



CMA Music Fest Night One: Jason Aldean, Dierks Bentley Salute Fans

Alan Jackson, Rascal Flatts, Florida Georgia Line and Sam Hunt were also on the high-energy LP Field bill

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Jason Aldean headlined Night One of CMA Music Fest at LP Field. Rick Diamond/Getty Images

The first of four nights of massive CMA Music Festival stadium shows kicked off at Nashville's LP Field Thursday night, bookended by two generations of country megastars and highlighting just how far the genre has come.

Jason Aldean closed the show with attitude and swagger, while Alan Jackson got things going with cool confidence and a nod to the past. Interestingly — given the timely, red-hot debate over country radio's longstanding gender inequality issues — not a single female artist sang a note. The others on the bill included Florida Georgia Line, Dierks Bentley, Rascal Flatts and Sam Hunt.

Aldean's set didn't start until almost 11:30 p.m., but that didn't deter the majority of fans. They were rewarded when Aldean blasted right out of the gate with "Tattoos on this Town" and "Just Gettin' Started." Mixing the tough-guy tunes of his early career with the steamy, sneering R&B influence he's got going on now, Aldean also included "Take a Little Ride," "When She Says Baby" and "Burning It Down."

"2015 is the 10 year anniversary of our first single, 'Hick Town,'" Aldean said from the stage with appreciation. "The coolest thing is that not only do we get to make music and have this great career, but you fans allowed us to do it our way. It's no big secret that sometimes we put out songs that are a little left-of-center, not right down the middle."

"My Kinda Party" got the crowd pumping their fists, and "Dirt Road Anthem," the first truly successful country-rap combination, kept them going. By the time Aldean closed with "She's Country" and its industrial rock-leaning intro, it was clear that country music's current bad boy feels right at home pushing the musical envelope.