

# Nada Mucho » Bumbershoot 2014 Day 1: Gemma Avoids “The Twerk Talk”

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## Bumbershoot 2014 Day 1: Gemma Avoids “The Twerk Talk”

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### **Bumbershoot 2014 Recap**

**Saturday, August 30**

**By Gemma Alexander**

Saturday was a good day for hip hop at Bumbershoot. I knew going in that Wu Tang Clan wasn't going to be an option; neither of my kids has ever seen the back side of 10 p.m. But the shows early in the day are always the place to discover the bleeding edge.

Fly Moon Royalty is a family favorite, especially for my 10-year-old, who befriended Adra Boo at Rain City Rock Camp. She headed straight for the front row. The rest of us stayed further back where a 5-year-old on the shoulders wouldn't block so many people, but it didn't matter where you stood. Action J said they hadn't expected so many people to turn out so early in the rain. They rewarded us by sounding the best I've ever heard them.



*Adra Boo and Mike "Action J" Illvester of Fly Moon Royalty turn Bumbershoot 2014's soggy start into steam. Photo by Gemma Alexander.*

I hadn't heard Sound Off! winner Otieno Terry before, but the contest pretty consistently highlights quality artists, so we wandered by. I stopped my oldest daughter from running to the front. "We might not stay," I said. Two songs later I was dragging her forward.



*EMP Sound Off! Winner Otieno Terry: soon to be very rich and famous. Photo by Gemma Alexander.*

Terry is a natural on the stage, charming the audience with just the right patter. When he dedicated a song to his mama, "It's her

birthday believe it or not,” I was inclined toward “not.” But when the audience sang “Happy Birthday” a woman a few feet in front of me started wiping her eyes; it was Terry’s very pretty mama.

The songs sometimes veer toward R&B, which usually leaves me cold, but the hip-hop elements and a full backing jazz band kept Terry’s music interesting. And the young woman he’s got singing with him – Ariana DeBoo – has a voice somewhere between Etta James and Beth Gibbons that could easily lure sailors onto the rocks.

We didn’t really want to hear other music after that. Instead, the kids explored the interactive art exhibits in Fisher Pavilion until we were drawn outside by the sound of Big Freedia. But I wasn’t up for giving “The Twerk Talk” on this day so we settled on the Fisher Pavilion stairs with snacks where we could only hear and not see the music.



*“This thing right here”... may not be right for your 5 and 10 year-olds. Photo by Jim Toohey.*

It was too cold to swim in the Alki Court Fountain in the Kids’ Zone, so the kids made crafts while I listened to Gansango Music & Dance’s pan-African drumming. Then we checked out the Vera Project’s new Forum of Local and Independent Producers showcase.

Tomo Nakayama’s soft, dreamy music did my 5-year-old in; her daddy had to take her home. I stayed with my older daughter for Iska Dhaaf’s set. It was more raw and intense than the time I had seen them before. They have one more show in Seattle before moving to New York – I recommend attending.





*The crowd looks on with the fountain and a bright red bumbershoot in the background. Photo by Jim Toohey.*

Besides the collapsing 5-year-old, our only scheduling conflict of the day came next: Naomi Wachira's set overlapping with Poliça. We swung by the Starbucks Stage long enough to confirm that we do want to see Wachira play in the future. Compared to their glossy, heavily produced recorded sound, Poliça's live performance was all rock band, with more distortion than reverb and more danceable than trippy. It added another appealing dimension to the band.

We tried to hold out for Yuna, but by the time she took the stage my 10-year was dropping into my lap. I made a mental note to explore Yuna's music in the future. But for now, we have to pace ourselves – there are two more days of Bumbershoot left.

*NadaMucho.com Contributor Gemma Alexander has written for ParentMap magazine, Three Imaginary Girls and the KEXP blog*

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