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Concert Review: Kelly Clarkson at Radio City Music Hall

From the top of her show, pop star [Kelly Clarkson](#) couldn't contain her excitement about playing the legendary [Radio City Music Hall](#) on Saturday night. Declaring her love for the crowd, the venue and the city of New York, she apologized for her frequent gushing saying, "Sorry, but I'm going to be the annoying 'cheerleader girl' all night!"



Kelly Clarkson at Radio City Music Hall 1/21/12

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It's understandable that she'd be grateful for the city's support considering she's received enough negative press to cause any pop star with human emotions at least a bit of momentary self-doubt. However, Clarkson has developed a sense of humor about all the gossip. During the first few bars of opening song "Dark Side", a screen/curtain displayed some of these headlines that addressed everything from her album sales figures to her own curvy figure. Words like "Fat", "Girl Next Door", and "Music Stale" floated by as Clarkson sang lyrics like "Will you love me even with my dark side?" and "Please remind me who I really am" from behind the see-through screen. Right after the final frame read "Failure" in big red letters, the screen lifted to reveal Clarkson and her band while the sold out house loudly cheered, showing the singer that she has nothing to worry about.

It's incredible that this September will mark the tenth anniversary of Clarkson's victory on American Idol. Only a handful of AI winners have gone on to reach the mega-star status they set out to achieve when walking into their hometown auditions. But luckily for Clarkson, she was one of them, continuing to get frequent radioplay and support from her fans even after all this time. The audience, comprised of males and females of all ages, sang along to her hit-filled setlist which included "Behind These Hazel Eyes", "Since U Been Gone", "Breakaway", "My Life Would Suck Without You", "Stronger (What Doesn't Kill You)", "Already Gone", "Mr. Know It All", and "Miss Independent." Their reaction to the songs was, at

times, deafeningly loud.

After attending last year's intimate Highline Ballroom benefit gig (review [here](#)), it was interesting to see how Clarkson would utilize a huge stage such as Radio City's. The show was filled with awesome lighting effects that set the mood, whether it was a high energy pop song or ballad. During the middle of the set, Clarkson and her backup band created a lounge-like atmosphere, performing in a huddle at the front of the stage, where they played a medley featuring "Walk Away" and "I Want You." Clarkson also paid tribute to Barbra Streisand, singing "My Man" (from "Funny Girl") and the recently departed Etta James with a great cover of "I'd Rather Go Blind." Later in the show it was revealed that one of her idols/friends, country legend Reba McEntire, was watching from the crowd down front. She claimed McEntire's presence added to her nerves, right as she was about to sing "Because Of You", a song she performed with McEntire for the album "Reba Duets."

With a voice like hers it seems impossible Clarkson would have anything to be nervous about, even if one of her heroes was in attendance. For her showstopping [cover](#) of Florence & The Machine's "Heavy In Your Arms", Clarkson went out into the audience, performing from a side balcony railing as she, in this Examiner's opinion, sang the song better than the original vocalist Florence Welch. A slowed down, piano-driven "[Never Again](#)" really showcased her vocal talents and gave the song more chilling vibe than the hyper-pop radio version. "Don't You Wanna Stay", sung with a giant screen projection of her duet partner Jason Aldean, also sounded amazing as it filled the whole hall with some country

flavor.

Having sold over 20 million albums worldwide (10 million in the U.S.), along with multiple singles on the Billboard Hot 100 charts, Clarkson has obviously maintained a solid fan base even though her American Idol days are long behind her. Given that a good portion of Saturday night's audience started listening to her when they were 'tweens entering middle school and have stuck around long enough that they can now legally drink at her shows, it's clear they are here for the long haul.

For photos from the show, click [here](#).

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