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# After the Show: Macklemore, The BEN Tour

Sean Alexander, Director of Photography

When I was in high school it seemed like anytime I turned on the radio, Macklemore (Benjamin Hammond Haggerty) was playing. He had just released his album “The Heist” and people were eating up tracks like “Thrift Shop” and “Can’t Hold Us.” Then I stopped listening to the radio and got on the streaming train and Macklemore was no longer in my rotation.

That was until I had the opportunity in late December to photograph the Seattle stop on his “BEN” world tour. Being from the east coast, photographing Macklemore at a show in his hometown was something I had never even thought of, but an opportunity I gladly accepted.



Sean Alexander

I had heard from some students at Seattle University or people in the community that they felt Macklemore’s popularity was on the decline. However, with “Can’t Hold Us” still holding strong as Spotify’s 37th most-streamed song of all time, and “Thrift Shop” having over 1.8 billion views on YouTube, his impact on pop culture is undeniable.

He performed two nights at Climate Pledge Arena and both nights sold out. The crowd was wild but warm and playful, as if I was attending a party to celebrate Seattle. During his performance of “And We Danced,” more people sang along than at any other show I’ve been to, it truly felt like the majority of the audience was belting it out together.

The music was good, the dancing was great, and the songs played showed a good mix of his classic tracks and songs from his most recent album “BEN.” So whether people were there to hear the new album or just wanted to hear “Thrift Shop” live, the show was made for both.

The most striking aspect of the performance, though, was the variety of other performers the show featured. Sometimes during a main act set, the artist may bring one other artist on stage who was featured on a track of theirs, but Macklemore brought more than five other musicians and performers on stage with him. They included Wanz, Mary Lambert, Morray and several others. Not only did he feature other singers, but also a breakdancing segment from members of the Massive Monkeys crew and a dance battle between two audience members. It was clear from the show that Macklemore wanted to bring people with him and not have the performance be just about him.

As part of the homage to Seattle throughout the show, he repped jerseys from the Storm, Supersonics, Mariners and Seahawks, and regularly brought up stories and favorite aspects of the city.

After putting on one of the better shows I’ve seen, Macklemore may have found a way back into my rotation.

Are you or someone you know a musician or involved in music? Do you like to talk about your music? Well, email [sean@seattlespectator.com](mailto:sean@seattlespectator.com) and potentially be featured in the column After the Show.