



Two genre-defining names will give a big punk-rock kiss-off season ending performance at

Jones Beach. The Offspring, and Sublime with Rome will play the last show of summer on Sat, Sept 16, 2017. The one caveat being that Sublime with Rome includes only one original member of Sublime, the singular punk/reggae/ska fusion band that just about created a genre unto itself <http://SUBLIME.jonesbeach.com>

Recently in California they played their last concert at Irvine Meadows Amphitheatre before it got demolished - the show went like this: The Offspring went first, launching into an epic nineteen-song set with barely a breath in between. The exhilarated set began with their 2008 hit "Go Far Kid" with lead singer Dexter Holland's pure tenor voice still able to cut like a knife; riding above the band's defiantly optimistic sound. It's remarkable that one of the most influential bands in the nineties California punk renaissance can pick and choose between nine studio albums spanning about three decades when coming up with their setlist. Not to mention The Offspring still has three out of four original members (Dexter Holland, lead guitarist Noodles and bassist Greg K.) with Pete Parada, former drummer of Face 2 Face completing the current line-up. In a brief interlude between the pounding rhythms of Parada's kit, Holland and Noodles opined on the loss of the Amphitheatre: "This is the last time we are going to see you here," before launching into the rest of their blistering set. At one point, whether in a poignant act of spontaneity or planned stagecraft, Holland gave a kiss on the cheek to Noodles mid-song. It must feel good to look out onto an audience that has stayed with you for so long, now bringing their kids to your shows.

Indeed, when a classic mosh pit erupted around "Staring at the Sun" I was pushed against Jim Kupsh and his thirteen year old son Ryan who before the set was over, handed his glasses to his dad to hold and joined the mosh pit, Jim taking photos of the occasion. "What I like about Offspring is they have two different kinds of music; their older stuff which is more extreme punk rock and their newer stuff is you know, popish and they also have some mellow songs and I just really like the wide diversity that they have...and I also like their lyrics...easy lyrics to mosh in," the teenager told me while we waited for Sublime with Rome. Out of the mouths of babes. "This is a bittersweet moment for us, this is our last song and our last time on this stage," says Noodles before starting their last song, the best tribute to the worst woman: "Self Esteem." The backdrop was changed from black-and-white skulls to a low-riding weed smoking skull and before you know it, Rome Ramirez, the Rome of Sublime with Rome was puffing his way to the stage... There will never be another Bradley Nowell, the lead singer of Sublime who died while the band was at the edge of fame. Which is why legally, the band can't be called Sublime thanks to the Nowell estate. But in choosing Ramirez to breathe new life into Sublime's greatest hits, the band avoided the pitfall of becoming just another really good nostalgia act.

And the band seems to know this as Ramirez was placed front and center, the rest of the band, including founding member bassist Eric Wilson, stayed mostly in the background. Eric actually doesn't need the force of his personality to take center stage anyway. The beauty of the original line-up in my opinion was the magnetic presence and incredible versatility of Nowell's voice married to Wilson's bass skills. Sublime was a small, tight band with a tight rhythm section with the bass always playing the starring role. In Rome, Wilson has found new life to breathe into the evergreen Sublime canon. Ramirez is more than capable of giving credibility to Sublime's lyrics, which are like poetic parables of lower middle class life in the LBC. He's relaxed and comfortable with the original songs, careful not to oversing or overshadow the legacy of Nowell.

Cutting loose on new songs he has had a hand in crafting, “Wherever You Go” off of their latest album, Sirens, is a standout—the distinctiveness of Ramirez’s voice shines. Still in the Sublime pocket, his voice almost takes on an R&B like quality as he riffs. He’s also a decent shredder. Sublime fans have the best of both worlds, a living legacy to an irreplaceable lead singer who leaves his own mark. I think Nowell would approve. And somewhere in the not-so distant-future I hope some Irvine luxury apartment dweller will pick up the strains of “Bad Fish” in the air, somehow sensing that the benign box they inhabit once welcomed legends.

Set Lists: The Offspring

Go Far Kid
All I Want
The Noose
Come Out and Play
Coming for You
Hammerhead
Genocide
Want You Bad
Staring at the Sun
Gone Away
Walla Walla
Bad Habit
Gotta Get Away
Get a Job
Americana
Head Around You
Pretty Fly
Kids Aren’t Alright
Self Esteem

Sublime with Rome:

Date Rape
Smoke 2 Joints
Wrong Way
40 Oz
Wherever You Go
You Better Listen
April 29th
Early Man
Panic
Skankin to the Beat
Scarlets
Doin Time
Badfish/Stoned

Encore:

Sirens
What I Got
Santeria