

Cruel World Festival Delivers Iconic Indie Music for the Masses

Cruel World Festival 2023 Makes Music History with Iggy Pop, Siouxsie, Billy Idol, and More

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Approximately 100,000 music fans traveled from around the country and worldwide to Brookside at the Rose Bowl, in Pasadena, California May 20, to see one of the largest all-alternative music festivals in the world: The [Cruel World Festival](#). Music fans were treated to 25 artists on 3 stages, including Siouxsie, Iggy Pop, Billy Idol, Human League, and more.



Billy Idol performs live at Cruel World Festival 2023. Photo Credit: Ariel Goldberg @Goldberghourphotos, provided with kind courtesy of Goldenvoice.

Fans were treated to amazing shows at the Cruel World Festival by legendary artists that have influenced generations of fans and other musicians for decades. The Cruel World Festival also included merchandise booths, vegan and vegetarian only food vendors, and a VIP area that featured water filling stations, phone charging stations, and picnic table seating.

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Hollywood Sentinel

This was the second annual Cruel World Festival, and it did not disappoint. The Cruel World Festival was organized by FKO and AEG’s Goldenvoice, and featured three stages with legendary stars of the punk, gothic, and new-wave music scene from the late 70’s and 80’s. Siouxsie and Iggy Pop headlined the festival. Billy Idol, Gary Numan, Love and Rockets, Echo and the Bunnymen, and Modern English also led. Other artists included Gang of Four, Squeeze, Animon, The Vapors, Human League, Berlin, and ABC. Newer darkwave, new-wave, and electronic acts also included Boy Harsher, Aurat, Riki, Gvllow, Glass Spells, Twin

Tribes, Ella Minus, Urban Heat, Soft Moon, Molchat Doma, and Boy Harsher. The festival also

featured a pop-up dance floor spun by Club Doom Dave.

Sooner than halfway into Iggy Pop's set, the Pasadena Fire Department reportedly ordered the Cruel World Festival shut down, after reportedly seeing some heat lightning following a clear blue sky. According to the Farmer's Almanac, "the light from intense thunderstorms as far as one-hundred miles away can be reflected off of a layer of haze in a clear night sky, which is typical on a warm summer night." After the City of Pasadena—who owns Brookside at the Rose Bowl—shockingly shut down the show, fans disappointedly left the venue without seeing a drop of rain, or headliner Siouxsie. A call to the Pasadena Fire Department for comment yesterday was not returned.

Cruel World Festival / Goldenvoice generously rescheduled a second date for the festival on May 21, even though they were not required to do so, and despite the early closure not being their fault. The second festival night included another set from Gary Numan, a full hour long set from Iggy Pop, and an extended full set by Siouxsie, delivered to tens of thousands of delighted fans who were fortunate enough to attend.

All of the bands at Cruel World Festival were in top form, and excited the massive audience. Iggy Pop sounded great, performing many classics from The Stooges including "Raw Power" and "I Wanna' Be Your Dog." Billy Idol brought his iconic showmanship to the stage, delivering his classic hits including "Dancing With Myself," "Cradle of Love," and "Flesh for Fantasy" among others. After deriding the Pasadena Fire Department for cancelling her performance the night before, Siouxsie pleased the crowd with classic hits including "Spellbound" and "Kiss Them for Me" among more.

Despite suffering the closure the first night, the Cruel World Festival was still a great success. Some fans who initially mistakenly blamed the promoter for the early closure, ended up praising Cruel World Festival and Goldenvoice for going above and beyond what most anyone else in the music industry would do under such circumstances. Fans are already planning attendance at Cruel World Festival 2024.

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In other Los Angeles entertainment news, Sisters of Mercy play today, May 23 at the Palladium. The Cure plays three nights at The Hollywood Bowl May 23—25. On May 26, The Exploited, Total Chaos, and Section 8 perform at the Regent, with L7 at the Glass House. Cobra Man plays The Fonda May 30, with James Taylor at the Santa Barbara Bowl on the 31st. Keith Haring's "Art Is For Everybody" show opens at the Broad Museum May 27 until October 8.

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