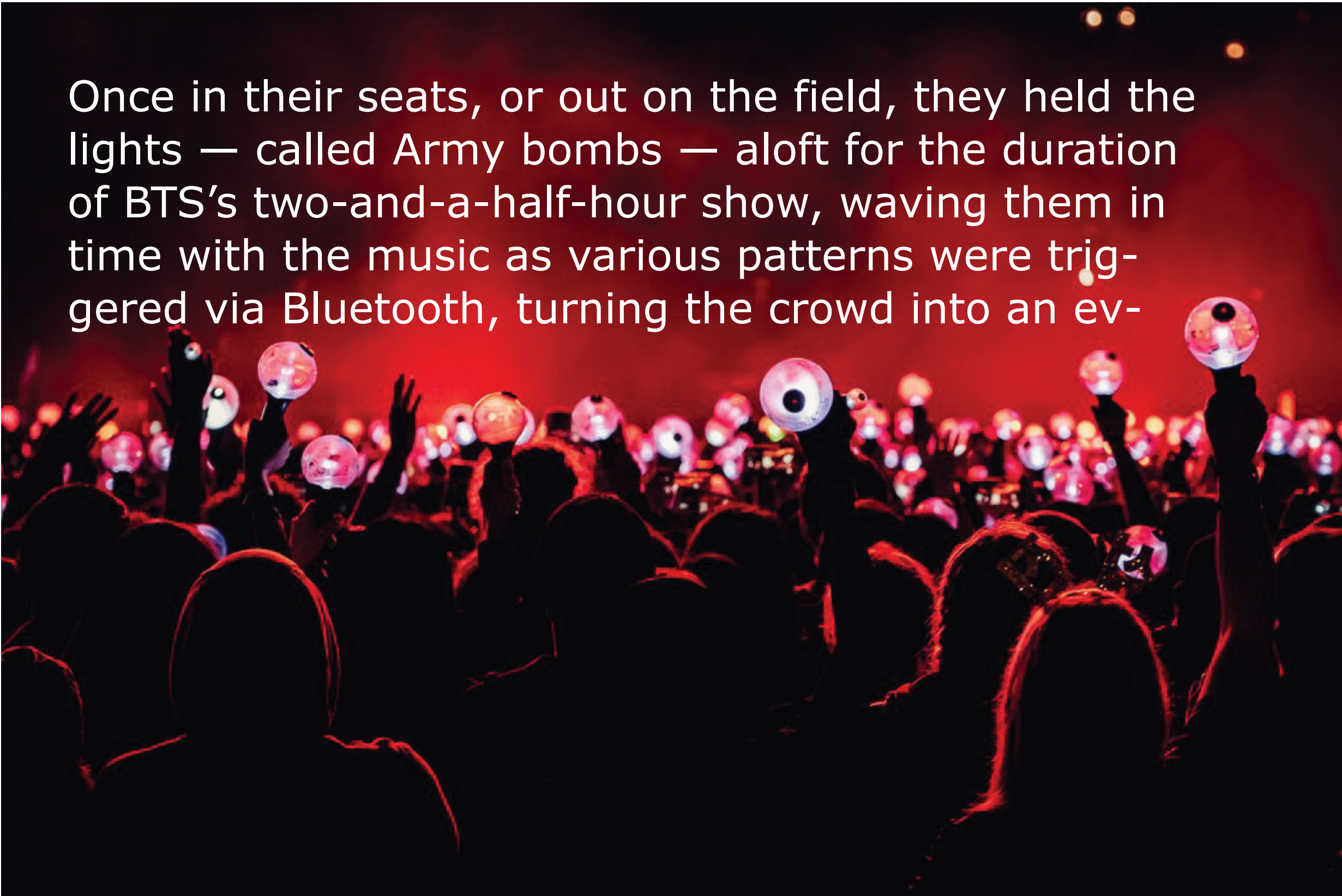


K-POP SUPERSTARS BTS LIT UP CITI FIELD. THEIR FANS DID THE REST.



The bulbs cost \$57. In the hours before the versatile K-pop maximalists in BTS took the stage at Citi Field on Saturday night, fans were lining up by the thousands at stands throughout the Queens stadium, laying out not-insignificant amounts of cash for branded light sticks the shape of microphones and the size of Big Gulps.

Shows of severe devotion are the norm in K-pop, but even in that universe, the fervor generated by the seven members of all-boy BTS — RM, J-Hope, V, Jimin, Jungkook, Suga and Jin — is unusually intense.



Once in their seats, or out on the field, they held the lights — called Army bombs — aloft for the duration of BTS’s two-and-a-half-hour show, waving them in time with the music as various patterns were triggered via Bluetooth, turning the crowd into an ev-



And Saturday night’s vibrant, sometimes seismic concert, with a sold-out crowd of about 40,000, was a sort of dialogue between artist and fans, a collaborative exercise. It was the final show of the group’s Love Yourself tour, and the group’s first stadium performance, in this country. Some BTS fans — they are called Army — had been camping out for almost a week to be the first to receive general admission wristbands so they could stand as close to the center-field stage as possible

Following several years in which K-pop’s biggest and most ambitious performers have been making inroads into the United States, BTS has become the most successful K-pop act in this country. Released in May, “Love Yourself: Tear,” its third album, became the first K-pop release to debut atop the Billboard album chart. The repackaged “Love Yourself: Answer,” released in August, became the second.

Those albums show how BTS navigates an increasingly variegated and complex sound: Chainsmokers-esque EDM-pop, 1990s R&B, hip-hop from New York and the South, and much more. As singers and rappers, the members are gifted. As dancers and performers, they are nimble. And at this show, their execution was relaxed.