

Saturday night's heavy rains in the New York City Metro area almost prevented Jay-Z from making the Providence stop on his current College Arena tour. The good news was, after waiting an hour on the runway, his jet finally able to depart and make it to the show. The "bad" news, according to him, was that he decided to take a couple of shots while waiting. So, as he said, he was "nice." Well, if he was afraid that was going to affect his performance, he had nothing to worry about.

He was on top of things regardless of whatever pre-gaming took place back in the city before take-off. Jay-Z is at the point where an evening with him is pretty much going to be a full set of his greatest hits. Saturday night he performed older classics such as "Can I Get A...", "Jigga What", "Hard Knock Life", "Izzo (H.O.V.A)", "99 Problems", as well as the soon to be classics "D.O.A.", "Empire State of Mind", and "Run This Town." Jay even recognizes his own place in rap's top echelon. Besides touting himself to an elder crowd member as the "New Sinatra", during 2000's "Big Pimpin'", he wasn't satisfied with the crowd's initial reaction to the song's startup. So he stopped the song mid-intro and told them they couldn't treat that song like it was any other record. He made them find something in their pockets to wave in the air like it's carnival time and properly pay tribute to the "cultural phenomenon" that song has become. This concert goer had nothing but a cell phone, but you better believe I waved it around like he asked.

That's not to say that the crowd needed him to prod them to get it going the rest of that night. From the moment the Brooklyn native stepped out on stage, the crowd was into it. They flashed the Roc hand Diamond and bounced their arms up and down throughout the show while they danced in the aisles.

As usual, Jay's partner Memphis Bleek was in tow, but he wasn't the only one who made the trip up to Rhode Island's capital. Beyonce was spotted sidestage during the show, clapping, dancing, and singing along to all her man's songs. Swizz Beatz also made an appearance, joining Jay for "On To The Next One", a high energy tune from the latest CD "Blueprint 3". Openers J. Cole and Pharrell (from N.E.R.D.) also took the stage to perform "A Star is Born" and "So Ambitious" respectively.

Over the course of the night, Jay spoke to the crowd about not letting anyone discourage them from following their dreams, and told them they should keep pushing forward, citing himself as a prime example of someone who kept his eye on the prize and didn't let anything stop him. Speaking to the Providence crowd, home to Brown University, Rhode Island School of Design and Providence College among others, he mentioned that Obama would never have made it to the White House had the young people not come out and vote. He stressed anyone could change the world, and that it could be someone in the house that night. He suggested it might even be a little girl in the front row who would be the one to do it, leaving everyone with a feel-good inspirational vibe before ending the night with the get-your-lighters-in-the-air ballad "Forever Young."