

# ACL MUSIC FESTIVAL 2017 - A GRAND SUCCESS

By Naomi Richard | VILLAGER Contributor



Benjamin Booker crowd-surfing. Photo/Greg Noir

AUSTIN, TX - The 2017 ACL Music Festival, held annually in October at Austin's Zilker Park, took the star-studded event to a new level with headliners Jay Z and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, a wide selection of music genres, additional stage platforms, more food options — and one of the best sound systems in the festival's history, according to multiple long-time festival-goers. The three-day Festival, occurring over two different weekends, typically is action packed, filled with music, reunions of friends, top talent and rising stars performing. This year matched or exceeded the high expectations.

Enjoy notable highlights of the standout experiences of the 2-weekend event.

Our recap begins with ACL's tribute to the recently deceased music legend, Tom Petty, a Grammy® decorated singer, musician and songwriter with over 80 million records sold worldwide. The creative production team added a special touch with skydivers being released as Petty's renowned classic *Free Falling* was played! Doing the most, ACL delivered a tribute to Petty, befitting the giant that he was. Rest in peace, Tom Petty, from *Austin City Limits Music Fest*.

The festival's Friday headliner, Jay Z, hit the main stage in grand style, accompanied by a blow-up animal backdrop, and many are still trying to determine how the balloon creature appeared! We met fans from New York, Los Angeles, Seattle,

Cleveland, Minnesota, Louisiana, Alabama and other places who journeyed to ACL to hear this King of Contemporary Hip-Hop, surrounded by A\$AP Ferg, Chance the Rapper and Ice Cube. ACL was heavy on the hip-hop side and to the crowd's delight.

Chance the Rapper, who recently donated \$1 million to Chicago's public school system to support the arts and after-school programming, made his way back to Austin. What a soulful sound blending Hip-Hop, R&B and Pop. His appeal draws a crowd filled with diverse ethnicities, ages and genders. In the hip-hop world, he owns a lane of his own with loyal followers. He is a young man of character, incredible talent, a heart for people and handsome as can be. He's a keeper!

The Red Hot Chili Peppers (RHCP) headlined Saturday night of both festival weekends with high energy performances. The multiple Grammy® and MTV Award winners were crowd pleasers, singing *Can't Stop, I Wanna Be Your Dog, Right on Time, Soul to Squeeze, By the Way* and many more. The music just kept coming as fans were seen dancing, hugging strangers, laughing and enjoying the rock sound under the evening sky with weather to die for. Austin was the place and the ACL fans were the audience for such a once-in-a-lifetime encounter.

Raging Fyah, a five-piece reggae band from Kingston, Jamaica, received a warm welcome as



Ice Cube with a shoutout to the Westside. Photo/Roger Ho

they took the stage. They released their first album in 2011, and in 2016 signed to VP Records, with their third album *Everlasting* earning them a Grammy nomination. Fyah, appropriately named, lit the festival with soulful music, resulting in the crowd rising to their feet and dancing to the Caribbean sounds!

Not to leave any area undone, the School of Rock performed in the Kiddie Land with mad talent! The School of Rock consisted of kids who appeared to be between 7-12 years old, singing, playing guitar and drums. Kiddie Land gave the younger festival goers games, music, play areas and more throughout the festival experience. A major feature of Kiddie Land applauded by parents was the ability to drop kiddos off via an expedited entry process in only a fraction of the time at regular entry points. *Bonus!*

Festival organizers expanded the festival to both sides of Barton Springs Road, giving way to additional stages, food and drink services. Other upgrades included a fully air conditioned merchandise store and, doing the most, they added flushable port-a-potties! By far, the 2017 ACL Music Festival was a grand success and delivered the talent they promised. While many came from afar, make no doubt about it, local residents were there in great numbers. A word of advice going forward, buy your tickets and plan on attending early for maximum enjoyment!

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