

Can FUN FUN FUN FEST X Redeem a Shitty 2 Weeks in Austin?



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Austin and its Festival scene have been keeping it weird (Yeah, Portland, you and a dozen other cities ripped it off. That's okay. Creative Commons and all that.) the last couple of weeks.

Thanks to floods, miscues, vehicular homicide, and an assortment of the other usual stupid shit, Austin has been one fucked up place.

Where does one start? Hmm.. Let's start on a "lighter" note, if you can call it that.

South by Southwest Interactive [stepped in a big wet pile of media mea culpa last week](#) when it:

- 1) Accepted a panel about sexism and online gaming, called "Level-up", to participate in its 2016 Conference. The panel features three very prominent women in gaming design and criticism who have been the targets of a lot of that sexism;
- 2) Invited what was quickly revealed to be a sexist counter-panel of gamer bros, a South American porn starlet, and some Ann Coulter wannabe Journalist/TV Reporter from San Diego (all alleged to be #GamerGate conspirators, no less) all bent on venting spleen, vitriol, and the deepest darkest menace upon the "Level Up" panel;
- 3) Was called out big time for accepting the alleged #GG counter-panel even though that panel submitted its application well after the submission deadline and was never reviewed nor vetted by SXSW's 3-tiered evaluation process. Basically, someone, possibly Director Hugh Forrest, just said, hey, fuck it, add these bros to the schedule even though we have no fucking idea on God's green earth who the the hell they are! What the fuck! Who cares if there are bomb and rape threats! The more the merrier! They're paying, we're playing! Money! It's a gas! Grab that cash with both hands and make a stash!;
- 4) Ran smack dab into an uproar about the competing panels, causing all hell to break loose on social media with thousands upon thousands of severe #hashtags fired in @SXSW's general direction;
- 5) Got really, really fucking scared;
- 6) Threw the baby out with the bathwater when it summarily canceled, not just the #GG panel, but "Level Up", too, because it got really, really fucking scared and confused and heard little birdies whispering "there'll be violence, there'll be trouble, you're corporate bottom line will suffer";

7) Got subsequently clobbered by an exponentially greater uproar , with BuzzFeed, Vox Media, and a whole holy host of thousands threatening to, shall we say, “uncoitus” the conference if it didn’t get all Hercules and go to scrubbing the Augean Stables it had managed to drop upon the digital landscape, and basically making things right by reinstating at least the “Level Up” panel;

8) Got really, really, really fucking scared, pissed its pants and called its collective mother because they had no idea what the hell they’d just done, much less how to get out of it;

9) Ran in circles like the Three Stooges for a couple days;

10) Finally screamed “EUREKA!” Friday afternoon, thinking they could resolve everything with a big ol’ all day lovefest on March 12, 2016, billing it as an “Online Harassment Summit”, bringing in big hoo hahs like Wendy Davis, Congresswoman Katherine Clark, and about a dozen other big hoo hahs with big important-sounding titles (Head of Product Policy!!! Law and Legislative & Tech Policy Director, Cyber Civil Rights Initiative!!!) to go “cluck cluck” all day about “Oh, online sexism is so bad. What do we do?” while the original sexism panelists Caroline Sinderson, Brianna Wu, and Randi Harper, as well as the #GG folks, got demoted to Sideshow Bob status;

11) Scratched their heads when everyone failed to fall on their knees and bow before their great wisdom, and the Twitterings in the general direction of @SXSW got even sharper and rougher than ever, and everyone wondered if indeed the conference emperor was running buck naked through the streets blindfolded;

12) Continued scratching their heads when a few of the lovefest invitees reported they were a little reluctant to accept the invitation because of, ya know, some of the participants had threatened them with violence, rape, and little stuff like that.

I’m staying tuned to see what else SXSW will fuck up. Hell, at this rate, we may all get in free to sing “We are the World” by the time March comes around.

On the “heavier” note, [the trial of Rashad Owens](#) began in an Austin Court on Monday. Who’s Rashad Owens? Oh, let’s see, he was a musician/artist from Temple, some 60 miles north of Austin, who, like thousands of other artists, went to SXSW 2013 to perform and be discovered. He was discovered alright. Unfortunately, for many people, it wasn’t for his musical ability.

Owens got really drunk on Thursday night of the conference, got into a car he had stolen from an acquaintance in Temple, and got chased by the cops for refusing to pull over after witnesses saw him driving erratically near I-35 in downtown Austin. While fleeing police, Owens went around a police barrier on Red River Street where thousands of pedestrians were milling about going from venue to venue. Four people were killed. More than twenty others were severely injured, a number of them will never walk again.

The local papers are filled with photos of crying people on the witness stand recounting Owens’s deadly rampage. If he hadn’t wrecked the car a block down Red River, he probably would have killed and maimed many more. There may be a special circle in hell for him. His lawyers are asking for leniency since he was there, like his victims, to be part of the music. Yeah, there’s already a special circle in hell for them, too.

Then, sorry if I’m sounding weary here, [there were the floods](#)— several dead, with many more injured and hundreds displaced from their homes; not to mention the little inconveniences like closed roads, missing road signs, malfunctioning traffic signals, your favorite food trailer washed to San Antonio, trees that look like they’ve been stepped on by Godzilla, mud-caked roads and sidewalks, and all that other annoying crap that happens in Austin a couple of times a year because building big structures and homes right up against rivers and creeks, and in flood planes, on rocky ground that is more impervious than G Dubya

Bush's skull, is really not the smartest way to go about building a major city – but, oh! The view!!! The deer! The raccoons!! Sure, the coyotes are gonna eat my cats from time to time, but hey, they can be replaced, just look at that tranquil little stream down there!

Okay, so Austin and Central Texas have had a kind of shitty run of luck the last couple of weeks.

With all that crap going down, and considering the mundane offerings at October's Austin City Limits Fest (Really, the Strokes? Drake? Florence and the Machine? Really? You want me to pay how much for that?), can the 10th edition of [Fun Fun Fun Fest](#) save Austin and its hyper-hyped Festival scene from itself?

And yes, I know, asking a music festival to redeem a city is like asking a three year old to negotiate a raise with his dad's boss. But, hey, I've met some pretty amazing three year olds in my life. So, hey, let's give FFF a chance, here. I think they're quite precocious.

Unfortunately, Redemption Road has had a few detours. A couple of FFF Fest's acts, D'Angelo and Conor Oberst's Desaparecidos, have canceled their appearances for good reason- illness. However, the festival has been able to find some really good replacements. Grammy winning singer and [convicted million dollar tax evader](#) Lauryn Hill will step in for D'Angelo on Sunday Night and mature Chapel Hill, NC



indie rockers Archers of Loaf will fill in for Desaparecidos, the latter replacement being chosen with input from fans on the festival's Facebook page. So all is not lost.

So, with Fun Fun Fun Fest just a couple days away, why should you, thrifty Millennial and not so thrifty Gen-Xer, or Gen-Y, or whatever Gen-Alphabet you are, spend untold amounts of money on an airline ticket and \$199 on a three day pass to go to this festival? As a veteran of Austin's festivals, that's an easy question for this Gen-(X-Y-Z)er to answer.

[Fun Fun Fun X](#) from [funfunfunfestival](#) on [Vimeo](#).

1. Summer is finally over in Austin!!

Yee ha! Gosh, even early October can make ACL Fest miserable. I thought Lauren Mayberry of CHVRCHES was gonna faint during the band's set at ACL 2014.

"Gosh, is it always this hot in October," she asked the crowd, "I know you're into keeping Austin weird, but this is too weird."

Little did the Scottish Lass know she was enjoying what is considered an average, even mild, 90-plus degree day in Austin's late, late summer. However, late October and all of November are the best time to visit the self-proclaimed "Live Music Capital of the World." It will be warm, but not scorching hot. Temperatures will be in the 70's all FFF Fest weekend, with a good chance of rain, not the torrential kind like the last couple of weekends, on Saturday, but partly to mostly sunny on the other two days. It's still warm enough to swim, but you'll have to go to Deep Eddy. Barton Springs got hammered by the floods and will be closed another couple of weeks, barring another damn flood. And yes, Deep Eddy is spring fed, too, without the pesky plants, fish, and chaotic free for all swimming. They have nice lanes there.

2. FFF Fest is a bit smaller than ACL Fest and SXSW

While ACL Fest pulls in 80,000-plus each day, and SXSW may be up in the hundreds of thousands of humans nowadays, FFF is a bit smaller. Last year's fest pulled in 50,000 after peaking at 65,000 in 2013. It's grown a lot since its first year at Waterloo Park in 2006 that pulled in a few thousand fans. This year should see a crowd similar to last year's.

3. Auditorium shores is smaller and easier to navigate than ACL Fest's Zilker Park venue

ACL fest can feel like wondering in the desert for 3 days and 3 nights after a conversation with a burning bush, or similar substance. Zilker Park is a huge flat terrain with no organized or sensible walking paths from stage to stage. Even if you don't bump into two thousand people on your way to a stage, it's still gonna take awhile to get there, and when you get there, you might be at the Giant Dell Spectacular Exploding Semi Conductor Stage instead of the AT&T God-Like Pronouncement Stage like you wanted because all the stages look the same, except for size, and those white words on a blue awning may be kinda hard to see from more than a hundred yards away, which is about as close as you can ever get, if you are lucky. You really need to get there early to get to know the terrain, the layout, and where you'll be going during the day when you are fighting 80,000 other people to get to the next set ya gotta see.



Getting around FFF Fest is pretty easy. Comparing navigability of ACL to FFF is like comparing the NY Subway to the T in Boston. While the NY subway can be a bit confusing to non-New Yorkers, Boston's has a nice easy color coded map and system that makes it user friendly right off the bat. At FFF Fest, you've got color coded stages: Orange, Blue, Black, and Yellow. Black tends to host heavy metal and grungier bands. Yellow is for comedy, while Orange and Blue boast indie and alternative acts. Need to get to the orange stage now to see a band? Easy, just look for the stage that is, well, orange. Blue? Well look for the stage that's blue, and so on. Also, the distances between stages are pretty short, and depending on how varied your musical tastes are, you probably won't visit more than 1 or 2 stages as I did last year in seeing New Pornographers, First Aid Kit, Courtney Barnett, The World is a Wonderful Place and I'm No Longer Afraid to Die, and a couple of other really good bands. In addition to the four main stages, there are a few smaller covered stages dotting the festival grounds featuring up and coming acts. There's also a wrestling ring and other crazy stuff.

4. The Price is Right

A pass for all 3 days is \$199. A single day pass is \$79, and the price doesn't change like ACL Fest who will try to get you to buy cheaper tickets "blind" 9 months in advance before the bands are announced, then jack-up the ticket prices once the they are named. FFF does not play that way. What you see is what you get and what you pay is what you pay.

5. Relatively speaking, the food is awesome!

Like other festivals, the food ain't cheap, but FFF Fest boasts actual local food trucks that pull up and park right in the middle of the festival alongside booths,



tents, and whatnot. Some of the local vendors include Bananarchy, Austin's Pizza, and the Black Sheep Lounge. So if you are veggie, carnivore, big time drinker or whatever, there's a food truck or tent waiting for you in the middle of all this great music. This may be the only festival where I've actually found the food very good, if not excellent, whereas most festival food is barely edible.

6. The Music! The Music! The Music!

Last but not least, who do you get to see? Well, if a crunchy ol' music crit like me is excited about seeing the bands at Fun Fun Fun Fest this year, I'll bet the less steely members of our race will be wetting their pants and panties over the schedule. It's quite an eclectic line-up.

Where should I start? Okay, I'm just going to get this out of the way. This is pretty much the reason I'm feeling lots of warmth in my cold, cold veins. If there is no other reason for you to hit Auditorium Shores this weekend, you should see the following two acts who are playing back to back, yes! **BACK TO FUCKING BACK!!!** on the Blue Stage Saturday Night. Are you ready?? Take a very deep breath.

Okay:

GRIMES

Yes. That Grimes, the super techno whiz with the voice of Lucifer's angels (mind you, Lucifer means the "bringer of light"), the one who will be releasing her much anticipated album, 3 years we've been waiting, waiting, waiting in the vast wasteland for it, *Art Angels* on Friday, the day before this set. Just when you think she couldn't possibly give you another jolt – bam!! – there she is live!! Live!! Right there in Austin-Fucking – Texas!!! And you know what? What? The world is going to fucking end! Huh?? It is, and only partially because of Grimes, because, wait, right after she finishes scorching and salting Auditorium Shores with her cosmic rays, laser duster and God nectar, and you think no one can out-gig her,...Can you see that?? What? Can you see that coming? Holy shit! Look!! It's a bird! It's a plane! No!! No!!!

It can't be!!!

No fucking way!!!

It's ...

WU TANG CLAN

Are you kidding me? What frikkin' apocalyptic mad man or mad woman made this line-up happen?? As one member of Wu Tang Clan would poetically put it, "They must be a murderin' ass *****!" Holy shit!! Who the hell scheduled GRIMES and WU TANG CLAN to play back to back on the same stage on a Saturday night in Austin, TX?? WTF!!! Kiss your mommies goodbye because if the world does not outright end by 10 o'clock central time Saturday night, it's surely going to be changed beyond recognition and you and your pal Ho Lee Fuk are gonna to have to be scraped off the ground and taken to Shoal Creek (Psych) Hospital for an extended stay, because, oh!!

No!! I can't believe this!! Wait!!!

What?

No!

God have mercy!

At the very same time WU TANG CLAN is obliterating any and all cohesion in the universe and raising U-

God to, uh, God; oh my, oh shit, you may have to clone yourself.. because.. because.. at the very same time, on the Orange Stage,

JANE'S ADDICTION

..will be performing *Ritual de los Habitual* IN ITS ENTIRETY! OH MY GOD!!!!!!!!!!!!!! [Ray Hudson's](#) head would explode! This is like Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, and a young Maradona on the same pitch!! This is not a holy trinity, but a Holy! Fucking! Trinity!!! that may well damn us all and make us love it. FFF Fest, I'll never forgive you for the damage, the destruction.....Arrggghhh!!

Phew! Glad I got that out of the way. But no!!!

No!! No!!

God have mercy!

You've got to end this!! No!!!

You've got to be kidding!

It can't be! No!!!!!!!

Yes! Yes!! While Grimes, WuTang Clan, and Jane's Addiction are playing, you get, I can't believe it!!

Forget the Holy Trinity, we got us a Pentateuch!

No! It can't be!

GOGOL BORDELLO

and

NOFX

...back to back over on the Black Stage. No!! So I have to clone myself twice!!! I will see Grimes and Wu Tang Clan while Clone Me 1 sees Gogol Bordello and NOFX and Clone Me 2 see Jane's Addiction. I'd better get the lab up and running and get to cloning. Damn you FFF Fest!!!

But wait, the apocalypse has an eve, and maybe a day after? Huh?

Okay. So if you are brave, and you dare step in Austin this weekend for the rock 'n' roll apocalypse, you will find even more evil combinations on the Shores Auditorium.

VIET CONG

Will bring their Nirvana meets Jimi Hendrix chainsaw guitar massacre to the Orange Stage while

BABES IN TOYLAND

and

THE DWARVES

also enjoy the sun Friday afternoon on the Black Stage.

Friday night will finish off with yet another deadly combination. Believe me. You will want to want it. On the

Orange Stage...

CHEAP TRICK

Keeps momma, daddy, and KISS records alright, followed by the greatest Scottish dance pop band since Orange Juice:

CHVRCHES

That's right. Lauryn and company have the *huevos* to follow Cheap Trick, a band that's accidentally killed more people with its journeyman rock than the combined members of CHVRCHES have lived years. But hold on a minute. If you think CHVRCHES are just some rainy day candy ass synth poppers from what you've heard your girlfriend's mix tape, you've obviously never seen them live where they take that sound up to eleven and throw more muscle than the Terminator into a performance that'll send you on an I-tunes download binge. Your very bones will believe. It'll be blue and clear, my friend. The clearest blue.

Okay. So, IF we all survive Friday and Saturday, and get to Sunday, here's who I'll want to see:

ALVVAYS

Hey, now that Grimes, Wu Tang Clan, et. al. have beaten us beyond recognition, why not a little Canadian pop pick-me-up to ease your pain on the Orange Stage? If you're not singing, "Marry Me, Archie," after this gig, well, you're hopeless.

L7

...will be on the Black Stage. This band was Riot Grrrrll before there was Riot Grrrl. Hey CHVRCHES— is this "the Mother We Share" you're talking about?

...And can you believe these huge acts are playing, too?

AFRIKA BAMBAATAA

The man who brought us, apropos, "World Destruction", will be laying down a DJ Set for the peeps.

RINGO DEATHSTARR

Also so so apropos. Seriously, with a name like that, they could play kazoos and I'd love'em. And, of course, the evening and the fest will wind down with the fabulous

LAURYN HILL

I will not say fabulous felon.

I will not say fabulous felon.

I will not say fabulous felon.

I will not say fabulous felon.

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I will not say fabulous felon.

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All those bands listed above? That's just a smidgen of what Fun Fun Fun Fest offers. There will be well over 100 acts in three days.

Let's see, that's way less than \$2 per act, hmmm... Get out that credit card now, pay that baggage fee. It's the end of the world as we know it, and if Grimes, Wu Tang Clan, Jane's Addiction or whoever is the last thing we see, we'll all feel just fine.

Hey, come for apocalypse, stay for the [taco cannon](#).