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Forever Young Festival Brings the Magic of the 1980s Back

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Thousands of visitors gathered on Vienna's Danube Island as the Forever Young – 80s Open Air Festival brought legendary artists and timeless hits back to the stage. The event proved that the music of the 1980s continues to unite and inspire generations across Europe.

Thousands of visitors gathered under blue skies to relive the sounds of synth-pop, new wave and classic rock. Many embraced the spirit of the decade by arriving in colourful retro-inspired outfits, creating an atmosphere that perfectly reflected the festival's nostalgic character. From the opening performance until the final encore, the event impressed not only with its international line-up but also with its warm, family-friendly atmosphere. Long-time fans celebrated alongside younger visitors discovering these timeless songs for the first time.

Artists and Audience United

One of the festival's defining features was the unusually close interaction between performers and the audience. Several artists regularly left the main stage to perform on the extended catwalk, allowing fans to experience their favourite musicians from only a few metres away. German synth-pop pioneers Camouflage opened the festival with energetic performances of The Great Commandment and Love Is A Shield. Frontman Marcus Meyn repeatedly walked onto the catwalk, greeting fans personally and creating memorable moments throughout the set. American singer Robin Beck followed with a powerful performance featuring her worldwide hit First Time. Despite minor technical issues, her powerful voice and confident stage presence won over the audience.

Limahl: ?This Feels Like a Class Reunion?

Former Kajagoogoo frontman Limahl returned to Vienna with the songs that made him one of the defining voices of the decade.

Backstage, he described the unique atmosphere of the festival:

"This feels like a class reunion. I've just been chatting with Midge Ure, and I'm looking forward to seeing Kim Wilde again."

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His performances of Too Shy and The NeverEnding Story transported the audience straight back to the golden age of 1980s pop.

Carol Decker Captivates the Audience

One of the day's standout performances came from Carol Decker, lead singer of British band T'Pau.

Displaying exceptional vocal power and commanding stage presence, she captivated the audience from the opening song. During China in Your Hand, thousands of fans joined together in a moving sing-along that became one of the festival's emotional highlights.

Frequently stepping onto the catwalk, Decker created an intimate connection with the audience that is rarely experienced at large open-air festivals.

Midge Ure Returns Home with ?Vienna?

Another unforgettable moment came when Midge Ure, co-founder of Ultravox and one of the driving forces behind the legendary Band Aid project, performed the song forever associated with Austria's capital.

Before beginning Vienna, he addressed the crowd:

"It is always an honour to play this song here. It makes it special for me as well."

The emotional performance received one of the evening's loudest ovations and once again demonstrated why Ure remains one of Britain's most respected musicians.

Kim Wilde and Paul Young Complete the Celebration

British pop icon Kim Wilde brought fresh energy to the stage with classics including Kids in America, Cambodia and You Keep Me Hangin' On. Fans enthusiastically sang along, transforming the concert into one giant celebration.

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Paul Young followed with beloved hits such as Come Back and Stay and Every Time You Go Away. His distinctive voice and relaxed stage presence provided another memorable chapter in an already outstanding programme.

Peter Schilling Steps In

Only hours before the festival began, organisers announced that Alphaville had cancelled its appearance after lead singer Marian Gold suffered broken ribs.

German artist Peter Schilling accepted the invitation at extremely short notice.

Before performing, he told the audience:

“I only learned about this performance 35 hours ago. I would also like to send my best wishes to Marian Gold.”

His professionalism earned widespread admiration from both organisers and visitors. Closing the evening with his international hit Major Tom (Coming Home), Schilling ensured that the festival concluded on an unforgettable high.

Beyond the concerts, visitors enjoyed spectacular panoramic views from the giant Ferris wheel overlooking the Danube Tower and Vienna’s skyline.

Excellent organisation, efficient logistics, short waiting times and a welcoming atmosphere once again demonstrated why Forever Young has become one of Austria’s most popular nostalgia festivals. Following the overwhelming success of this year’s edition, organisers have already confirmed that the Forever Young Festival will return to Vienna in 2027, promising another celebration of the music, artists and unforgettable memories that defined the 1980s.

For thousands of visitors, Vienna once again became the capital of the decade that continues to shape popular music around the world.

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