



Home > Music > News

Sep 17, 2025 12:25pm PT

Jelly Roll Rocks T.J. Martell Foundation Gala, Which Raises \$2.2 Million for Cancer Research

By Jem Aswad ▾



(Photo by Jamie McCarthy/Getty Images for T.J. Martell Foundation)

Country-hip-hop star [Jelly Roll](#) is in the middle of a European tour, but he flew himself and his entire band to New York to play a full set at the T.J. Martell Foundation's 50th anniversary celebration at Cipriani 42nd Street, which raised more than \$2.2 million for cancer research.

Performances at such events are usually just a few songs, but Jelly Roll — who recently performed for Pope Leo XIV — and his band played [nearly their entire headlining set](#), including such hits as “Liar,” “I’m Not OK,” “Save Me,” and his hip-hop medley of N.W.A’s “Straight Outta Compton,” Eminem’s “Lose Yourself” and Outkast’s “Ms. Jackson.” (He continues his European tour in London on Saturday.)

He also spoke to the crowd at length. “I’m more nervous than normal,” he said, “And I was like, well, I know why. I’m in New York City. I’m at the T.J. Martell gala. It’s a big deal. It’s like, I’m obviously more nervous than normal. I said, probably the most nervous I’ve ever been, and this

<https://variety.com/2025/music/news/jelly-roll-rocks-t-j-martell-cancer-research-1236522381/>

is a really unique comparison that y'all will get, was when I performed very recently at the Vatican for the Pope. And the first time I got invited to do the Clive Davis Pre-Grammy party — Clive Davis and the Pope! So quite a parallel that can only happen at an event like this, I reckon.”

British singer and Republic recording artist Sekou also performed two songs “Love Language” and “Better Man.”

The event was hosted by T.J. Martell Foundation Board Chairman and Republic EVP Steve Gawley, in collaboration with the Foundation’s Executive Committee.

“For 50 years, the music industry’s generosity has fueled lifesaving cancer research,” said Lynn-Anne Huck, CEO of the [T.J. Martell Foundation](#). “Honoring our Circle of Legends reminds us that together, we can turn music’s promise into tomorrow’s cures.”

Other featured speakers included Sony Music Entertainment EVP/ general Counsel Julie Swidler, Big Loud partner/CEO Seth England and BMG’s Jon Loba. 2025 Circle of Legends honoree and Co-Founder, Disturbing the Peace Records Chaka Zulu also spoke about his work with the foundation regarding vital cancer prevention and their Pioneers in the Promise Cancer Summit.

The evening debuted the inaugural Circle of Legends award, a new honor recognizing the leaders and devoted champions whose belief in its mission has powered five decades of progress in the fight against cancer. Those honorees (some posthumous) included: Michele Anthony, Clarence Avant (deceased), Irving Azoff, Lenny Beer, Mitchell Benson, Steve Boom, Scott Borchetta, Will Botwin, Jim Caparro, Gary Casson, Warren Christensen, Tom Corson, Shanti Das, Archie Davis, Clive Davis, Seth England, Rakiyah Marshall England, John Esposito, Charlie Feldman, Jason Flom, Tom Freston, Joe Galante, Daniel Glass, David Glew, David Glinert (deceased), Floyd Glinert (deceased), Charles Goldstuck, Berry Gordy, Jeff Harleston, Clint Higham, Dr. James Holland (deceased), Jimmy Jam, Joel A. Katz (deceased) Michael Kushner, Dennis Lavinthal, Aaron W. Levy, Terry Lewis, Avery Lipman, Monte Lipman, Carianne Marshall, Tony Martell (deceased), Harvey Mason Jr., Judy McGrath, Tommy Mottola, Mike O’Neill, Dino Paredes, Bea Perez, Michael J. Pollack, Frances W. Preston (deceased), Diarmuid Quinn, Michael Reinert, Marc Reiter, Scott Rodger, Paul B. Shore (deceased), Julie Swidler, John Sykes, Afo Verde, Marsha Vlasic, Ron Wilcox, Chaka Zulu.

“The Circle of Legends celebrates the visionaries whose leadership built this Foundation and carried it forward,” said Gawley. “Their dedication has created a legacy of progress — uniting our industry and inspiring hope for generations to come.”

Read More About: [Jelly Roll, T.J. Martell Foundation](#)
