

10/14/18

NYC, Radio City Music Hall - Night 2

Taper: Jon Sevastou

Location: DD 413, 4th row center.

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So I just barely got the recording rig into the show. Man, RCMH security could teach some things to TSA. The recording came out really good. Seats were 4th row back just left of center. It was a much better visual experience than last night. I got to see the whole show the way it was meant to be seen. The sound was a lot better too. I have to say though, for such an advanced and expensive sound system, the overall sound wasn't the best. Not enough power in the low end, washed out mids and lower volume all around. Radio City Music Hall wasn't ready for this.

The setlist was a million times better than night 1. Probably because the trilogy hasn't grown on me yet and I don't value it the way I do some of the older stuff. This set is seriously worth a blow by blow replay. (Numbers represent the song ranking of most played live out of 161. 1 is most times played ever. This will give you an idea how popular overall the setlist was.) So here we go.

Opened with Somewhat Damaged(27) Very strange. It's always a dark stage so you can't see them come out and then, BAM, they're in your face. Not tonight. The stage was thick with smoke but washed in bright white light like it had been for set change. The soft opening of the song starts and next thing you know they're all just kinda there playing. I think the whole venue thought they missed

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something. Once the song kicks in the energy is electric. But no GA pit so the crowd didn't reflect that.

The Day The World Went Away(25) A little slow for the start. Great song but better suited for middle of the set. Not much to say other than a decent song done well.

The Frail/The Wretched(15) What can I say, this is a better live staple than Closer in my opinion. The bass wasn't enough for me though. Tonight it sounded very 'live'. Robin's guitar was very noticeable.

The Beginning Of The End(47) This is a decent song. I like it. But not for live shows. In the high priced real estate of a setlist, this is filler material.

Survivalism(18) A lot of damn energy in this song. Like Trent was pissed off singing it. This night had a great 'live band' feel to this song.

Piggy(11) I always loved how the opening dirty-swing-vibe gets you hooked in. It's so easy to get lost in this track. They could "jam" on the ending for 15 minutes and I wouldn't break my gaze.

Burn(13) Yay. I love this song and Dead Souls similarly but in their own rights. Because they were separate from the halo work but still amazing. This performance was a little lacking in stage energy but I was really happy to see it.

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La Mer(28) It is a great song. So powerful in knowing what the meaning and value of this song is to Trent but it seems to slow down the set. But I still value it knowing that when i'm in the same room as him watching him, I know he's going through some serious shit performing that song. All the feels.

Closer(7) Ugh, this song... I liked it when the album was fresh and it was part of the album as a whole. I loved the video. But the mainstream abuse of this track has ruined it for me forever. BUT, this was a great performance of it. I let myself accept it and it was awesome to listen to. I also love the little "The Only time" interlude they throw in there. I kinda wish they had just used it as a transition and played the whole song as I like it so much more than Closer.

The Becoming(53) This gets played kinda frequently but I still think of it as a deep cut for diehards. So yeah, pretty fuckin great seeing this live. Just really well done.

I Can't Give Everything Away(117) Ugh, I saw them do this at Panorama last year. It was special because Trent did it as a tribute to his friend and mentor. I get it. But I can't stand the arrangement he came up with to cover the song. Go listen to the original, i'll wait... Trent's version does not do Bowie justice. But, we know it was kind of special for Trent because he was in NYC. His spoken preface to the song shows that. It's pretty much the same thing he said at Panorama. I seriously get the vibe that the whole band plays this song internally shaking their heads saying to themselves "what the fuck man?!"

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But Trent gets what Trent wants so here we are." Anyway, RIP Bowie, my idol adores you and that's gotta mean something, right?

The Lovers(92) Warning, unfair opinion, I'm not a fan of the trilogy works....YET!. Most of NIN's material grows on me over time. It took me a year to start to like HM and now it's one of my favorites. So these trilogy tracks will grow on me and I will like them more and more. When I finally love them, I will be happy I got to see them live. But until then, just another ok song done well.

The Great Destroyer(38)Yes yes yes muthafuckin YES!!!! My favorite of the night. What an amazing performance. This really is one of my more favorite songs and the chaos of sound and lights when live just trumps the amazingness of the record. This song is Atticus' time to shine during the show. Atticus is like the ghost member of the band. Even though he's right up front, no one 'sees' him because he doesn't move around and the parts he plays aren't that apparent. I almost feel bad that Great Destroyer is like his only showcase. It was fucking killer though! I love that drum and bass breakdown and it was even better letting him and Cortini just go nuts and extend it. Don't get me wrong, he's integral to the band, but I honestly can't tell in the live act what parts he's playing vs. the parts Alessandro is playing. The arrangements they had to come up with to perform their catalog live with the particular line-up fascinates me and is so amazing to watch live. It's the balance of reproducing a digital soundscape with live instruments that makes for the intangible greatness of their live shows.

Burning Bright(Field on Fire)(104) Refer to my entry for The Lovers...

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Head Like A Hole(1) I get it, it's THE number one most played live NIN song ever. There's a reason for that. It's just perfect live material. BUT, I'm personally a bigger fan of the deep cuts. Gimme Sanctified, The Only Time or That's What I Get and I'll call that a serious win. HLAH reminds us of NIN as a band before he was really an "artist".

Help Me I Am In Hell(37) & Happiness In Slavery.(39) I'm putting these two together because they can't be separated. At least not in my mind. They belong together and playing either without the other would be sacrilege. Everything on Broken is about rage and Happiness always delivers. I would love see them do Last though. I will say, the breakdown about a minute into the song is one of my favorite sonic elements ever. But because it depends on a stereo source, it's impossible to replicate live and it was all too noticeable to me. But the whole song was still raging amazing.

Even Deeper(40) Always had an appreciation for the emotional tension this song brings. This is a sit at home with headphones deep cut listening style track for me. But after hearing Trents spoken intro and description just before playing it, my whole view of it changed from introspection to watching Trents on-stage catharsis and feeling the song for/with him. Man I got the feels listening to this in a new light. This is gonna slide into heavy rotation for a while.

Hurt(5)What can I say. Like Closer, this was a song that, when the album came out, moved me to my core. I had to be careful when I listened to it because of the emotional damage it could cause me. Over the last ~25 years it has been ruined and stripped of everything special by mainstreaming into pop

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culture. It was taken away from "me" and given to the masses for consumption. I wonder how much of its truth has been lost on Trent too? That being said, I watched him. Not the performance, not completely listening, but watching Trent and saw that it is indeed still in him. What ever spawned this song is still deep enough in there for him to dredge up and spill out for his loyalists. I commend him for that. And thank him for that. I got back a little bit of what was lost many many years ago.

General observations. I really love this lineup. Vrenna is the only former member I would like to see back. Although I really like Ian. He's an amazing drummer. And an awesome contributor to the band. Piano, guitar and cello and a little bit of vocals for good measure. His diversity is excessively impressive. I still can't decide if I like Robin or not. NIN is so sonically specific that it's not fair to judge him as a guitarist versus being an incredible reproductionist. Remember, he's not a writer of NIN music, just a performer of it. I would like to hear 'his' music to see what he's really made of. Damn, I gotta say this, take his microphone away. I can't stand his vocals. His backing vocals ruin parts of songs for me. I cringed at his refrain in HLAH. But he performs NIN songs flawlessly.

To summarize, not the right venue, killed the energy, best NIN live band lineup, best overall setlist i've personally seen of theirs, top 15 shows of my life. Till the next time...keep marching piggies.

Jan Sevostra 10/14/18



10/16/18

Brooklyn, NY Kings Theatre Night 1

Taper: Jan Sevostra

Location: Sec 11 I 101 Balcony

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Brooklyn NY, my home. I've never been to this venue before but it's another elegant place. Makes RCMH look ghetto. But at least there was a GA pit so that made it seem more energetic. I was in the absolute back row in the balcony just left of center. Very different experience than being front row two nights ago. So let's get into the music. 6 of the top 7 most played songs ever were in this setlist. They balanced it with some stuff that was not well received. At least not by me. Home and Metal are throw away songs for me. They played 4 tracks off the new trilogy, see my notes from the last show and you'll know why i'm glad they did them all in order and got it over with fast. They played my favorite song ever, SICNH. I've now seen it live twice so I can die a happy man. Highlights were SICNH, sanctified, find my way, IDNWT. I would have replaced 40% of the setlist. It was really nice to see TDS loaded up in this setlist. Not one Fragile track. This is the kind of thing that makes me want to see every night of the tour.

(Numbers represent the song ranking of most played live out of 161. 1 is most times played ever. This will give you and idea how popular overall the setlist was.) So here we go.

Opened with Now I'm Nothing(81) It took a almost a minute to recognize this. It's been so long since I heard it and I'm sooooo happy they played it.

Terrible Lie(3) Blazing awesome as always.

Mr. Self Destruct(28) Such a great song for live performances. So much rage!