

ROWING FESTIVAL WRITER



Gathering of the Vibes 2010

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Mysterious death. Nitrous. Lightning.

These words became synonymous with the Vibes in 2009. Luckily, this year painted a different and greatly promising picture for one of the premier festivals still standing strong through the adversity and economical demise crippling the music industry.

Unrelenting rays of sunshine cascaded upon Seaside Park amid the dilapidated ambience of the once-industrious port city of Bridgeport, Connecticut. It is an annual notion shared by many festival veterans- why is such a joyous event bordered by rust, aggression, and societal stagnation?

Perhaps we must see the other side of the fence to appreciate and embrace our own weekend musical backyard? Perhaps the venue is placed before us in an effort to strive for unity, tolerance, and innovation- an idea one would hope sticks to the mind as they head back to their humble abodes.

Vibes seamlessly conjures a childhood playground type of excitement. Bodies manically wander the enormous park. Many swirl in the Long Island Sound, while others place their toes in the sand.

Anonymous small pieces of paper are placed on urgent tongues. The skunky smell of pleasure and the pursuit of happiness wafts throughout the masses like a blissful fog sent by the Sandman himself- evoking his gracious intent over heavy eyelids encapsulating wide eyes.

It is a madness only contained within the confines of melodic beauty and jovial, manic cries to the heavens, “What the fuck is that??”

At the center of this New England circus are indescribable performances crossing our paths like a shooting star hurdling itself into the crisp, fleeting night.

The pearl is pried from the oyster while one stands in awe of perfection (Further tackling a 24-minute “Terrapin Station Suite” in its entirety Friday night), passion (Assembly of Dust unleashing its Americana soaked tunes to a sun-soaked audience howling along to “Sharecropper”, “Light Blue Lover”, and “Westerly”), powder-keg boogies (Deep Banana Blackout wearing out dancing shoes with a dizzying funkified freakout, which ended with the poignant “Let’s Get It On”), and promising acts (the magnetic Zach Deputy pulling hundreds into his orbit during an early Saturday afternoon set which included a sizzling “Magic Carpet Ride” > “We Want The Funk” > “Magic Carpet Ride”).

The four-day journey breeds when-pigs-fly collaborations (Keller Williams & the Rhythm Devils featuring Mickey Hart and Bill Kreutzmann raising curious eyebrows with “Cold Rain and Snow”, “Uncle John’s Band”, and “Fire On The Mountain” before handing the stage over to Primus who tantalized our minds with their unique brand of musical oddity- “Jerry Was A Racecar Driver”), starry-eyed youngsters maturing before our eyes (The McLovins side-stage, sweat-dripping “Tweezer Reprise” and “Rapper’s Delight” in front of an overzealous crowd begging for more), and legendary musicianship often few and far between these days (reggae cornerstone Jimmy Cliff brightening our days with “I Can See Clearly Now” and “Wild World”).

Gathering of the Vibes represents a lasting centerpiece within the national music community. While a handful went bankrupt, some relocated, and others had reputations tarnished, Vibes did not lay down and wallow- it took the reigns and reestablished itself as a desired musical destination where those in search of a sense of community can frolic freely amid an endless fury of experiences unique and sacred to the festival itself.