

Lonely St." Isn't So Lonely Anymore

By Kya Brogdon | 12 April, 2023

BMO Stadium - Los Angeles, CA. (April 2, 2023)



Image via JYP Entertainment

On April 2, Stray Kids - an 8-member boy group under JYP Entertainment - held their final encore show in Los Angeles to wrap up their year-long *Maniac* tour. After 338 days, 42 shows, 3 different continents— and their skill, passion, and talent never wavered.

After seeing them two days prior with floor seats, (read about [my experience here!](#)) I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to see them again in the lower bowl section of BMO Stadium. Regardless of the fact that I knew what to expect from having seen them before, experiencing the show from a different viewpoint with the emotional heaviness of this being the last night of the tour brought a whole new outlook to the evening.

When the lights dimmed and the screens changed, the roaring of the crowd was just as loud as it had been from the floor. Hearing all of the voices singing along to the pre-show "[Stray Kids Anthem](#)," I already knew that this night's show was going to be more impactful and sentimental than Friday's. Decked out in their all-white prince-like attire, they opened with a powerful back-to-back-to-back performance of "[Maniac](#)," "[Venom](#)," and "[Red Lights](#)" captivating their audience and not letting them go for one second (or as members Kim Seungmin and Yang "L.N" Jeongin sing in "Venom," "*you got me wrapped up, around your finger.*"). After saying their individual hellos and teasing the crowd, the group launched into their next trio attack of tracks "Easy," "[All In](#)," and their iconic debut track, "[District 9](#)." From the members to the crowd, the energy never wavered.

Despite the hype that flows through the track, I think "[District 9](#)" was one of the more emotional songs they performed. I can still hear the echoes of the fans shouting along to the lyrics, "*Stray kids everywhere all around the world / 떠돌지를 말고 여기로 찾아오렴 / Stray kids everywhere all around the world / 점점 커져가는 그들의 발걸음 소리*" (translation: "*Stray kids everywhere all around the world / Don't wander around, come find us here / Stray kids everywhere all around the world / The sound of their footsteps get louder and louder*"). It was truly the definition of an "I made it" moment both for Stays and for Stray Kids themselves.



Image via JYP Entertainment

In a similar vein, another hype-yet-emotional song was the performance of "[Lonely St.](#)" A rock-inspired track, one can't help but to raise their hands (and lightsticks) in the air and move along to the beat. I've seen this song three times live, all from different perspectives, and it will never not be an emotional experience. Hearing twenty-two thousand people sing along to the chorus "*Still astray / Astray / Astray / Just stuff it all 'cause I'mma go on my way*" brought more than just sad tears to my eyes. Despite the sadness and loneliness the words portray, I've never felt more like part of a community than I did at that moment.

After another costume change - this time into tour merch and their iconic custom Charles Jeffrey Loverboy beanies - the members launched into explosively fun performances of "[FAM \(Korean Ver.\)](#)" and "[Miroh](#)," jumping around and shooting confetti cannons into the crowd. As the music faded out, a VCR popped up on the screen - a common occurrence at K-pop shows - but this one was different. The title on screen, "[STAYFLIX](#)," is one that I've seen floated around on Twitter and other social media sites, and I knew immediately what this VCR was - a fan project for the last night of tour.



An immediate hush fell over the crowd and the members, who sat on stage and watched the video with us. The video had voice memos from Stays speaking to how much Stray Kids meant to them, and how much comfort and sanctuary they've brought to their fans. It was the quietest I've ever seen a crowd at a concert before. Even when we cheered for each of the members as they popped up on screen, everyone hushed as quickly as possible so we could hear each and every word being said on the video. The crowd wasn't the only ones moved by the video - with shining eyes, the members turned back to look at the crowd with amazement and bewilderment written on their faces. While I had expected sentimentality in the ending moments since this was the last night of the tour, adding the emotional aspect of the VCR put everything over the top.

Speaking over the instrumental of one of my favorite songs of theirs "Grow Up," all of the boys expressed their sincere gratitude and love to and for Stays. I don't think I'll ever forget what member Han Jisung said when it was his turn to speak: "You guys always say to us 'your music saved my life' but your being saved my life. Your existence saved my life." As if having saved up their cheers from the five or so minutes that the video ran, the stadium absolutely *exploded* into shouts and screams after his words rang through. At this point, I'm pretty sure everyone in the audience was simultaneously crying and cheering all at once.

After a near 30-minute run of each member talking and thanking fans, the group finally launched into their final two encore songs - "[Star Lost](#)" and "[Haven](#)." As we danced, cheered, and sang along to the final songs, I thought back to the lyrics of "Lonely St.," and thought about how entirely *un-lonely* the night felt. The feeling of community, of being surrounded by people who love and appreciate the same artists you do, is something that will absolutely never be beaten, and it's one of my favorite feelings in the world.

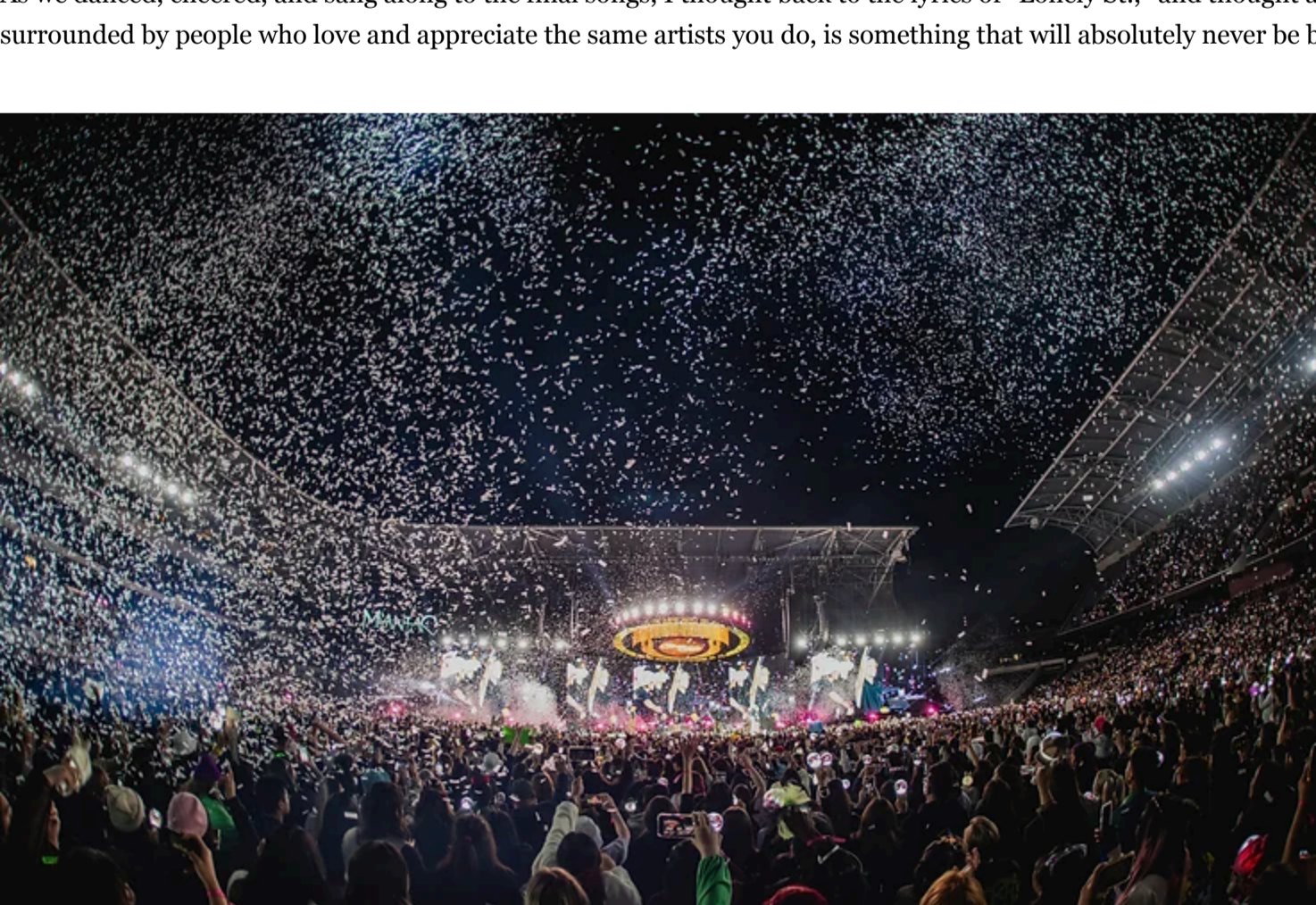


Image via JYP Entertainment

Thank you to Republic Records for giving me and Fan To Band the opportunity to attend the last night of the Stray Kids *Maniac* tour! It was truly a *charmer* of a night.