



FESTIVALS

REPORT: ELECTRIC ZOO

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It was a symphony of excessive excellence. 2010's Electric Zoo Festival will be remembered as the year that in promoting full inclusion of all realms of the international EDM universe that the Electric Zoo Festival became the definitive statement of the passion and appreciation of electronic dance music by American audiences. **Harkening back to the beginnings of the genre, it was always foreign tastes that pushed the music in America.** Italian Giorgio Moroder awed ears, and for years, whether through the work of Germans like Kraftwerk, Englishmen Depeche Mode, and today Dutchmen like Armin van Buuren, ad infinitum, America never seemed to have much more to offer than a nod of appreciation to our overseas neighbors for providing the building blocks upon which traditional American dance styles like house, freestyle and hip hop were built. But this has changed. Electric Zoo honors the development of electronic dance music as a viable genre both mainstream and economically in the United States by providing broad displays tangible emotion, love and appreciation as the multitudes which numbered in the tens of thousands of multi-colored, multi-ethnic tribes representing all electronic sounds on Randall's Island outside of Manhattan. In turning the island into into a bass and treble powered sonic monster, whose reverberations were heard all the way to the streets of Harlem across the water, Electric Zoo 2010 was a truly successful event.





It isn't enough to be memorable at Electric Zoo by playing a great set. This is Electric Zoo, and to every single attendee everyone is a superstar. Some far bigger and important than others, **but this is a lineup where the term "All Killer, No Filler" would make absolute sense.** The lineups reflected very international tastes that have trended to America, as the dirty rumble of Dutch house basslines were provided by simply the best in the genre as Afrojack and DJ Chuckie were represented. Dubstep and heavy bass aficionados had their shine as well, as when the UK's Rusko hit the stage while Fake Blood finished a thunderous and excellent set with his 2009 banger "Mars," the crowd noted the blonde mopped dubstep demon plugging in, and a rumble turned into a roar as the crowd chanted his name in unison.

Heavy bass was in session as well with titanic sounding sets from The Glitch Mob and Bassnectar were championship winning caliber.



The main stage featured legendary veterans The Chemical Brothers underwhelming many as their desire to not move forward into 2010 with a heavier set and instead relying on the tried and true method of synth slaying melodic and pulsing techno trip hop was excellent, but expected. Second day headliner Armin van Buuren delivered as expected and left his legion of fans in the crowd awed in appreciation. The idea of veterans meeting and exceeding expectations and staying with the times was no more obvious than on Sunday than the quadruple threat of Laidback Luke, Boys Noise, Moby and Fedde le Grand. Luke's hip hop styled electro fell into the pounding wall of noise that was Boys Noise's powerful electro and a renewed Moby stepped into the 21st century with the giant synths of Avicii's top tune of 2010 "My Feelings for You" alongside re-edit's of his classic hits like "Porcelain." Fedde le Grand merely hit the stage, and from dropping a refixed edit of "Put Your Hands Up" and inserting "for New York," it was a downhill ride into an enormous party.

Let's pay attention to North America for a second. The hipster underground of this side of the world, where the most inventive and advanced work in EDM in the last decade on this continent stood up at this event and became a force to be reckoned with. International names known to hipsters like DJ Mehdi impressed, and talents like Steve Aoki showed and proved. But if you left Electric Zoo without mentioning A-Trak or Diplo, you were doing it wrong. Diplo is the only man who played two sets at Electric Zoo. Foremost on Saturday on the main stage with Skerriitt Bwoy and crew with the Major Lazer project, and on Sunday in the hipster themed Red Bull tent where he pretty much performed a tag team set with prolific producer, remixer, DJ and Fools Gold label chief A-Trak. Diplo occupied the same space as David Guetta did in this festival last year. The DJ most trending towards the mainstream with dashes and sprinkles of showmanship, entertainment and raising musical low culture to the heights of EDM snobbery expected at an event of this nature.



Yes, ATB played Rage Against the Machine's "Killing in the Name Of" prior to "9 AM (Til I Come)." **But after the large scale international debut of the Dave Nada invented moombahton sound, Diplo went through a set that dipped and dived out** of all manner of the top sounds of his career and all the crunk dubstep, kuduro and two-step of the moment, then he dropped a most unlikely banger, Cali Swag District's "Teach Me How To Dougie." At an event where moshing, jacking, rolling, freaking and grinding were all expected, Diplo added "Dougie-ing" to the list and insanity ensued. And to hear A-Trak run through a slew of top remixes and re-edits that have defined his career, from the Duck Sauce hits like "aNYway" and "Barbra Streisand" to his popular re-edit of the Yeah Yeah Yeah's "Heads Will Roll," alongside his bread and butter of hip hop, with touches of novelty and true entertainment value, the duo were a standout of an event where everything was noteworthy and worthwhile.

As well, the techno and trance tent may have been the true sleeper of the entire festival. The "Sunday School Grove" was home to a plethora of top minimalist sets, as names like Richie Hawtin and John Digweed headlined, and major sets were delivered by Steve Bug, Claude von Stroke, Victor Calderone, Marco Carola, and the real treat, a triple team set from Martin Buttrich, Matthias Tanzmann and Davide Squillace which was the highlight of the entire event for many techno and trance fans in attendance. Yes, the tent was set up at least fifty yards away from the main park area, but, to the credit of the organizers who really did a phenomenal job in attempting to provide a depth to all sounds with true attention being paid to subwoofers the sonic boom and fast paced synths of other styles would have easily overwhelmed the intense deep opulence of sound of that area.



Electric Zoo was a great success. Such was the nature of the event that if you came during the "recovery from last night" hours of 11 AM to 3 PM on Sunday, hearing great sets from the likes of Grum, Cosmic Gate, XXXChange, Adulthood and JDH & Dave P would have sufficed. From a production and sound standpoint, at many moments if you stood in the middle of Randall's Island Park, it sounded like you were in the middle of a volcano, and if you did so at night, the nature of the light show would have left you believing you were defending against an invasion by Darth Vader and a million storm troopers. Equal parts visually bizarre and aurally stimulating, in covering EDM from the underground to the bottle service to early mornings in Ibiza to late nights in Miami, it was a broad success. At a point in the night, the beautiful and strained love adoration of Skream's remix of "In for the Kill" was being played by Diplo while Fedde le Grand dropped Prodigy's "Smack My Bitch Up." Two ships of many passing in the night, but occupying the same broad sea. Thus was the tale of Electric Zoo.