

Ciara's Jazz Fest performance was always going to be sunny

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By Laura Testino, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

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Ciara was going to be shining and bright at Jazz Fest whether the weather was or not.

It was all decided when she dressed in a fluorescent yellow bodysuit and jacket.

She strutted onto the Congo Square stage in battle with the suddenly blinding sun, flanked by a quartet of dancers with swishy fluorescent yellow pants.

“Y’all brought the sun out,” she giddily told the crowd about a third of the way through her show.

She looked and danced the way I always wanted to look and dance, in my best possible dreams, while on my school’s dance team. We had choreography to “1, 2 Step” and “Lose Control” when those songs were new and cool, and if you weren’t also dancing with hoop earrings then what were you even doing, exactly? One of her dancers had hoop earrings, and all of them often performed together in this power pyramid formation with Ciara at the front.

“It’s so beautiful because of you guys,” Ciara said next. (Again, so kind of her to think that it was us, though maybe she was talking to the revelers like the one I met in a gold raincoat and bedazzled black hat who asked me to take her photo in front of the stage as she enjoyed a plate of fried chicken.)

Ciara then performed her newest track, “Thinkin’ Bout You” for the first time, the only song during her hour-long set that dancers weren’t accompanying her with powerful choreography.

By that point, she’d already opened with some favorites (“Get Up,” “Oh” and “Goodies”) for a crowd that continued to grow and stayed excited to be dancing along with her, Ciara, instead of with competing headliners Earth, Wind and Fire or Alanis Morissette.

It’s difficult to not be attracted to and infected by her confidence. The one-name star recalled in [an interview with The Guardian in 2015](#): “I’m on videotape aged 17 at high school graduation saying: ‘I’m gonna have a No. 1 song in the Billboard chart and sell 3 million copies of my debut album.’”

She did that. One year after graduating, “Goodies” was the No. 1 song on the Billboard chart for seven weeks. It was the first time that had happened for a female artist since 1977, The Guardian reported.

Before coming to Jazz Fest, Ciara spent the morning in Algiers at Edna Karr High School as part of a "Reclaiming the Rhythm" workshop. Jamar McKneely, InspireNOLA Charter Schools CEO, confirmed that "it was awesome." Edna Karr's dance team performed for Ciara, and she also gave the students a pep talk.



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Our special Grammy Award winning guest is [@Ciara!](#) She's here today to speak with the Cougars and perform her most popular songs! [@EdnaKarrHS](#) [#inspireNOLA](#)

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"Take risks and be bold," she told them.

Ciara ended her Jazz Fest show with similar words of encouragement: "Keep on leveling up in your life," she said, a play on "Level Up," her final song of the evening. "You going forward starts with you, nobody else."

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