

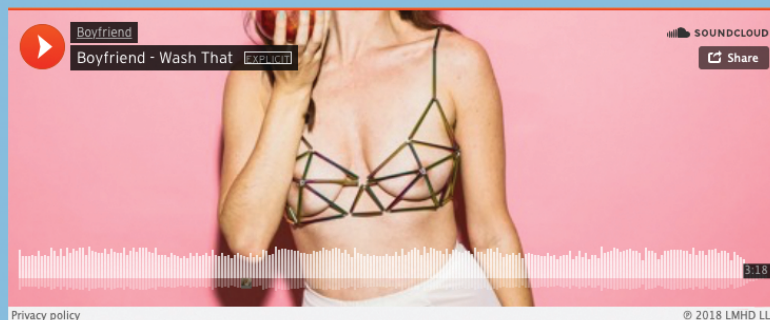




My other highlight Thursday was **Boyfriend**, who used her time well after a late start that looked to be due to technical difficulties. She had three curtained doorways onstage that Dillard students had built for her, and she and a small dance troupe used them for dramatic effect, making entrances in new costumes and with new props. She began with “Love Means” dressed as a bride with the dancers paired up as bridal couples as well. The moment was striking for its inclusiveness as Boyfriend’s dancers came in a number of body shapes and colors, and you couldn’t miss the presentation of women paired up for marriage. The imagery wasn’t necessarily new, but it was certainly new to Jazz Fest, as was much of Boyfriend’s show.

In another festival first, Boyfriend ended “Beauty is Pain” by singing a coda to the song a cappella without flinching while two of her dancers shaved her armpits. Lulu and the BroadSides’ version of The Stooges’ “I Need Somebody” may be the first cover of The Stooges at Jazz Fest, and Boyfriend has to be the first woman to shave her pits onstage. I’m sure there were festival faithful who weren’t sure that they needed to see that or how Boyfriend fit into the Jazz Fest they’ve known for all these years, but her fearlessness is a quality she shares with many who have graced the Jazz Fest stages before her.

And after a gesture as conceptual as shaving in front of an audience, she finished on a nakedly sentimental note. Boyfriend concluded her set by inviting the crowd to sing along as her band played Pink Floyd’s “Another Brick in the Wall,” which segued into Britney Spears’ “Baby One More Time” with her father playing guitar on both. The songs didn’t do more than give her a chance to perform with him and dance with her dance troupe to songs everybody knew. She didn’t have an angle, nor did the songs become something specific to Boyfriend the way she did earlier in the set with “Wash That,” which takes inspiration from the song from the musical *South Pacific*. Still, after her deliberately poker-faced performance, hearing her talk about her dad bringing home a copy of Alanis Morissette’s *Jagged Little Pill* when it came out and the way it made her feel vulnerable and strong carried more emotional weight than you might expect.



My Thursday started in the rain with **Grayson Brockamp and the New Orleans Wildlife Band**, and it was something I wasn’t prepared for. Brockamp had two vocalists, but songs weren’t showcases for Gabrielle Cavassa and Bailey Hinton’s vocalese flair. Instead, the song was the thing with three- and four-part vocal harmonies. The vocal melodies and harmonies gave the songs their backbones, and Brockamp’s bass, Ricardo Pascal’s saxophone and Jamison Ross’ drums all danced around them. The set was smart and subtle, and I want to see it again to get a better handle on what he’s doing.



All things considered, the Fair Grounds held up to Thursday’s rain pretty well, so Friday should be a good day at Jazz Fest. Here are our Friday highlights:

Motel Radio

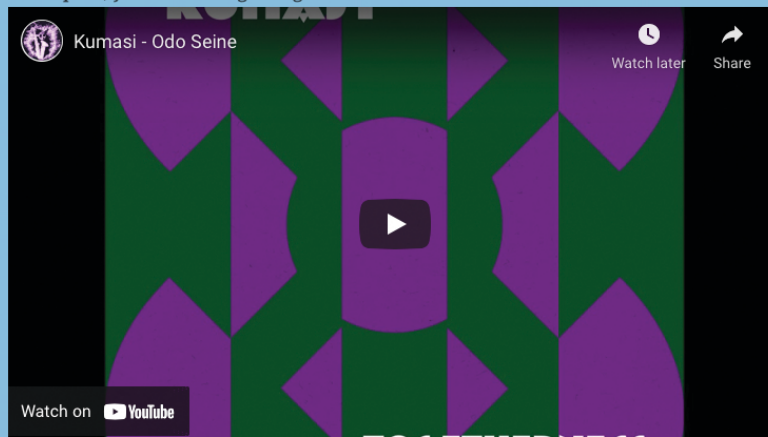
11:30 a.m., Gentilly Stage

The Motel Radio story circa 2016



Kumasi

12:25 p.m., Jazz & Heritage Stage



Moonlight Benjamin of Haiti

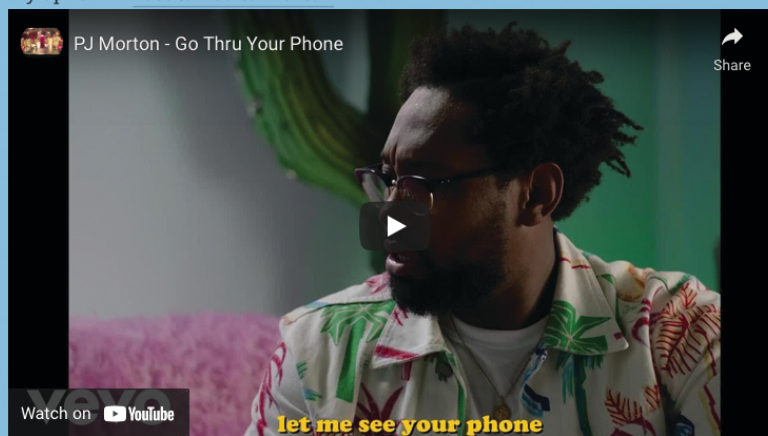
12:30 p.m., Blues Tent



PJ Morton

1:25 p.m., Congo Square Stage

My Spilt Milk last talked to Morton in 2017





Alvin Youngblood Hart's Muscle Theory

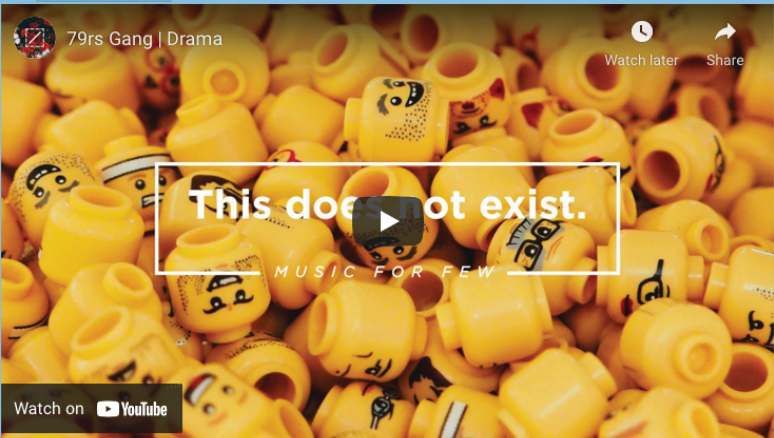
4:15 p.m., Lagniappe Stage



79rs Gang

4:25 p.m., Jazz and Heritage Stage

We talked to them last year



The Revivalists

5:25 p.m., Gentilly Stage

Alex Rawls' review of the band's recent *Take Good Care*

