

Slideshow: Wu-Tang Clan, Gary Clark Jr. Headline Youthful, EDM-Focused 2013 North Coast Music Festival

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ncmf-lineup.jpg

CHICAGO – With music festivals continuing to explode in Chicago, the 2013 North Coast Music Festival (NCMF) felt like it learned some lessons from master fests like Lollapalooza but needs to keep paying attention.

When I attended NCMF's first night this year (Friday, Aug. 30), I first noticed the alcohol lines and how [no one was in them](#) [20]. That's because this crowd was primarily under 21, so it'd make sense that most of its [booked acts performed EDM](#) [21] (*electronic dance music*).

Even Friday headliner Passion Pit only played an EDM set. Their appearance at all was in question because their gear was trashed by the rain. NCMF evacuated that night due to dangerous weather and [resumed after a couple hours](#) [22]. Friday also featured The Disco Biscuits and Mac Miller.

I skipped Saturday – including headliners Afrojack, Big Gigantic and NaS – and returned to NCMS in full force for Sunday. Sunday was the day I cared most about as I was specifically seeking out headliners Wu-Tang Clan and Gary Clark Jr. While Gary Clark Jr. was the most talented musician at the fest, NCMF's youthful audience didn't fully appreciate him.

Known as the “future of Texas blues” and trademarked by his fuzzy guitar licks and smooth vocal stylings, he felt out of place and underappreciated at NCMF. Gary Clark Jr.’s out-of-this-world musical performance felt in his own world as he primarily had his eyes closed or looking down. While I very much enjoyed it, he for the most part didn’t engage his very large crowd and they felt only lukewarm about him.

That’s not due to his talented set, but rather his mature sound playing to a mismatched younger crowd that primarily wanted a heavy dance beat. A smaller American indie soul band from Chicago followed Gary Clark Jr. – known as JC Brooks & the Uptown Sound – and was looking forward to their set. Unfortunately, it never happened as Friday’s rain returned.

Strangely, though, the JC Brooks & the Uptown Sound set was canceled before it even started when the other two headliners played on. Lightning was threatening, and while the JC Brooks set was quickly killed, headliner Wu-Tang Clan sucked in most of the fest’s crowd and their set pushed on nearly to completion.

Wu-Tang Clan was the talk of the fest – especially because so many of their original members hit the stage on Sunday to collectively perform their 1993 hit album “36 Chambers”. To this day, “36 Chambers” is regarded as one of the greatest hip hop albums of all time. RZA, GZA, Method Man, Raekwon, Ghosface Killah, Inspectah Deck, U-God and Masta Killa all made appearances.

I had an unexpected moment with Inspectah Deck. Shooting from the photo pit, Inspectah Deck jumped off the stage, onto a speaker and accidentally kicked me in my face. I managed to [shoot the close-up nonetheless](#) [23] as well as a video, which shows the [jump right by me at the end](#) [24].

A highlight video for Sunday created by the North Coast Music Festival can be watched below. HollywoodChicago.com photos from Friday and Sunday can be enjoyed by clicking “Next” and “Previous” at the top.



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- [19] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/22422/slideshow-wu-tang-clan-gary-clark-jr-headline-youthful-edm-2013-north-coast-music-festival?slide=1>
- [20] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/22422/slideshow-wu-tang-clan-gary-clark-jr-headline-youthful-edm-2013-north-coast-music-festival?slide=4>
- [21] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/22422/slideshow-wu-tang-clan-gary-clark-jr-headline-youthful-edm-2013-north-coast-music-festival?slide=33>
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- [23] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/22422/slideshow-wu-tang-clan-gary-clark-jr-headline-youthful-edm-2013-north-coast-music-festival>
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