

# Motion City Soundtrack stir up old memories at the Fillmore

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in

Music



Justin Pierre of Motion City Soundtrack at the Fillmore last night.

Natalia Mendez

For the first few months I lived here, I walked around Minneapolis with Motion City Soundtrack’s “Better Open the Door” playing near-constantly in my head. OK, really, it was just one line:

“Frank fails to see the humor in my sad attempts at breakdancing in every bar along Lyndale Avenue.”

Every trip to Muddy Waters or the VFW, passing street signs for Lyndale, it popped unwillingly into my mind, a sort of lyrical landmark orienting me to my new reality. Lyndale Avenue is a real place. The CC Club is a real place. The Triple Rock is a real place. (Or was, RIP.)

Look, MCS were no Hold Steady—it’s not like they served as a geocache map of Minnesota—but it meant something to me to be in a place that meant at least a small something to them. I memorized those words long before this state held any significance for me: When I was an angsty teen in a small town outside of Philly, they’d always been a Stagnant Suburban Soundtrack, with songs about alienation and depression and loneliness backed by zoomy synths that made it not so bad to feel all those things.

Is this all a little self-indulgently nostalgic? Sure, fine. But hey pal, that’s what these latest MCS dates

*are*

. That’s what a reunion tour

*is*

. And a reunion tour on the second, sold-out night of a three-night run also billed as a homecoming?

Literally show me a more nostalgic event.

Everyone at the Fillmore Sunday night, drinking cans of the

[MCS/Able Brewing collab IPAs](#)

<http://www.citypages.com/restaurants/local-suds-5-minnesota-beers-to-drink-in-february/567732891>

under the new venue’s new chandeliers, felt it too. “Well, cheers to high school,” a guy toasts his partner at the bar, and not (I don’t think) in a derogatory way: These are songs the crowd wanted to holler along to, with the friends we’ve known since childhood or since moving to the Midwest.

Drawing from

*Commit This to Memory*

and

*Even If It Kills Me*

and

*My Dinosaur Life*,

with plenty of

*I Am the Movie*

favorites thrown in for good measure, frontman Justin Pierre was only too happy to lean into the sappiness of it all, dedicating songs to his bandmates’ parents and to his wife and to the

[late Ed Ackerson](#)

<http://www.citypages.com/music/ed-ackerson-the-life-and-legacy-of-an-essential-minneapolis-musician/56774521>

and to Jason, a counselor he worked with at a treatment facility between 2007 and 2010 who was in the audience. He profusely thanked local opener Lydia Liza, who he also toured with around the release of his solo record. In a brief break between songs, he talked about loving the Carpenters for their ability to channel sadness into seemingly happy songs, that sort of witchcraft that allows you to mask your pain behind a plucky guitar riff (or a shiny synth line).

The body of the set closed out with “Hold Me Down,” an all-time sad song about leaving someone you love and live with for self-preservation, the kind of track that guts you as a teen imagining the scenario and eviscerates you as an adult who’s been there.

Listening to the hometown heroes play this stuff now, I picked up on Minnesota-isms I’d missed as a Pennsylvania youth, or the last time I caught them in Massachusetts on their 2016 farewell tour. “How it got so cold our words just froze/We had to wait till summer to find out what was said.” Pierre, pointing out at the crowd, Midwesternly, as he sings, “I’m so proud of all the things that you have done.” How effectively they tap into that Middle America boosterism while acknowledging the chilling, isolating feeling the same place creates. How they do it all while making the show unbelievably fun.

The thing that rules about hearing “Better Open the Door” live now is realizing that, for what I’m pretty sure is the only time in their career, the band lists their friends in it by name. So often theirs are songs about being sad alone, but in this one “Matt makes his murderous demands”; “Liz likes to liquor up my thoughts”; “Kate claims she can’t depend on me for anything (and I agree).” Hugging our own friends as we holler along, it all feels right.

“Most of the time, people are not trying to fuck with you, they’ve just got their own shit going on,” Pierre reminded the crowd during a brief break between songs, to cheers.

“Our hell ends every weekend,” am I right?

## Setlist

Attractive Today

Everything Is Alright

Broken Heart (Clean)

Disappear

It Had to Be You

When You’re Around

Her Words Destroyed My Planet

Perfect Teeth

A Life Less Ordinary (Need a Little Help)

Last Night

My Favorite Accident

True Romance

Makeout Kids

Time Turned Fragile

Antonia

Better Open the Door

This Time I Mean It

Even If It Kills Me

Hold Me Down

*Encore*

Worker Bee

L.G. FUAD

The Future Freaks Me Out