

Bieber asks the big questions in Indy

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The deafening screams, the mania, the crop tops. No doubt about it, this was a Justin Bieber concert.

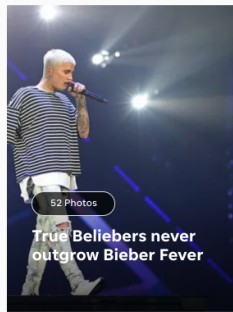
Bieber played to a sold-out crowd Saturday night at Bankers Life Fieldhouse.

His performance began with a video behind the stage of Bieber free-falling into an abyss before finding himself in a clear box. Moments later Bieber appeared in the real-life version of that box onstage. He crooned out the lyrics to "Mark My Words."

This song seemed to set the tone for the show and echoed back to Bieber's larger mission this past year of setting himself straight and proving himself. Promising the crowd an entertaining show, he sang out, "Mark my words, give you all I got."

"Mark My Words" was quickly followed up by energetic, fist-pumping EDM anthem "Where Are U Now."

Bieber's dancing was the most impressive aspect of the show, his first world tour in three years and his third time performing in Indianapolis. He didn't leave the heavy lifting to his backup dancers like many singers do but instead performed the choreography to nearly every song in time with them or solo. Bieber did all of his choreography with a sprained ankle, which he mentioned on stage and posted a photo on Instagram.



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Due to the amount of dancing, backing vocals played through the majority of the songs, leaving a little more to be desired from Bieber's performance in the vocal department. Not for lack of vocal talent, but for the lack of chances to showcase it because this was such a dance-focused concert.

Bieber appeared in a cage during "I'll Show You," where he pointed at the crowd almost defiantly and recited lyrics that gave a glimpse into the not-so-glamorous side of Bieber's life. "Don't forget that I'm human, don't forget that I'm real" the lyrics tumbled from his mouth as he paced inside his cage.

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Production elements played heavily into the show including explosions, video elements and, most notably, a giant trampoline suspended above the crowd from which Bieber performed current single "Company."

A humbler moment of the show came when a couch appeared onstage. Bieber sat with an acoustic guitar, living-room-jam-session style, and played a medley featuring two unreleased songs: "Look at the Stars" and "Insecurities." He also played a portion of "Home to Mama," a duet track he released with Cody Simpson, and single "Love Yourself."

This moment gave his vocals a time to shine and was reminiscent of Bieber's beginnings of uploading videos of himself playing guitar and singing on YouTube.

Audience members reacted to Bieber's older songs like one would to a souped-up energy drink. "Boyfriend" seemed to remind everyone in the room just who they wanted as a boyfriend.

Bieber performed the choreography with precision and flirtation, receiving a piercing howl from the teenage and twentysomething females in the crowd in return.

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The night took a more serious turn when Bieber asked the crowd about the subject of sleeping. In his casual, playful tone, he asked if anyone liked sleeping all day, saying that he wished he could sleep all day sometimes.

Going on to show that he was addressing something much deeper than initially appeared, he then talked about how life and our days on the planet are worth living through and reminded his audience not to forget that.

Bridging that conversation into "Life Is Worth Living," Bieber jovially stopped singing and asked, "Can you tie my shoe for me?" to a lucky fan in the pit.

Taking away all of the theatrics, Bieber appeared to have a bigger message to share, one that seemed to be the whole purpose of the "Purpose" tour.

"I just want each and every one of you to know that you have a purpose," Bieber said.

The "Purpose" tour might make you ask yourself some hard questions about life and your role in it. An unexpected result of a Justin Bieber concert, but that just might be what made this show so satisfying.

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