

Young MC - what happened at Club 2000?

More than 550 teenagers eagerly waited outside Norval's Club 2000 in one of the coldest days of the year Sunday - they wanted to take in some rap music by Grammy winner Young MC and Canadian artist Maestro Fresh Wes. What they got were a series of delays that resulted in mayhem in the Club's parking lot and some very angry parents.

Club 2000 manager John Fisher said Monday his club was the victim of a series of incidents beyond his control.

The following is a chronology of exactly what happened at the show, as described by Mr. Fisher.

Several months ago, American rap artist Young MC and Canadian artist Maestro Fresh Wes were signed to a contract with Club 2000 through a promoter for \$13,000. The promoter takes his share, then splits the money with the two acts.

The performers were scheduled to give two 45 minute shows each, one at 4 p.m. for teenagers, and one at 9 p.m. for adults. The two artists were scheduled to arrive at Club 2000 for sound checks and rehearsals between noon and 2 p.m.

But the lighting and other equipment for the show was stranded in a broken-down truck. The speakers, lights and other equipment that was supposed to arrive at 11 a.m., didn't get to Club 2000 until 4 p.m. - the scheduled starting time of the first show.

Maestro Fresh Wes arrived at Club 2000 at 3 p.m. Meanwhile, outside Club 2000, teenagers were lining up while the equipment arrived.

A provision in the artists' contract allows the artists to keep the doors locked until they were happy with the stage set up. Maestro's manager ordered the doors kept locked. Meanwhile, the line-up grew.

A short time later, Mr. Fisher decided to open the doors despite the wishes of Maestro's manager to allow the teenagers inside for needed relief from the bitter cold outside.

Young MC's manager and road crew arrived at 4:20 p.m. More than 550 teens were waiting.

Young MC's manager said the stage production wasn't satisfactory. He began arguing for the next two hours, citing several reasons why his artist would not appear on stage.

Maestro, the scheduled opening act, went on stage at 6 p.m. Two hours late. His 45 minute show was followed by two encores. "The kids loved it. Right then that seemed to please them. They'd forgotten that they'd waited for three hours," said Mr. Fisher.

Meanwhile, Young MC's

manager and crew left Club 2000 saying there would likely be no appearance by Young MC. At 7 p.m. Mr. Fisher received a telephone call from Young MC's manager at a Mississauga hotel asking for a "bonus."

It appears the artist's Grammy award last week had prompted the action, said Mr. Fisher.

Around the same time, parents who showed up to pick up their children at 7 p.m. were becoming very agitated. About 90 people who were unable to stay up and catch either show because they had school the next day, got their money back. Tickets were \$18 each.

Angry parents pointed their frustration at Mr. Fisher, but they seemed to understand the events were beyond his control, he said.

Asked by Mr. Fisher to make an announcement about the delay on stage, the event's promoter Stuart Hinds, declined.

Mr. Fisher was preparing to cancel the rest of the show.

At 8:30 p.m. Young MC arrived. He walked on stage at 8:55 p.m. - four hours and 55 minutes late - and gave a 25 minute performance. His reception was luke warm.

At this point adults began arriving for the 9 p.m. show. Mr. Fisher instructed the teens in the balcony to move down to the floor so adults could get in, out of the chilly weather.

About 250 adults showed up for the late show but Mr. Fisher says he lost another 250 door sales because the club's parking lot - full of parents waiting for their children and people arriving for the late show, was packed. They assumed there was a huge line-up and left, said Mr. Fisher.

Teens emptied the club after the first show at 9:35 p.m.

Meanwhile, Mr. Fisher fielded about 120 telephone calls from angry parents while his staff fielded over 100 more.

At 10:30 p.m. Maestro Fresh Wes went on stage for the late show. He performed for only 35 minutes this time, obviously discouraged by the day's events, said Mr. Fisher.

Young MC, scheduled to walk on stage at 10 p.m. for the evening show, took his position at the microphone at 11:30 p.m.

He played for 25 minutes. His reception was again, luke warm.

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"I think by that time people were beginning to realize that Young MC was causing the delays," said Mr. Fisher.

In the contract, Young MC had demanded some extras for his dressing room - including three gallons of Evian bottled water. His crew downed the water before the

show. They said they would not take the stage unless they got another bottle of Evian, according to Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Fisher is offering free tickets for the next "All-Ages" night for those who contact him with complaints about the evening.

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