

# Sprite's Liquid Mix Tour more than just free soda

**Sprite's summer concert season featured diversified musical talents.**

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Managing Editor

One would think that with a company like Sprite sponsoring a concert tour it would be all about radio-friendly pop crooners, like Pepsi's recent Britney Spears tour. Fortunately, this was not the case for the Sprite Liquid Mix, which managed to offer artists from all musical genres.

Diversity in music was kept alive during Sprite's tour visit to the Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre in Charlotte this past Saturday.

For only \$10, pennies compared to most shows that offer a variety of artists, those in attendance experienced every type of music from the alternative rock sounds of a college favorite, the band O.A.R. to

the smooth sounds of rapper Talib Kweli.

Beginning at 4 p.m., the main stage started off with a band discovered by the late singer of Sublime, Brad Nowell. Slightly Stoopid, which had the crowd rocking out to the music that defines Southern California.

This was followed by the rapper Skillz, formally know as Mad Skillz, who spent his time on-stage educating the crowd on rap's history by sampling beats from many of rap music's pioneer songs.

Of course, the crowd favorite was Skillz's song "Ghost Writer", which lyrics dismissed almost everyone in the hip-hop industry from P.Diddy to Eminem.

It was the positive, almost soulful, rap styling of Talib Kweli that spoke to many. Kweli's approach breaks away from the idea of "rap", as many people have come to know it, and

is able to both lyrically and musically be seen as beautiful to all those who listen.

For me, it was Robert Randolph and the Family Band who stole the show. Always playing to the crowd, Robert Randolph's music is described as a mix between gospel, funk, r&b with a hint of blue-grass flavor.

Those who have had the privilege of seeing Robert Randolph in concert come away fulfilled having heard his sweet jams on a pedal steel guitar accompanied by a lot of soul.

Robert Randolph has within the past few years gained a fanbase as mixed as his music, thanks to the fact that he can often be found on stage with musicians like Widespread Panic and the Roots. A single foot was not left stomping while Randolph played fan-favorite "The March".

O.A.R. and N.E.R.D. were booked as headliners

for this leg of the Sprite tour. Classified as a reggae-ska-rock explosion, O.A.R. surprised many who were in the crowd by changing the feeling with their up-tempo songs that did not leave a single person in their seat.

Although not the biggest O.A.R. fan, I was left pleasantly surprised at what a good show they put on and gained a new respect for them and the way they got the crowd jamming out.

Even the most hard-core rap fans were found dancing in the aisles with those busting out hippie moves. O.A.R. is highly recommended for those that enjoy the Dave Matthews Band.

Most of the crowd came out for N.E.R.D. Having gained notoriety as the Neptunes, N.E.R.D. can be called the split personality of its members Pharrell Williams and Chad Hugo.

It can best be explained as an alternative-rock act that features hip hop and

soul.

The Neptunes is a familiar name on the music scene these days due to their successes in adding a bit of extra pop to songs like Britney Spears' "Boys" and the hook/chorus on Snoop Dogg's "Beautiful". Their latest CD, *The Neptunes Present Clones*, is currently number one on the Billboard R&B charts.

N.E.R.D. was not what many people in the crowd expected because of Pharrell and Hugo's work on almost all of the rap songs in the current Billboard charts.

However, they quickly won everyone over, bringing a new addition to the rap/rock genre, one that blows all other acts out of the water. Their astonishing stage presence left the audience feeling like they had witnessed the next big thing.

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