

Macklemore Returns to Minneapolis

Macklemore electrifies The Armory with high-energy performance and heartfelt memories

By Bartt Pierce



Macklemore's third studio album, Ben, released March 2023

Fall Sunday nights in Minneapolis are usually quiet—a time for winding down after a Vikings game. But on October 1, 2023, Macklemore turned the chill into fire, transforming the historic Armory into a pulsing house of music, emotion, and community.

This wasn't my first time seeing Macklemore. The first was at the 2013 Minnesota State Fair with my wife and our son, his first concert. We returned again in 2017. On this Sunday night, our son, now grown, joined us once again—completing a beautiful, musical circle.

Though it was my first visit to The Armory, I was instantly hooked. The intimate venue buzzed with energy, and when Macklemore stepped out in a Twins jersey to perform “CHANT,” the crowd erupted. DJ Nick Beeba, warming up the stage in a Kevin Garnett Timberwolves jersey, already had the hometown crowd lit.

Macklemore loves Minnesota—and Minnesota loves him back. He spoke about his admiration for Prince and Minneapolis' underground hip-hop roots. When he sang “Good Old Days” and name-dropped First Ave, the venue nearly exploded with applause.

Throughout the night, Macklemore blended hits like “Thrift Shop,” “Same Love,” and “Glorious” with newer tracks. His energy was electric, but it’s his connection to the crowd that sets him apart. He spoke candidly between songs, grateful to fans for showing up in person. “I’ve got the best job in the world,” he said. Watching him, it’s hard to disagree.

One unforgettable moment came during the song “Dance Off,” when Macklemore invited two fans on stage. A young girl named Willow slipped during her first move, but quickly got up and finished strong. Macklemore turned to the crowd:

“You showed us what we all do in life. I’ve slipped before, my love. In front of the whole world. And you got back up and kept dancing. Thank you for reminding us what it means to be human.”

The room chanted her name—“Willow! Willow!”—as her mom embraced her in tears. It was one of the many reminders of how powerful live music can be.

The encore hit hard: “Tail Lights,” “Good Old Days,” and the anthemic “Can’t Hold Us.” As confetti showered the crowd, I was overwhelmed. I cried—twice. “Same Love” always brings me to tears. And when “Can’t Hold Us” played, I was transported back to years of coaching my son’s football games, when we’d blast that song before every kickoff. As he pointed to me from the field during his final high school game while the song echoed from the speakers, I cried then. And I cried again Sunday night.

Some shows entertain. Others leave you changed. Macklemore’s “Ben” tour is the latter. In Minneapolis, it wasn’t just a concert—it was a memory made, and a memory relived.