

MUSIC

Who's that girl?

Madonna concert virgin didn't think he had, like, a prayer of seeing the icon in person, but he lives to tell

BY MICHAEL WAYNE KECK

She's a headline-grabbing, controversy-making sex symbol and superstar. Not to sound like a total fag, but I really think Madonna is one of the most revolutionary and influential artists of the 20th century—and maybe this one, too. (OK, so I sound like a fag. Who cares?)

Seeing Madonna in concert is something I've dreamed about for as long as I can remember. I suppose I just always figured it was one of those things you fantasize about but never really happens.

So I was in complete shock last May when I ended up getting tickets to the show. I kept thinking I must be the luckiest bitch in the world—not only was I going to be seeing Madonna, but I was going to be seeing her in, of all places, Sin City!

Never having been to Las Vegas before, I was pretty pumped up to go. I wasn't sure what to expect beyond gambling and drinking (which, after being there, is pretty much all I have to say about Vegas—lots of gambling and drinking).

I brought along my ex-boyfriend Mark, who is as big a Madonna freak as I am. (Considering we had just broken up, maybe he's the luckiest bitch in the world?)

All I'd been talking about for the past few months was Madonna. Anytime I was in my car or at home I was listening to Madonna, and I'd been reading every article I could find on her. I don't think I was quite at the stalker stage, but I was pretty damn close.

When I wake up the day of the concert I'm immediately tense. As the day drags on my anxiety level increases by the hour with the anticipation of seeing her Materialness. I can hardly eat, and by about 6 p.m. I think I'm going to start breaking out in hives or convulsing.

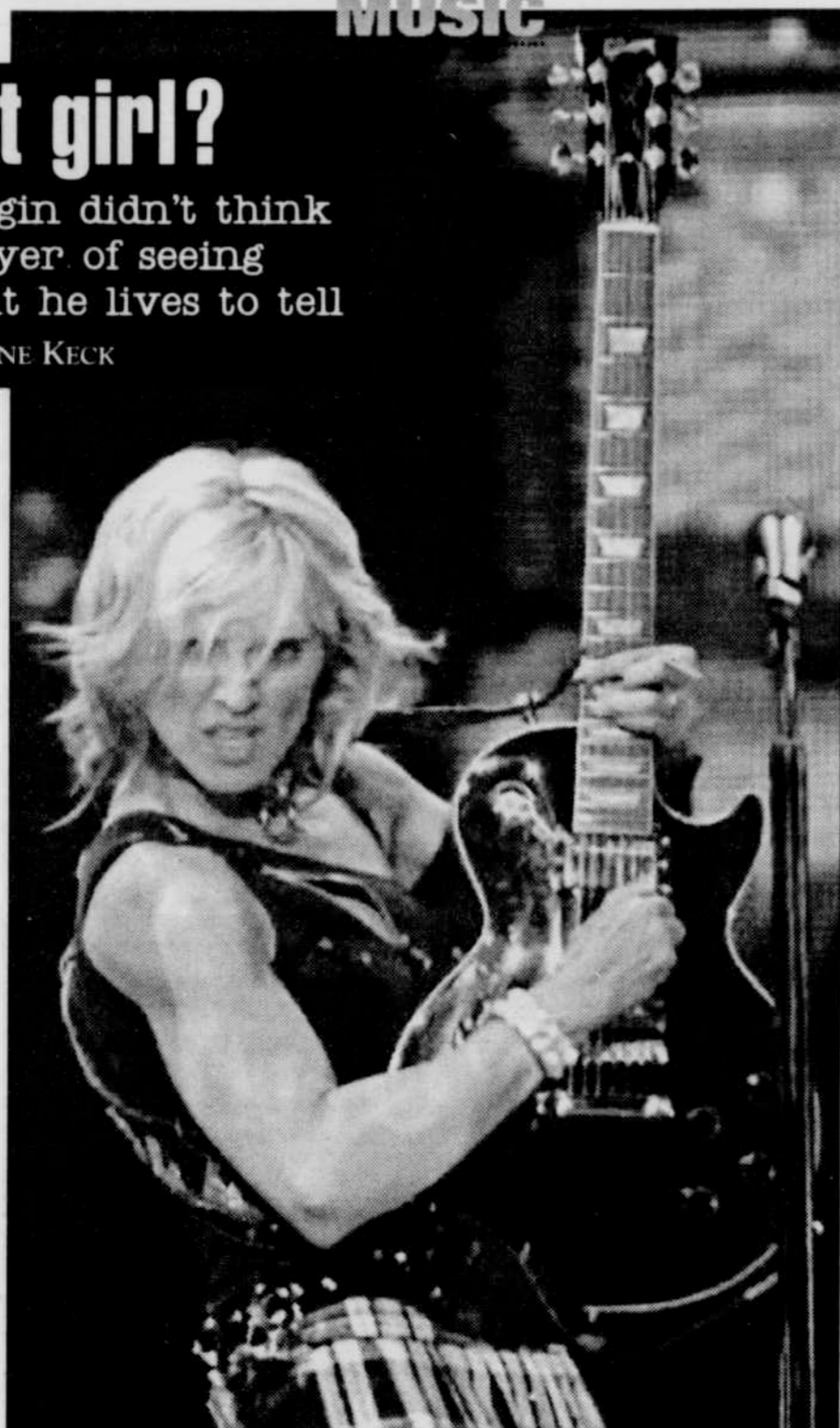
We arrive at the MGM Grand early, and I'm happy to discover the arena is much smaller than I had imagined. Our seats are toward the back but still decent.

As people flood in I see all types of fans, most in their 20s and 30s. Not surprisingly, homos are everywhere.

Some people's outfits are pure entertainment. One flamer is in a big white fluffy fur coat resembling my grandma's shag carpet—the only other things he's wearing are some flashy boots and his boxers.



Ride, urban cowgirl, ride!



Madonna displays her biceptuality

Everywhere I look, sorority girls are trying to impersonate Madonna's latest look with rhinestone T-shirts, cowboy hats and studded jeans. It's fun to see them, and I can't help but wonder how many days they fasted to paint those tight pants on. A few older fans even pay tribute to the old-school Madonna with wedding veils, crucifixes and fake moles.

As the magic hour of 8 p.m. arrives, my anxiety peaks. I am repeatedly reminded to breathe. Mark is equally in shock, and we exchange only a few words as we sit there fidgeting.

Finally at 8:45 (hey, she's Madonna, she can do whatever the hell she wants) the concert begins.

It's difficult to describe how amazing and surreal it is to see her perform live. The show is pure spectacle, dancing and theatrics.

Madonna definitely knows how to entertain. The set is stellar and features her very own mechanical bull—which she rides like the naughty cowgirl she is.

At one point in the concert some of her hot male dancers clad in nothing but G-strings (with asses so tight you could bounce quarters off them) dangle from their ankles upside down. It was actually a little trippy.

Her costumes are numerous and flawless, and her dancing is off the hook. She flaunts some kick-ass creations by Jean-Paul Gaultier, including an incredible geisha dress with a 52-foot wingspan.

But what surprises me most is how great she sounds. I was nervous she wouldn't sound very good in person, but let me tell you: That girl can sing!

Most of the songs are from her last two albums with a few exceptions. The obvious crowd favorite comes toward the end of the show when she sings "Holiday." The entire audience leaps to their feet and goes collectively nuts. (Myself included—I literally screamed like a little girl!)

During the concert Madonna is witty, charming, brash and rude—everything I expected and more. The concert lasts about two hours, but it feels like five minutes.

I am enthralled and engrossed the entire time. Whether she's flying around the set like a ninja, shakin' her ass to "Ray of Light" or just sitting at the end of the stage singing "Gone" in a single spotlight, I love every second.

It's amazing to think about the impact Madonna has had on so many people. She certainly influenced me as a young gay man.

There is something inspiring about a woman who really doesn't give a fuck what people think. That's part of why I like her so much; she just says and does whatever she wants—no excuses, no apologies.

I think gays are drawn to her because she's such a rebel and fighter as well as someone who has no problem defying convention. We understand how it feels to be hated for simply being ourselves.

As Mark puts it: "She relates to gays because our lifestyle is not the norm, and neither is hers. Instead of fitting into a mold of what society thinks we should be, she has broken it. Gays are attracted to that strength."

Mark even admits she helped push him out of the closet. "When I watched *Truth or Dare* and saw her interact with and mother the most feminine of gay boys, it made me realize that I was OK. I had always been afraid of such femme guys, because I thought it would draw attention to my own homosexuality. But after seeing her accep-

tance of them, it helped me to accept myself." There really is no doubt she has helped change the way our society looks at sexuality. Good looking, full of attitude, talented, driven, controversial and smart—Madonna is the package deal.

And not to rub it in—but I got to see her live! [7]

MADONNA trivia buffs, express yourself: In what year and what city did she perform her first-ever live concert? The first correct answer e-mailed to justout@justout.com wins a pizza.

MICHAEL WAYNE KECK is a Portland free-lance writer. E-mail him at michaelwaynekeck@hotmail.com.



Crouching tigress, hidden dragon

Counter Media

EVERY SINGLE BOOK OF GAY EROTICA ALWAYS IN STOCK!

- (NEW) *Phototropic 1, 2.* #1 is all foreskin and #2 is all boners. Any problems with that? \$24.95 ea.
- (NEW) *Twink.* 20 stories, bursting with creamy goodness—oh wait that's *Twinkies!* \$13.95.
- (NEW) *Queer Pulp.* A riotous look at 50s/60s gay paperbacks. Tons of illos, lucid text. \$19.95.

DOWNTOWN @ 927 SW OAK • 226-8141

WESTOVER HEIGHTS

C L I N I C

Offering general internal medicine and excelling in sexual health care

Serving the community for 17 years

2330 NW Flanders
Suite 207
503-226-6678



Oregon Wines on Broadway

Specializes in Oregon's best producers

50 wines available by the taste or glass

Wine Sales
Case Discounts
Private Parties

Great downtown location
515 SW Broadway
Tuesday—Saturday • 12-8

Raized Printing

We specialize in business cards using thermography, die cutting, embossing, and foil stamping.

Call us at: 503.239.6694 or visit our website at: www.raizedprinting.com



Bring in this ad for a 10% discount on your first order.