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Childish Gambino Says Goodbye

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Childish Gambino Says Goodbye

By Diana Ventura

There are many concerts that happen each year at different locations and venues around the world for which many people pay a lot of money, myself included. In December of 2018, I had the opportunity to watch Childish Gambino perform at the Oracle Arena in Oakland, CA. The venue itself was pretty big, having floor, lower level, and upper level seating. The concert was a sold out show, so as the day came to an end, the venue filled up. Just about everyone at the concert was excited to see Childish Gambino, and even screamed for joy when he finally made his appearance onstage. This is Childish Gambino's final tour before he retires his stage name and possibly stops making music altogether for a while. This bit of information is what created the scene of the venue to be full of die hard fans that paid a lot of money, and possibly even traveled far, just to see Childish perform on his last tour.

The show kicked off with a solo light that shone from the stage and streamed a ray to the top of the venue. There, we saw Gambino's shadow of a body as he stands in front of the beam of light. The light mimicked his voice and blinked on for every lyric. Gambino himself stood before it with a mic, but he is not singing, instead letting the light sing for him. This intro grabbed the crowd's attention as we all anticipated what he would do next. The next song he performed was one that he had actually sent a small clip via email to every person that bought a ticket. It was a song he was working on that he wanted his fans to memorize by the time the concert came around called "Algohythm," and then he performed the entirety of it for us.

Following his new song, he gave a brief speech about how this show was an experience not a concert, and asked his audience to put their phones away and enjoy his show. After performing a couple more big hits like "Summertime Magic," "The Worst Guys," and

“Worldstar,” Gambino leaves the stage and leaves the crowd in wonderment. For a second, we think this might be an intermission, but then the big screens turn on and shows Gambino walking around backstage with his crew while the musicians play “Late Night in Kauai.” He walks around the lobby and then down the stairs and passes right by audience members. As he goes down the aisle he starts singing “Stand Tall.” After his little serenade, he starts making his way back on the stage while “Me and Your Mama” plays. Gambino was able to keep the audience engaged not just by his lights and his band, but also because of his high energy and dance moves. He loves dancing and incorporated little dance movements as he moved across the stage for every song. He did a lot of little hops and fancy footwork. During instrumental breaks in his songs, he would really let himself go and do whatever his body wanted to do. After performing two more of his songs, “Boogieman” and “Have Some Love,” Gambino took a knee and started to talk to his fans about his life. He discussed how it had been a rough year and how he has lost a lot of people. He sang a more stripped version of “Boogieman,” filled with emotion and soul. He faced the ground the entire time as he sang into the mic, making audience members like myself feel sad for how rough it has been for him. Many of the fans started to clap their hands to the music. Gambino sang an octave higher than how the song was recorded, and as a result, it took on an ethereal beauty. During this song, he also asked the audience to sing back to him during the parts where the backup vocals usually sing. Then, once the song entered the chorus, Gambino got back up and returned to his high energy spirit. The next song, “Terrified,” was performed with Gambino hunched over the mic and with a single spotlight on him. As the song neared its end, there were these images that appeared not on the big screens, but on the stage. The images showed two people drowning in water. On the left side was a woman in a dress and on the right side was Gambino himself. During the presentation of the images, Gambino was not highlighted

onstage. Everything was dark but those images. He played two more songs before getting to “This is America,” his most recent and biggest hit. Not only did this song get the crowd on their feet and singing to every lyric, but it seemed as if this was the song that Gambino had the most energy for. He was hopping and dancing like crazy on the stage and brought out his dancers to dance with him. The song also had a strobe light effect which helped take the energy up even higher.

As the show moved into encore performances, the crowd was thoroughly excited and surprised to hear some of the songs. Because we were in Oakland, Gambino added his song “Telegraph Ave.” to his setlist. The crowd applauded and screamed because he was not supposed to play this song. He played some of his big hit songs like “Sober” where the crowd sang along giddy that he was playing the songs that gave him the most fame. He sang “V. 3005” which was the song that got him his big start, it was the first of his songs on the radio. He asked the audience to sing along with him and even had pauses in his singing so that only the crowd would sing. He hyped the crowd up once more with his song “Sweatpants” before breaking it down for the last song of the concert. “Redbone” is the most popular song from his latest album. Once that song came on, the crowd screamed in excitement. They rocked back and forth in unison as Gambino sang with a spotlight on him and raw emotion. He performed with the most energy he could muster as he once again walked all around the venue while singing to the crowd. He made his way back to the stage and asks the crowd to clap their hands. He ended the concert with his last note holding so much emotion and feelings. He thanked the audience and then walked off the stage, and at that point, the concert was officially over.

As a fan myself, this concert was worth the drive and the ticket price. Childish Gambino has an amazing stage presence and maintained an extremely high level of energy for the entirety

of the concert. He constantly tried to engage the audience, he talked to them in his little speeches, and he danced every chance he got. He played some of his older music and some of his bigger hits, and even played some new content that has not been released yet. This was a great concert not only because of how energetic and engaging it was, but also because this was a concert from his last tour. The venue was filled with Childish Gambino fans that have been around from the beginning and fans that have just recently started following him. Part of a good concert is the environment, and everyone was there for Gambino, and that is what brought the entire show together.