

Live from the Vibes Day 3: RatDog, Levon Helm, Max Creek, Guster, Jaimoe, AOD and Perpetual Groove

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Gathering of the Vibes' paid tribute to Woodstock's 40th anniversary by presenting numerous veterans of the famed 1969 music festival Saturday. More than almost any other Northeast music festival, Gathering of the Vibes captures the pure, communal spirit of that legendary event and, as in years past, brought in Woodstock icon Wavy Gravy to serve as the four-day event's Master of Ceremonies.

Woodstock alumni bookended Saturday's schedule: the afternoon opened with a performance by Moonalice, the Roger McNamee-led band that features Woodstock veteran Jack Cassidy on bass. The band, which also includes John Molo, Pete Sears and G.E. Smith, ran through a set of originals, before climaxing with a cover of the Grateful Dead's "Sugaree." Later, fellow Woodstock veterans Levon Helm and Bob Weir closed out the night with intertwined mainstage performances backed by their individual solo projects. Helm ran through a number of Band classics throughout his 90-minute set, including "It Makes No Difference," "The Shape I'm In" and The Band's arrangement of "Long Black Veil." The drummer was unable to sing, however, after blowing out his voice during a recent Black Crowes tour, and relied on bandmates Larry Campbell, Teresa Williams, Amy Helm and Brian Mitchell to supply lead vocals.

Weir also emerged partway through Helm's set to sing with Campbell, Williams and Amy Helm on The Dead's "Attics of My Life," as well as Helm's entire band on The Dead's "Tennessee Jed" (the drummer recorded the latter tune for his recent studio album, *Electric Dirt*). He also returned at the end of night to join Helm and his band on a sing-along version of "The Weight."

Soon after, Weir took the stage with RatDog for the group's fifth appearance at Gathering of the Vibes since 2000. The quintet opened with its first version of the *Bobby & the Midnites* track "Festival" since 2006 and later brought out Donna Jean Godchaux-MacKay to sing on "Berta," "Scarlet Begonias," a set-closing "One More Saturday Night" and the lone encore of "Ripple." Weir also nodded to Bob Dylan by playing the legendary songwriters' classic collaboration with Robert Hunter, "Silvio."

The rest of Saturday's lineup mixed Gathering of the Vibes mainstays with some left-leaning additions. Vibes regulars Ryan Montbleau Band (a staple since 2005) and Assembly of Dust (a staple since 2003) both played extended sets that blurred the lines between singer/songwriter, roots-rock and jamband sounds. Assembly of Dust opened its show by bringing out frontman Reid Genauer's three-year-old son Ryder to strum a miniature acoustic guitar with the band. The younger Genauer—who reportedly had never seen his father play in public—played on "Arc Of The Sun" and later ran back onstage to display some impromptu rock-star heroics on "Samuel Aging."

The seminal Connecticut jamband Max Creek, who appeared at Vibes each year from its inception in 1996 through 2003, returned to the festival for the first time in six years to play a cover-heavy set that nodded to the likes of The Dead and Talking Heads. Godchaux-MacKay also sang with the group on "Cassidy" and "Bertha." Before its set, the band confirmed that the annual Camp Creek festival would return in 2010 after a yearlong hiatus.

Boston-bred pop band Guster, who played after Max Creek, also boast a local hero: drummer Brian Rosenworcel, who grew up near Hartford and attended several Max Creek shows during his formative music years. Guster played an extended 90-minute set that mixed early favorites like "Demons" and "Airport Song" with newer indie-centric songs like "Captain" and "Come Downstairs and Say Hello." (the band jokingly asked Helm to sit in as a make good for when the drummer declined to record with them near Woodstock). The politically-driven jam-pop band State Radio was also set to make its Gathering of the Vibes debut, but unexpectedly cancelled its appearance this past Friday.

[The event's eco-friendly Green Vibes Stage](#) featured some notable acts: Area-resident, and Allman Brothers Band co-founder, Jaimoe played an intimate set of southern-rock influenced jazz, soul and R&B, longtime Grateful Dead Hour host David Gans played a set of solo acoustic music and progressive jam-rockers Perpetual Groove played a late night set that stretched until nearly 4 AM. Perpetual Groove guitarist Brock Butler also treated early arrivals to a few songs from his forthcoming solo album, which he previewed during an onstage Relix podcast.