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Elton John Performs Final North American Show at Dodger Stadium

The legendary singer and pianist concluded the American leg of his Farewell Yellow Brick Road tour with guests, tributes, and 23 songs across his discography.

BY NATHAN ANSELL NOVEMBER 22, 2022



Photo by Celebrity Photo Agency / Scott Downie

All paths must have an end. Even the aptly named Farewell Yellow Brick Road tour, Sir Elton John's five-year goodbye journey, is a bittersweet acknowledgment of that aphorism.

The iconic performer and Beverly Hills resident electrified a sold-out Dodger Stadium for the final time Sunday, the last of three consecutive shows at Chavez Ravine and his final North American concert. The tour will continue next year into Oceania and Europe, finishing in Stockholm on July 8.

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"This is a very special night for me, a very emotional night for me," John said. "It's been a long journey."

Condensing that journey into two-and-a-half hours would be demanding to most. For an artist successful enough to bookend the show with two multi-Platinum singles and still include several others, it was another day at the ballpark-sized office. The setlist featured some deeper cuts, but the opener, "Bennie and the Jets," set the tone for an evening saturated with John's greatest hits. As the innately recognizable notes of "Tiny Dancer" and "I'm Still Standing" emanated from his piano, the acclaimed singer transported the crowd back to a half-century ago.

Throughout the night, John, who played his first U.S. gig at the Troubadour in 1970, occasionally paid homage to the city that provided his career such a propulsive boost. He gratefully recalled a glowing Los Angeles Times review of that American debut, thanked a handful of fans who attended the 1975 Dodger Stadium performances, and sported a robe version of his iconic bedazzled Dodgers uniform for the final three songs, a look mimicked by many in the audience.

"I see him around, I see him at restaurants, I see him with his children," said Race to Erase MS founder Nancy Davis, a longtime fan whose nonprofit hosted John for a 2013 event. "He knows everybody, and everybody in L.A. knows him. He's part of the fabric of Los Angeles."

John interspersed the show with many other tributes too. He dedicated one of his earliest singles, "Border Song," to Aretha Franklin, remembering he was "so flabbergasted" when the Queen of Soul decided to cover it. Before singing with Brandi Carlile on "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me," he expressed gratitude towards several former band members who have since passed away. On a night filled with raucous applause, some of the longest-lasting cheers were reserved for John's longtime songwriting partner, two sons, and David Furnish, his husband and manager – all of whom the legendary pianist invited on stage.

Two other collaborators from opposite ends of John's discography shared the microphone after Carlile, representing songs released 45 years apart. Kiki Dee added to the '70s nostalgia with an appearance on "Don't Go Breaking My Heart," while Dua Lipa performed her cross-generational duet, "Cold Heart," to begin the encore.

The timeless appeal of John's discography attracted more than 50,000 to the stadium, from younger supporters to attendees older than the Rocket Man himself. Concertgoer Charles Wong arrived minutes before the opener after spending two hours in excruciating traffic, but to him, the experience was worthwhile.

"I had to go, [it's] the last time I could ever see him live – at some point, it's a bucket list thing," Wong said. "He's a cultural icon."

The ticket-holders who populated the azure blue bleachers weren't the only ones Crocodile Rocking, however – the event made history as Disney+'s first ever global livestream, captured with 28 camera angles and accentuated with prerecorded clips of John and others reliving his decades-long career.

As John approaches the Stockholm finale, he informed the crowd about his semi-retirement plans for a vacation and increased time with family. In an interview last week, John told the Associated Press he would continue creating albums and musical projects, but his traveling days would be over.

"I wish you health, love, prosperity," John said, concluding his final speech. "Be kind to each other, OK? And farewell."

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OCTOBER 4, 2022