

Taylor Swift Says Broadway Inspired Her 'Speak Now' Tour

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by Tom Roland, Des Moines | Juni 01, 2011 8:21 EDT

[...]

Swift launched her Speak Now Tour in the U.S. this last weekend, playing Omaha May 27-28 and Des Moines May 29, and the two-hour production was an overwhelming experience. Lighted trees, pyrotechnics, dancers popping up from the stage, aerialists twirling above the eight-piece band, nine costume changes, multiple set changes, a floor-sweeping mime, confetti, a satellite stage and a small, gazebo-ish lift that took her over the crowd were just some of the details that turned an evening into a spectacle.

In essence, one of the genre's most ambitious acts has created one of the genre's most ambitious tours, drawing from country, pop, rock, Broadway and likely "Glee" to create an ever-changing production. Watch Swift and the backdrop changed; watch the backdrop and Swift was suddenly in a different outfit. And just when there was a lull-boom!-fireworks exploded or dancers appeared out of giant bells.

"The first time that I fell in love with performing is when I went to go see theater in my hometown in Pennsylvania," Swift said after the performance at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines. "I would see it done incredibly well -- going to see Broadway plays of 'Wicked' -- things like that just really inspired me from an early age to love putting on a theatrical performance where there are storylines and characters, and you're always seeing a scene change into another scene. I love telling a story in any way possible."

[...] Swift, as a singer-songwriter, wrote all the music and conceived the show's themes and visuals, limited only by the ways in which her stage designer could fit it all in.

So while a production that incorporates snow, ballet and an Appalachian front porch could come across as hokey and disjointed in another's hands, Swift managed to pull off a certain cohesiveness.

"We spent months going over the set list and just thinking of where things would go, which ones would segue well into other songs and how we could tell individual stories," she noted. "I didn't want to tell one big story. I wanted each song to have its own story."

"We had a few costumes that weren't finished yet at that point, but other than that everything was the way the show is," she notes. "That rehearsal went incredibly well. I never expected for it to go on without a hitch, but it did and after the show we were all just jumping up and down, screaming."

[...]

In this case, there's an enormous amount of detail that worked to make the Speak Now Tour a sort of next step in country concert presentation, right down to the roman-numeral XIII on the bell props and the fairy dust (small bits of confetti) that dropped from her lift over the audience during "Love Story." It blended the pacing, the music and the artist's personality in a way that transfixed many in the crowd. It's a production-and an ability-that her peers in the business will continue to study.

“Swift’s stage show alone should be worth the price of admission. Her big production spares no expense and is sure to amaze and entertain everybody that comes to watch.”