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Stevie Wonder Blows My Mind

On Saturday night I was fortunate enough to see Stevie Wonder in a sold out Madison Square Garden in his first headlining concert in New York City in 11 years. I'll count down the top five highlights...

- 5.** Stevie opened the show talking about the death of his mother last year. He said that after spending some time basically being depressed, he realized he had to get out on the road and make music, a decision that was culminating with this MSG show. His opening remarks were the first indication that it would be a special night.
- 4.** Stevie does voices. Who knew? He told several stories in which he did hilarious voice impressions. After "Signed, Sealed, Delivered" he said, "This song was a great hit in its day, but I think it can be a hit again...as a country song." He wasn't kidding. His band picked up the song with a twang and he shifted to a Randy Travis-esque baritone and drawled, "Here I am, baayyyyy-beeee, signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yowrs..."
- 3.** Many of us picture Stevie sitting in front of a piano, but his first instrument was the harmonica, and it shows. During "Boogie On Reggae Woman" he stood up from the piano and tore into an intense dueling harmonica jam with virtuoso Frederic Yonnet. Awesome.
- 2.** Halfway through his performance of "For Once In My Life" Stevie stopped the song and said there was something that could make it better. He said his mom's two favorite singers were Ella Fitzgerald and Tony Bennett. So out walks...Tony Bennett. They then go into a crooner-style rendition of "For Once In My Life," and DAMN, Tony Bennett sounds good. In fact, I later learned that Bennett recorded this song first, and he and Stevie won a Grammy for their duet of the song in 2006. Here they are performing "For Once In My Life..."

And the number one highlight of Saturday night's Stevie Wonder concert in Madison Square Garden...

1. Several songs after Tony Bennett, the instantly-recognizable drum beat of "Superstition" kicked in. Just then, without any announcement or fanfare, who walks on to the stage? PRINCE. High heels and all, he picks up a guitar and begins tearing it up. Madison Square Garden went wild. And that's how Stevie Wonder blew my mind.

Bonus content...

Read more about the MSG show [here](#)...The *NY Times* used the gig as a peg for an [interesting piece](#) about the increasingly-strict restrictions being placed on concert photographers...Prince played guitar on a track off Stevie's last album called "So What The Fuss." [Listen/watch here](#)...We blogged a [sick performance](#) of "Superstition" from Stevie's guest spot on "Sesame Street."

Dan Pashman

8:55 AM ET | 11-19-2007 | [permalink](#)

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Dan, I am so envious you got to see that.

By the way, one of the greatest pieces of television ever was Stevie Wonder singing "I'll Be Seeing You" during one of Johnny Carson's farewell shows. I can't find it on YouTube. If anyone has a link to that clip, please post. It's incredible.

Sent by Sarah | 11:20 AM ET | 11-19-2007

Woah. Talk about getting your money's worth....

Sent by andy carvin, npr | 11:38 AM ET | 11-19-2007

Sarah, I can't find that clip, but here's another Stevie Wonder YouTube clip that is quite awesome. It's Stevie performing "Living for the City" with Ray Charles. [Check it out.](#)

Sent by Dan Pashman | 1:08 PM ET | 11-19-2007

Sarah--There's a clip of the Stevie performance you're talking about at 1:45 into [this video.](#)

Sent by Dan Pashman | 1:21 PM ET | 11-19-2007

Thanks, Dan. The full performance was truly great. I happened to be watching the show that night, and when Stevie started singing it was completely spontaneous...the band picked it up, and by the end, as I recall, Carson was reduced to tears (as was I).

That Ray Charles and Stevie clip is awesome...I found it a couple of days ago when I was googling around for more of him with five-year-old Nathaniel, who became a confirmed Stevie fan when he saw that Sesame Street "Superstition" right here on the BPP blog.

Sent by Sarah | 2:05 PM ET | 11-19-2007

those legends in my mind keep getting harder to find...those special magical musical moments...even in youtube shorts...the bpp covers some great stuff...you're an up and coming jonathan schwartz!!!

Sent by jan | 8:34 PM ET | 11-19-2007

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