

Radio 1's Big Weekend – Saturday sets



Lorde serenades the crowd during her encore

Glasgow has forever been hailed the home of proud Scottish behaviour. Rowdy, good fun and filled with camaraderie, it only seemed natural that Europe's biggest free music festival set its next footsteps in Scotland's largest city.

Tickets for Radio 1's Big Weekend were released in March and snapped up at uncontrollable speeds, due to the popularity of the acts and the free ticketing policy the BBC has operated since the festival began. A total of 50,000 people arrived at Glasgow Green over the weekend, eager to take advantage of the arrival of massive music names on Scottish shores.

* * * * *

Radio 1's broad spectrum of listeners invited a varied crowd to the first day of the event. In a very clever effort to get people through the gates early in the day, boy band of the moment One Direction opened the main stage.



One Direction

Whether or not you enjoy their music, the sheer number of people who had heard of One Direction and their fan base resulted in a packed main stage. The crowd was varied, from young children on their parents shoulders, to twenty/thirty-something year old men there just to experience the 1D mania. They had an undeniable stage presence; brilliantly bold urging the crowd to sing along (as if they needed any encouragement). Reeling off hit after hit, you realise that although their music may not be made to appeal to everyone, it inadvertently

does. They've been responsible for one of the most recognisable music catalogues of the 21st century, and when performed live, it translates to an unassailable crowd pleaser. They are The Beatles of the internet generation, and with Harry Styles misted in a Jagger-esque aura, the mass hysteria you experience is entirely justified.



Lorde

Hailing from New Zealand, Lorde has gone from writing music in her bedroom to performing to huge international crowds, all before turning eighteen. Her subdued set early on Saturday afternoon was nothing short of beautiful, as she took to the stage in high waist black trousers paired with a white vest. She looked and acted like she meant business. Delivering highlights from her brilliant debut 'Pure Heroine', she jolted and swayed her hair in perfect sync to her music. It was like watching a teenage girl dancing around her bedroom, unrestrained as though no one was watching. In turn it felt affectionate and intimate. She feels her music, and reverberates that to every corner of the audience. One of the most touching moments came as she introduced 'Ribcage', a song she wrote when she was fifteen and realised the inevitability of growing old. She looked out on to a packed crowd, and smiled. She may only be a young woman, but her stage presence and lyricism reflects that of somebody near three times her age. Lorde was Big Weekend's most innate and expressive performer.

Pharrell

His name has been attached to every one of the world's most popular songs in the past eighteen months. As expected, all of Pharrell's recognisable hits propped up in his perfectly slotted set on Saturday afternoon. Opening with the Daft Punk collaboration 'Lose Yourself to Dance', he started subdued with subtle groove provoking a swaying crowd. His vocals, whilst there, were barely audible. Perhaps this was an issue

with sound (I was near the back of the crowd, and his voice has more intricate flare than booming power), but the half recognisable record was not necessarily the best choice for an opener. Saying this, he ploughed his way through his impressive repertoire of music, dropping in cuts from his latest album including Marilyn Monroe and Happy, and some of his older work. His most bizarre performance came in the form of Gwen Stefani's Hollaback Girl, a song Pharrell wrote and produced under his early noughties power group, The Neptunes. It got the crowd going, but Pharrell's effort was questionable on that part. His band, choreography and backing singers were on point, but maybe a little bit more passion from the man himself would work better as a festival gig.

Calvin Harris

Both sub-headline slots on the main stage were filled by Scottish music heroes at the weekend. Whilst Paolo Nutini brought soul to the stage on Sunday night, the world's highest paid DJ performed on Saturday, setting off pyrotechnics and smoke flares aplenty. Bombastic, non stop and relentless, Harris reeled of his catalogue without a duff note in between. It was an atmospheric, standard set for the DJ. He delivered what the crowd wanted, but was a little afraid to drop something unexpected. Nothing overly boring, nor earth shattering – just standard EDM affair.



Coldplay

Undoubtedly, the most astounding feat of Big Weekend came with Coldplay's euphoric headline set. Delivering some of the most incredible stage work the city had seen, they effortlessly soared through a rather short set for the stadium band, but included all of their best work and the obligatory new ones. That's the thing, though. The crowd was more than willing to listen to their new music – it's as wonderful as the classics. As the lights stretch out as far as you can see, and twisting LED dandelion seeds fall from the sky, you realise that

although the spectacle is there, it isn't necessary with Coldplay's immense catalogue and charisma. Seeing them live is a mindblowing experience, and as Chris Martin watched the 25,000 strong crowd sing the hook of 'Viva La Vida' back to him, it might just be the same for them too.