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**An unforgettable performance by the one and only,
Taylor Swift. Even ten years later, the memories
vividly remain of my first concert at Thompson-Boling
Arena when I was 8 years old.**



For as long as I can remember, I have loved Taylor Swift's music. My mom would listen to her music as she cleaned around the house and eventually, Swift became my favorite singer.

Taylor Swift began singing with more of a country style and she has slowly transitioned into the pop genre now. She had released a few single songs, a Christmas music album “*Sounds of the Season: The Taylor Swift Holiday Collection*” in 2007, and one country album of music entitled “*Fearless*” (2008), before “*Speak Now*” (2010) was released.

In 2010, when I saw her concert, she was doing the *Speak Now* album Tour. This was labeled as a country album; however, it was noticeable she may have been mixing in some pop throughout her music. I prefer her singing country style music but still enjoy her current pop music. She had only been in the music industry for a few years before making this transition of music style.

Swift focused specifically on releasing music of the country genre from 2006-2010. The beginning transition point for Taylor Swift’s style of music was seen throughout the years 2010-2012. Before her current albums, she sang solely country songs, and pop was a stretch for her original music. From 2014 on, pop is the only genre she focused on. The audience noticed as Swift would sample pieces of pop background music in her country albums (2010-2012), and it caused rumors of whether she was certainly transitioning. In 2014, those rumors were confirmed when she released her first pop genre album entitled, “*1989*”.

Everyone must try different things and I found it fascinating she could switch genres like that because most singers cannot. I also thought this transition in the genre was quite brave of her, not knowing how her audience would react to her new and fresh style of music. Taking that risk paid off because the audience loved it, her album sold over a million copies the first week and was a record high in 2016. The concert I attended, *Speak Now* (2010), also sold copies extremely well and she had a lot of pop background music and some pop songs within that album.

My mom knew just how much I loved her country/pop music since I first heard her music in 2008 when "*Fearless*" was released, and my mom loved her music as well. I was about to turn eight years old; my birthday was coming up on July 5th and as an eventful present from my mom, we saw Taylor Swift's concert in Knoxville, Tennessee on July 1st of 2010. I went to the concert of her first album that mixed a little pop into her original country music.

I recall mostly teenagers were at this concert and my mom was still quite young at the time, as she was only 28. So, I would say the audience was filled with mostly young adults and ranged to people in their early 30's. Not most eight-year old's I knew of got to attend her concerts, I considered myself lucky. I could not wait to go back to school and tell every one of my friends about it. The stadium was huge, as the capacity for Thompson-Boling Arena is 24,535 guests. Our seats were up high in a balcony towards the middle and front row of that section; I remember sitting there thinking about how if I were in her shoes, I would be so nervous to perform in a large stadium with this many people.

The fact that I can still remember this concert, should tell you how impressive of a performance it was. The opening singer was James Wesley for the concert I attended, he is a country singer and songwriter. Taylor Swift had Hunter Hayes as her opening singer until April, he then went on to debut his newest album and shortly after became famous. The only thing I can recall not enjoying was the opening singer, not because he was bad, but because of how excited I was to see Taylor Swift, I was impatient to say the least. I know what you're thinking, because I was eight years old, of course I was going to be impatient. However, she did take longer than she was meant to getting out on stage. Halfway through her concert, she stopped for a second to tell the crowd how she was feeling sick with a sore throat and pushed through, therefore she was late to the stage and to bear with her through this next slow song. Taylor apologized and said she did

not want to cancel the performance after seeing how many fans had shown up for her. The next thing I remember is that Swift momentarily quit singing, as the crowd took over the lyrics to her song, "*Sparks Fly*." Thousands of voices in unison, echoing off the walls, truly created an unforgettable moment. You could see the look on her face, on the big screens, was a feeling of accomplishment for Taylor.

One specific thing I thought was quite unique about her concert was that it was more than simply singing and dancing, she really, truly performed. With every song, there was a story to be told, and she acted this out on stage. She had extravagant props and backgrounds for every song, even fire or fireworks to go with some of them for special effects. She had lots of dancers and a band who played drums or guitar. For her slower songs, when she wasn't dancing as much, she played guitar herself. Some of the songs even had a short film she would play on the huge screens in the stadium while I assume, she was backstage preparing for the next song. I thoroughly enjoyed the way she 'acted' out her songs while still singing and dancing. At no point do I recall being bored at all. She kept your attention one hundred percent of the time.

Taylor Swift's concert was a total success from my point of view regardless of her feeling sick. Honestly, you could not tell she was feeling sick until she spoke about it. One of Taylor's biggest hits was before the album she was meant to perform. I recall the crowd got an encore of three songs not on her setlist. We heard, "Picture to Burn," "You belong with me," and "Love story." This had me so excited because these were the main songs of hers that I grew up listening to. I remember eagerly shouting but singing these songs in the crowd so loud, I went home barely able to speak clearly from causing my throat to get sore. With how far Taylor Swift has come from 2010 to now, I would love to see a concert of hers again today. Her passion is what I believe causes her to stand out to me.

The main complaint I originally would have had, I think is forgivable due to the explained circumstances of Taylor unexpectedly becoming ill. She still pulled off a spectacular performance and left the audience amazed. The only other thing was the seating was strange. This is more reliant on the stadium than Taylor herself though. The seats were not all levitated above the row before them making it harder to see ahead of you to the stage. While I still had a good, unobstructed view on the balcony, you could tell not everyone did. Especially not on the lower floor of the stadium. Some people behind us on the balcony would ask us to lean to one side so they could see through. That wasn't the best, but this problem was not in the performer's hands. I remember thinking she sounded better in person than over recordings, some artists need autotune to sound good and that was not the case here.

Overall, I had an amazing time at this concert. Taylor Swift raised the bar for my expectations from then on out of what a concert should be like. I left the concert that night happier than ever. It's a night that I will never forget and will always stick with me. It was hard for me to process that she was sick during all of it. This was a vast experience and I would recommend her performance to anyone because she goes above and beyond for her audience and that was clear. Since this concert, it has been a goal of mine for me and my mom to see Taylor Swift in concert again. I know if I had the opportunity and the time to go once again, I'd jump to it.



Set list

1. "Sparks Fly"
2. "Mine"
3. "The Story of Us"
4. "Our Song"
5. "Mean"
6. "Back to December"
7. "Better Than Revenge"
8. "Speak Now"
9. "Fearless"
10. "Last Kiss"
11. "You Belong with Me"
12. "Dear John"
13. "Enchanted"
14. "Haunted"
15. "Long Live"
16. "Fifteen"