



ULTRASOUND TOUR

Before Lorde even came on stage, people were already passing out. The Armory in Minneapolis was packed shoulder to shoulder, and the air felt warm and claustrophobic. Everyone wanted the perfect spot, the perfect video, the perfect night, but somewhere between the shoving, holding phones in the air and shouting, the whole point of being there started to fade.

Live music is supposed to bring people together. It's supposed to be that sacred place where strangers scream the same words and somehow feel like friends for a few hours. But lately, concert culture feels less about connection and more about content. When did we stop caring about the actual moment and start treating shows like background noise for our phones?

At Lorde's concert on October 12, I saw it all. Phones in the air for every song (except the two nobody but me knew from *Solar Power*), people pushing forward to supposedly meet friends or parents and others talking obnoxiously during the openers. I completely get it; everyone wants to post a clip or two. But there's something sad about watching your favorite artist walk around the venue, touching fans' hands, and the whole crowd staring from behind a lens. You can't record what a moment feels like, no matter how good the video quality is.

And then there's the part about taking care of yourself, which people often forget. The Armory is almost all general admission, and it showed. People were dropping left and right before the show, during and even after. No one ate food, no one drank water and everyone wanted to be front row. Passing out at a concert doesn't make you dedicated – it just puts you and the people around you at risk. Hydrate, eat and wear comfortable clothes. It sucks when people's carelessness ruins the show, but at least we got to hear “:)” by The Japanese House twice.

One of my biggest issues of the night was how people treated the openers. Lorde's openers were *Empress Of* and *The Japanese House*, both incredible, but you wouldn't know it or hardly hear it based on the crowd. So many people were talking, scrolling or just ignoring them. I know that openers aren't why you bought the ticket, but they're still part of the show, and usually only 30 minutes of it. The artist picked them for a reason. Showing respect isn't hard, just listen. You may find someone new you love, kind of like when Chappell Roan opened for Olivia Rodrigo last year.

Despite all that, once Lorde finally came out, the chaos kind of melted away. Her visuals were insane: a treadmill, bright colors, x-rays; it felt unreal. And before singing “Liability,” she gave us this sweet speech about growing up and how everything's going to end up okay. That stuck with me as it did the last time I saw her. It reminded me that concerts are about connection, about feeling a part of something.

Live music can be exhausting and expensive. It's sweaty, loud and sometimes miserable. But no livestream can replace that moment when the lights go down and everyone screams together.

After the show, my friend and I walked home in the light rain in downtown Minneapolis. We DoorDash'd Taco Bell and watched *RuPaul's Drag Race* in our Airbnb. We were drenched and exhausted but couldn't stop reliving the night. After all the chaos, I felt insanely happy to have been there.

Concert etiquette isn't about being strict or judgmental. It's about protecting what makes live music special. If we all stopped pushing, filming and treating shows like content factories, we'd actually get to feel them again. So next time you're at a concert, put your phone down for a while, drink some water and just be there.

