



# SUNDAY!

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# Channeling Obama

Robert Gibbs explains the president to the press and the world

*By James Gerstenzang*

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Today's art chosen by  
**Heather Goss**

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN KNIGHT

**POSITION:** Director, Ten Miles Squarer

**RESIDENCE:** Columbia Heights

**WHY I LOVE THIS PHOTO:** There's a fallacy surrounding concert photography: With interesting-looking people in crazy outfits, their faces filled with emotion under colorful lights, snapping a great image must be a piece of cake. The truth is that shooting concerts is incredibly challenging. The dim lighting requires expensive high-speed lenses; the low aperture combined with energetic subjects makes focusing difficult. Not to mention, venues often only allow shooting for the first couple of songs. As a result, finding the perfect moment and having the ability to capture it is the mark of a skilled photographer.

Kyle Gustafson's shot of Michael Stipe from R.E.M. is a fantastic example. Everything in the image screams music. I love the lyrical movement of the mic cord as it floats around and through Stipe's hands. The single blue spotlight and the camera angle put Stipe alone on an empty stage, emphasizing a sadness in the unheard lyrics. Despite his energetic expression and pose, stretched out along the stage, his hands are relaxed, embracing the words as he hands them to his audience.

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Also worth noting are the somewhat accidental, yet necessary, details that capture the energy and unpredictability of a memorable concert, and consequently memorable concert photography. Notice how the focus is shifted ever-so-slightly to Stipe's right hand, as if he'd moved quickly forward toward the camera, giving the photo more energy, and how the exposure gets the details of the light pinstripes on his shirt and jacket, but gives perfect contrast to his expressive face.

The ease with which Gustafson captures all this is what keeps that fallacy going strong. Which isn't to say this image is 100 percent technically perfect, but part of the joy of concert photography is embracing those minor flaws the way you embrace the slightly off-beat note of your favorite band as they get lost in their performance. - *Chris Klimek*

*"Everything in the image screams music. I love the lyrical movement of the mic cord as it floats around and through [Michael] Stipe's hands. The single blue spotlight and the camera angle put Stipe alone on an empty stage, emphasizing a sadness in the unheard lyrics."*

- Heather Goss, director, Ten Miles Squarer



COURTESY PHOTO

Michael Stipe of R.E.M.; photographed by Kyle Gustafson, June 11, 2008, Merriweather Post Pavilion, Columbia, Md.



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