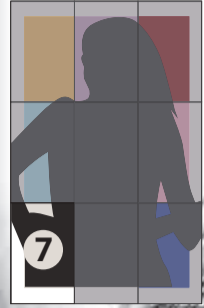


## ASSEMBLE YOUR OWN POSTER

This is the seventh of a nine-part infographic that will be published daily until Feb 25. Combine all nine pages to create your own mosaic poster of Taylor Swift. Or stand a chance to win a limited-edition collectible poster. **Find out more:** [str.sg/TSwift](https://str.sg/TSwift)



In this seventh instalment of The Straits Times' nine-part daily Taylor Swift infographic series, correspondent **Yamini Chinnuswamy** and executive artist **Billy Ker** explore the 34-year-old American pop star's eighth album. This is ahead of The Eras Tour in Singapore from March 2 to 9, named for the different musical "eras" of her career

# folklore (2020)

## TAYLOR'S DIARY

April to July 2020

Unbeknown to all but a select few, Swift secretly begins recording *Folklore*. She works remotely from her home in Los Angeles, while her producers (below from left) Aaron Dessner and Jack Antonoff operate from their bases in Hudson Valley and New York City respectively.



Swift announces the new album on the morning of July 23, giving fans just hours to prepare themselves for the drop at midnight on July 24.

In May, Swift condemns then United States President Donald Trump for "stoking the fires of white supremacy and racism". "We will vote you out in November," she writes on Twitter, now known as X.

she said in a television interview: "It's my right to vote, but it's not my right to tell other people what to do."

In October, she declares her support for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris – then the US Democratic Party candidates running for president and vice-president respectively – by showing off cookies decorated with their campaign logo.

November 2020

*Folklore: The Long Pond Studio Sessions* premieres on the Disney+ streaming service. This documentary concert film sees Swift joining Antonoff and Dessner at the latter's recording studio in an isolated, forested part of upstate New York.



Also in November, she joins Beatles legend Paul McCartney on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine (left). In the cover story, the pair discuss making albums in quarantine, among other things.



August to October 2020

In private, Swift continues to quietly record music with Dessner.

In public, she continues her social media criticism of Trump, ahead of the US presidential election in November. In August, she tells her followers: "Donald Trump's ineffective leadership gravely worsened the crisis that we are in, and he is now taking advantage of it to subvert and destroy our right to vote and vote safely. Request a ballot early. Vote early."

These political statements are a stark contrast to her stance in 2012, when

December 2020

Just as the start of the *Folklore* era is unexpected and sudden, so, too, is its end. On the morning of Dec 10, Swift drops a bombshell announcement – she is releasing yet another new album, *Evermore*, her third in less than two years.

## WE NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE



### 1 Cosy knitwear

To celebrate *Folklore* and its lead single *Cardigan*, Swift sends special cardigans to her celebrity friends such as American actress Elle Fanning. The cardigans – one of which Swift wears in the *Cardigan* music video – are also sold in her official merchandise store.

### 2 Cottage life

With *Folklore*, Swift popularised "cottagecore" – an aesthetic which idealises the trappings of rural life, such as forest cabins and flowy prairie dresses.



### 3 Self-reflection

In the song *Mirrorball*, Swift uses the image of a glittering, shiny mirrorball

to ponder the fleeting, fickle nature of celebrity. As a song, the introspective track is an apt representation of the dreamy feel of *Folklore*.

## HOT SWIFTIE MERCH

Here are some of Swift's most popular limited-edition items that go beyond the usual T-shirts and posters



### Snow globes

The music video for Swift's song *Lover*, off the 2019 album of the same name, takes place in a snow globe containing a house with multicoloured rooms. Each room represents one of her eras.

The *Lover* snow globe is the first one to be sold, in 2019. There have been more snow globes since, inspired by other aspects of Swift lore, such as her songs *All Too Well* (2012) and *Willow* (2020).



### Cardigans

Following the success of the *Folklore* cardigan, Swift's team goes on to produce cardigans for other occasions, such as the holiday season and her Taylor's Version album releases for *Red* (2021), *Speak Now* (2023) and *1989* (2023).

## AT A GLANCE



8<sup>th</sup> album, released in July 2020

80.6 million streams on Spotify on its first day

more than 2 million sold worldwide within a week of release

1 Grammy Award won for Album of the Year

## LINER NOTES

Inspired by the fiction she is watching and reading during the quarantine days of the Covid-19 pandemic, Swift experiments with fictional narratives in her songwriting. "Consuming other people's art and storytelling sort of opened this portal in my imagination," she explains.

These experiments culminate in a trilogy of songs that she calls the *Teenage Love Triangle*: *Cardigan*, *August* and *Betty*. Some of the fictional teenagers in these songs are named after the children of Swift's close celebrity friends, such as Hollywood couple Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds' kids, James, Betty and Inez.

But Swift does not do away with biographical storytelling altogether. The haunting ballad *My Tears Ricochet* uses the metaphor of a messy divorce to express her feelings about her bitter 2018-2019 break-up with her former record label, Big Machine.

She also lets loose with explicit language on this record, making it her first to carry an explicit content label. It starts as early as the first line of the first track, *The 1*: "I'm doing good, I'm on some new s\*\*\*."

Eagle-eyed fans studying the liner notes of *Folklore* notice a mysterious writer on tracks such as *Exile* and *Betty* – the up-till-now unknown William Bowery. Swifties theorise that Bowery might be a pseudonym for Swift's boyfriend, British actor Joe Alwyn – a theory which she later confirms.

### Vinyl

Swift accounts for one in every 15 vinyl albums sold in 2023, according to music industry publication *Billboard*.

The *Folklore: The Long Pond Studio Sessions* vinyl is a Record Store Day exclusive, sold only by participating vinyl shops in 2023. Only 115,000 copies have been made. For Valentine's Day 2023, Swift releases heart-shaped double *Lover* (Live From Paris) vinyls. These contain recordings of a concert she staged in the French capital in 2019 to promote the *Lover* album.



### Perfume

Swift releases her first perfume *Wonderstruck* in 2011, inspired by a lyric in her song *Enchanted*.

Her second scent, *Wonderstruck Enchanted*, continues the fairy-tale theme in 2012, represented by a passionate red hue. Her third fragrance is *Taylor* by Taylor Swift, released in 2013.

