thousands of people packed on the floor of the stadium. I would conservatively estimate that there were close to 70,000 people in the outdoor space.

The concert started at 9:30pm, so the sky was completely dark already, making the experience feel more surreal. I was in the pit, where people were squished together and the smell of watermelon vape, cigarettes, and alcohol floated above us in a smoky haze. As the concert started, the crowd turned into literal chaos. People were spilling beer on me, a couple of fights started, and everyone was screaming as the light displays flashed. The insanity just made being next to the stage more memorable. Slash, Axl and Duff were only eight feet away from me. It was thrilling to see their songs come to life and have my favorite band members so close.

There was a main stage, two side offshoots that went into the crowd, and a long runway area in the front, which helped to take down the fourth wall. The band made sure that they addressed every fan which was impressive in such a large venue.

The setlist was 25 songs long, plus Slash's solo, so the show was almost four hours long. The songs played were: "It's So Easy," "Mr. Brownstone," "Chinese Democracy," "Welcome to the Jungle," "Double Talkin' Jive," "Better, Estranged," "Live and Let Die," "Slither" (Velvet Revolver cover), "Rocket Queen," "Shadow of Your Love," "You Could be Mine," "Attitude," "This I Love," "Civil War," "Yesterdays," "Coma," (Slash played an epic ten minute-long guitar solo, it was fantastic), "Sweet Child O' Mine," "Used to Love Her," "Don't Cry," "Wish You

Were Here,” “November Rain,” “Black Hole Sun” (Soundgarden tribute for Chris Cornell who passed away in 2017), “Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door,” and “Nightrain.” Most of the songs were dirty, raw, hard rock and some were rock ballads.

The band played a combo of songs from their four studio albums, but *Appetite for Destruction*, their debut album, had more showtime than the others. They also played a couple of covers that are part of GNR’s repertoire, (“Knockin’ on Heavens Door” and “Live and Let Die”), and some tributes to other bands. The setlist was great, *Appetite for Destruction* is their most popular album so it makes sense that it made up more of the set list than the others. The audience was mostly full of old rockers, who definitely remember *Appetite* from the late eighties, so the choice was a clear hit with everyone.

Undoubtedly, the crowd’s favorite moment was when Slash’s epic guitar solo transitioned into the intro to “Sweet Child O’ Mine.” The entire audience erupted in screams. “November Rain,” “Welcome To The Jungle,” and “Rocket Queen” drew incredible responses, as well. Some of the songs the audience didn’t know that well, like the Velvet Revolver cover, and anything from *Chinese Democracy* were not crowd favorites. The biggest tell for how the crowd would react to each song seemed to be the intro guitar riff. If that was recognizable, the song was going to be a hit with the audience, which was the case with “Sweet Child O’ Mine,” “Rocket Queen,” and “You Could Be Mine.”

There was an encore of three songs before the band left the stage for the final time. “Patience” was first, then second was a cover of “The Seeker” (by The Who), and then they closed with “Paradise City.” Everyone danced their hearts out to that song, knowing it was the very last one. I think the reason for such a long show/encore was that this band will probably never reunite

again. The band members are getting older and all of them are involved in their own projects and supergroups.

My ticket price was \$297 dollars for one ticket in the pit area, and it was definitely worth it. The show itself was a huge production, there was four hours of music, and tons of crowd engagement. Compared to similar concerts from a superstar artist, that price is a bargain. For Taylor Swift's *Reputation* tour, a front row ticket in a large venue would have been around \$1,190. Of course, she is a current popular artist, not an old superstar band, so it's hard to compare. Still, it was worth it for the amazing experience!